

she is a burden. That daughter of hers is wearing her life out taking care of her."

Ronald was more deeply interested in Mrs. Smith's daughter than he would care to reveal to anyone but Clementine Smith. Only recently he had been plunged into the deepest gloom because the mother stood in the way of his marrying the girl he loved. To be sure, there was no opposition from the old lady herself; she opposed nothing but the restraint which did not allow her to roam out of doors at will. But Clementine felt that all her energies should be devoted to the service of her mother. She could not think of marrying, though she could not keep herself from loving.

Montgomery even wished that Clementine had refused him, point blank, on the ground that she did not love him. Then he could cease to love her; then he could possibly forget his disappointment by wooing another. He tried to persuade himself that Clementine really did not care for him and that she had seized upon a pretext to avoid a frank disclosure of her lack of affection for him. But no, he had to admit that she was doing her duty. Her self-sacrifice made him love her the more.

Montgomery assured himself that he meant Clementine's mother no harm. He shrank from accepting the notion that the feeble minded do not suffer. He knew nothing about Dr. Osler's opinion that old people should be put out of the way as a protection to society. Of course if she could not be found—

The horse, which had been moving slowly along in a tranquil state of mind undisturbed by its master since the conversation with John Ball, shied so suddenly that the rider was almost thrown headlong. On a log by the roadside sat an old woman dressed in black, wearing a white cap, usually worn in the house only. Her body was diminutive; her face was wan and pinched; her appearance was like that of a child with white hair and many, very many, wrinkles. What was Montgomery to do? He could not put her on his horse, neither could he carry her. He thought it would be useless to try to lead her to the nearest house, two miles away. He felt an impulse to call for help, but no one was near, he was sure, except John Ball, whom he disliked to summon.

Yet, ought he not to do something for Clementine's sake? He remembered how, when the mother had left home once before, the anxious daughter said to him: