

mother had then told him quite plainly that Cousin Nevill was going to die.

Jim's views on death were perfectly formed. He knew exactly what happened. The soul went to heaven, after a spell in Purgatory, and the body went into the churchyard. He blinked rather rapidly when he heard that this was going to happen to Cousin Nevill, and played with his toast. He was not sure whether he wanted to cry or not: but crying was discouraged by his mother. And, in any case, for about six weeks he had not seen Cousin Nevill at all; and six weeks is a vast period. He looked up at his mother presently.

"And I shan't see him any more?" he said. "After now, I mean?"

"Not till you die yourself, my dear."

"When shall I die?"

"I have no idea at all," said Anna gravely. "But there's something else too I want to say. Cousin Nevill has been very ill indeed: you know that, don't you? Well, he looks quite different now; he's much thinner and he's wearing a—a sort of white cap on his head. You mustn't touch that white cap—it's wet; and you mustn't be frightened, will you?"

"No, Mummie," said Jim very softly.

"Stop as long as he wants you; and if he doesn't say anything ask him whether you're to go away. If he doesn't answer, just come away on tip-toe. I shall be in the hall all the time, and Nurse will be in the bathroom. So you won't be afraid, will you?"

"No, Mummie."

Here then he stood; and his heart hammered in his breast.

Nothing happened when he tapped; and he tapped again. Then the door shook ever so slightly; then it opened and Nurse Deacon's face looked out. (Jim loved Nurse Deacon entirely; she gave him a rusk sometimes; it was pleasant to meet her face first.) She smiled and stood back: and Jim went in.