

stammering out her name, and clutching for support at the brass rail that was at the foot of the bed.

"Lynetto! You. . . . It is you? . . ." He shook, staring at her with dilated eyes.

"Owen, you are ill. You speak and look so strangely. It is me—really me!" she said, trying to speak calmly through the tumult of her heart.

"I am not ill. How is it that you are here?"

He lifted a hand to his strained and smarting eyes and moved it to and fro before them. He was staring at her still, but with pupils that were less dilated, and the veins upon his broad forehead were no longer purple now.

"Have I talked nonsense? I had dozed, and you startled me coming upon me. . . . Why have you? . . ." He strove to speak and look as usual. "Has anything happened, that you have come back?"

She pressed her hands together, wrestling for collected thought and clear, explicit utterance, though the room rocked about her, and the floor seemed to rise and fall beneath her feet.

"Something happened. I have come back from Wales to tell you that I . . . I cannot live upon your friendship any longer! I—I must have more, or I shall die!"

He knew all. She had met the man whose look and breath and touch had revealed to her her own misery. Chained to her by sh yoke-fellow; denied Love's bread and wine of life! He looked at her, and answered coldly:

"You shall not die. You shall be free! If you had waited until to-morrow——"

"It is already day," she told him, and, as though to confirm her, a neighbouring steeple-clock clanged twice. He moved uneasily as his eyes fell on the disordered coverlet, half dragged from the bed and trailing on the floor. They shunned hers as he said, a dark flush rising through his haggard pallor:

"I beg your pardon for the intrusion here. But you were away. . . . I could not sleep, and the house was lonely. . . . Is your maid with you? Surely you are not alone?"

She bent her head with a faint smile.

"Quite alone. I did not wish for a companion."

"It was not wise——" he began, and took a step door-