

imagination, if not in reality, the tap-tapping would begin again. Then I suppose nature came to my rescue and I fell asleep; but I did not sleep soundly, and I was awake before daylight had quite come in. And I lay waiting impatiently until I thought it was time to get up and go out, for I was feverish and restless. I thought that if I was out I could think more connectedly and write a letter to Robin before the morning post went out. Before six o'clock I rose and dressed quietly and unbolted my door. The servants were sure to be up and about soon, so I could go down and wait until the front door was opened. I tried to open the door cautiously, almost wondering at my fear of the night before. Daylight brings such courage, Lal. I pushed it gently but it refused to open. All the doors in the old part of the house opened outwards, and I pushed it still more firmly. Something had caught it, I supposed, perhaps it was the mat. Then I tried to shove my way out, and almost fell over something heavy on the mat. I righted myself by catching hold of the lintel of the door, and looked down at the bundle that had caused my fall—it was Lucille Ivory. She was lying there, all huddled up in a pitiful heap, with her great mass of shining hair spread over her like a golden crown. I lifted up her head and threw her hair back from her face; thrice I looked in horror. Ah, Lal, there was no mistaking the expression on the cold drawn features. Death was written there as plainly now as life had glowed on it so proudly the night before. I moved her poor lifeless body out of the crushed heap in which she had fallen, and covered it reverently with the soft, white nightgown. I could not speak or cry out. Something like a nightmare held my tongue. But in a moment a complete understanding came to me of why she was lying there crushed against my door. Her candle, which had fallen from her hand, had rolled some distance along the passage, and so my ghost of the night before had been Lucille. She had felt ill and come to my door for help. Three times she had knocked in vain, and then she must have fainted, and I in my cowardice had not heard the fall; after the third tap-tap I had plunged beneath the clothes. Then I remembered her weak heart and the doctor's warning. But what had disturbed her? My thoughts flew to Robin's letter; she had read it and the shock had killed her. Feeling one of her attacks coming on, she had come to my room just as she was, in her nightdress and bare feet. I had never seen death before, and here I stood alone in the early summer morning with the sweet, cool air blowing in from a high lattice window, which stood open to ventilate the corridor. How the birds sang and chirped and disturbed the trees in the Nun's Walk below, as if to assert their joy that a new day had begun, and I was there alone with the dead. There was

plenty of assistance near at hand, for three members of the household slept only a few yards off, but I stood as if rooted to the spot. I could neither call out nor leave the poor chilled body, that looked so fair and fragile, stretched out on the dark oak floor, and although death had been a stranger to me till now, for I was too ill to see my father when he died, I knew by instinct that Lucille had been dead some hours. She was so far removed from things earthly; it was strange how utterly severed she was, and yet it had all happened between the dawn and the daylight. If you have never seen death, Lal, and the one who is dead was something beautiful and pure, you can never realise the intensity of separation. No oceans or continents can really separate those who love and live, but the great master, death, had taken Lucille at the first hour of the new day into that infinite space where thought cannot travel nor mind transmit sympathy, and he had left lying at my door an awesome thing, with all colour and meaning and humanity gone.

"Suddenly I heard a noise in the house below; how welcome at that moment was the sound of active life, for I was still watching on the floor by Lucille. Soon I heard the great house-door open; the butler must be down, and then a great flood of cool fresh air came wafting up the stair and swept over the pale thing by my side for a moment and surrounded me. Softly I went downstairs; the man started when he saw me at that early hour dressed and ready to go out, and when he looked at my white face and staring eyes, he thought I had lost my reason.

"Nash," I said in a miserable dazed way, "Come with me, don't make a noise, for Miss Ivory is dead. Quick, don't you hear me, Nash, why don't you come?" I implored, for he stood staring as if he was afraid to come near me. "Go to your room, miss, you've been dreaming," he managed to say. "Miss Ivory's all right. I'll send you up a cup of tea directly."

"Nash," I said, "for pity's sake come or I must call for help." My senses were beginning to act, I suppose Nash saw this, for he went upstairs in front of me."

Here Aunt Netta paused and her poor pale face which had been so drawn and pained, relaxed and a flood of tears broke the strain. I let her weep for I could not comfort her, my mind was too full of the story she had just told me, beside the dusk which had deepened into darkness seemed to hold my voice.

At last I whispered, "And did you never see Robin again, Aunt Net?"

"Yes, child, but only once, and that was at her funeral. He and I alone knew the true cause of her death, he and I standing by her grave knew that he had killed her, for they gave him the letter she had written that night in answer to his."

"And did she give him up?" I said. "Oh, poor, proud Lucille!"

"Yes, Lal, she implored him to marry the girl he loved. 'Even if it should break my heart,' she said, 'my love is so great that I can spare you to her.'"

"And it did break, Aunt Netta," I said, "but that was God's way of solving the problem. There is one more angel in heaven instead of one more broken heart below."

Aunt Net sighed gently as if the thought comforted her and answered, "Now, Lal, you will know never to call me courageous again."

"You have been courageous to live, Aunt Net, and not accept what Lucille died to give you."

"No, Lal, we could not do that. Robin and I are true to her memory with a continent and sea dividing us. Neither of us could have known happiness at such a price."

"Hark," I said, "that's Ned." And I listened for a familiar footstep on the stone stair that led into the great hall. The door was flung open and Ned stood there blinking into the darkness.

"What two brave women," he said, "sitting in this great place alone in the dark, but I wouldn't mind getting that Lal has got tight hold on you, Aunt Net?" The next moment he tripped and nearly fell over the heavy abbot's chair. More cautiously he groped his way towards us. "Have you heard the patter of the little goody-two-shoes, or felt the draught that blows from behind the tapestry, or seen any other form of ghost? for you two seem to have been inviting the presence of spirits to-night." Laughing he flung himself down beside us in the old oak settle and folded us both in his arms.

"I think I'm the luckiest fellow in the world," he said, "to have the two nicest women in the world for my sweethearts. Have you fixed the day for our wedding, Aunt Netta?"

"Which of us is to be the bride?" I asked, pushing more closely up to his side.

"Both of you if the parson will allow it, but I'm afraid they are very mean about such matters. And surely no one man was ever lucky enough to have two beautiful women ready to marry him?"

I felt for Aunt Netta's hand, and she pressed mine closely on hers, for again our spirits had met, this time more truly than before.

"Yes, two women love you, Ned," she said, "but only one is ready to be your wife; the other rests content to look on."

"Onlookers see most of the game, Aunt Net, so you'll have to act as umpire for Lal and me in the great game of love and life."

Then the candles were lit, and I knew by Aunt Netta's face that what had passed was sealed for ever, to live only in her memory and in mine.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MISCELLANEOUS.

IRISH GIRL.—We do not think it would be well to write to people for their crests and escutcheons. You could obtain a good many through a stationer printed—as specimens of the engraving—on cards. We will keep your envelope and send you a few shortly.

MUREN should get a small bottle of muriatic acid and a small flat camel's hair brush and sweep the acid over the outer crust of the shell, washing it off continually, to see that the burning is effectual, though not excessive. Mark the bottle "Poison."

Ivy.—You had better show the description of the slipper-stand for a flat-iron at a first-class ironmonger's shop, and simply give an order for one. If they have not got any, they could write to London, Birmingham, Manchester, or Liverpool, whichever may be the place whence they get their supplies.

J. L.—We cannot undertake to alter your face, although we can help you as regards the roughness and chapping of both face and hands. For this trouble, by far the best thing to get is a little tube of glycerine, honey-jelly and cucumber. As to the shape of your nose, we do not endorse the plan once suggested by a reader of ours, to confine the broad tip within the grip of glove-stretchers or a stiff hair-pin during the night. Leave it alone, a sweet expression will amply correct all defects in form. Be assured of that.

MIRABEL.—We never heard of any special cause or reason for removing a ring from one hand to the other, by either man or woman, excepting to place it where it may fit the best, or suit better with, or make place for other rings.
Snowdrop should go to a hairdresser and have her hair dressed in the newest way. She can then adapt it to herself and find out whether it will be becoming to her.

MISS PRYLE.—We have no guild for the sale of decorative art work, nor work of any description, in connection with our magazine, but there are such societies to be found. For example, there is such an institution at 17, Sloane Street, S.W.; also Messrs. Simpson, 100, St. Martin's Lane, W.C., employ ladies in various branches of decorative work, including china and glass painting. We fancy that there is probably a greater demand for such work than for that of the needle.

EKA.—You read to improve yourself, and if in reading, you find any book exercising an evil influence over you, or causing you to think lightly of holy things, do not continue it. This is the test, and it lies with you to apply it.

PANSY.—A knowledge of fine needlework is necessary for anyone who intends to undertake the work of making children's clothes. You would have to apply at some shop where there is a vacancy, or else advertise.