he had worn when he sprang upon the poacher, Dobbs, came into his face, his hands clenched, and he started forward. His left hand was at Dysart's throat, and his right was raised to strike, when suddenly the expression of his face changed, and his hands dropped harmlessly to his side. He could not strike Dysart. His head dropped forward, and he turned away.

Little Elsie entered the door. The child hesitated on the threshold as she caught sight of Dysart, and her eyes wandered from him to Jack, and then to the glove lying on the floor, where it had fallen after being hurled against Jack's face. Quickly, and with indescribable grace, she advanced and picked it up, and extended it to Dysart.

"I think you must have dropped your glove," she said, politely, her eyes fixed steadily on his own.

Dysart stared at her for a moment, taking the proffered glove in a mechanical sort of way. Then a sudden flush overspread his face, and his eyes refused to meet the steady gaze of those big blue ones. He stood abashed for a moment, and then turned quickly and left the room. With a cry as of supreme agony Jack tottered to the mantel-piece and buried his face in his arms.

"Elsie! Elsie!" came faintly from the sick-room. With a glad little cry the child ran into the room. Darcy, too, quickly lifted his head and turned away from the mantel and followed Elsie. At the doorway he was met by the nurse, who pushed him back gently, telling him in a low tone to go for Dr. Jellet. The doctor was in his room, and came at once. Indeed, he hurried past Darcy, and when the latter reached the door of the sick-room the doctor was already at the side of his patient. The first glance at the group within told the worst to Jack.

The mother, in full possession of her faculties in that supreme moment, lay with her dying eyes fixed tenderly on the little form clasped feebly in her arms. The little one was not crying, but her big blue eyes were opened very wide; and while one soft little hand tenderly stroked the loose hair clustered around the fair white temples, the childish lips were repeating over and over again, "I love you, mamma; I love you, mamma." Jack advanced to the foot of the bed. The eyes of the dying woman, wandering for a moment from the face of her child, fell upon him. They lit up with recognition as they did so, and a feeble motion of the hand brought him to her side. Her lips moved; she was trying to speak. Jack bent low to catch the words. They came slowly and with great effort on the part of the speaker. "Elsie,—your brother's child—find Cordella—and tell—him—"

This was all. The lips refused to frame the words of the last love-message; the hand clasping little Elsie's tightened a little, and then relaxed; the pale face turned slowly to the child's. . . .

That night, sitting in the window-seat with Elsie in his arms, and his pale face rendered whiter by the flickering rays of the electric light outside, Jack undertook the task of presenting to her childish understanding the full meaning of the change about to take place in her life. He tried to comfort the little heart that would not be comforted. Elsie would lie passively listening for a while, and he could see that the child tried hard to get consolation out of his talk, but it was of no use. Great convulsive sobs would cause the little frame to tremble from head to foot, and then she would clasp her arms tightly around his neck and cry softly to herself.

It was after one of these prolonged, quiet crying spells that Jack discovered that the child had cried herself to sleep.

He did not dare to move lest he should wake her. . . .

In the midst of this fresh calamity, and in his anxiety to assuage the grief of little Elsie, he had almost forgotten his own trouble, and his encounter with Frank Dysart seemed to have happened days ago, instead of only a few hours. With the temporary ceasing of