

you have come," he said quickly. "I'm sure it is bad for you to be shut up alone; I have been so anxious. I can't tell you how I feel for you."

"Hush," she murmured, half-fiercely. "Not one word of sympathy; I can't bear it, it mocks me. I have come to know what happened. Tell me quickly, you needn't be afraid. I am quite equal to it."

He placed a chair for her, but she refused to sit, motioning to him impatiently to go on.

"We don't know much," he said, "but Dr. Hills says death was caused by suffocation after he had been stunned by a blow. He was found in a ditch with the trap on top of him, so he must have got off the road in the dark and been overturned. We have heard from Mr. Haines that he left there as right as possible about eight o'clock. He must have been stunned when he fell, and the cloak having blown tightly round his head, he must have been suffocated almost immediately."

A violent shudder ran through her and she bit her lips as if to prevent herself crying out: then, quickly regaining her composure she remarked, "No doubt you are right, but after all it doesn't much matter how it happened; where is he?"

"In his own room."

"Take me to him," she said briefly, and stood aside for him to pass and lead the way.

In the chamber of death, they stood side by side and gazed on the still form they had both loved so well, but it was in the man's eyes that tears gathered and it was the man's lips that trembled—the woman stood calm, dry-eyed and seemingly passionless.

Presently she bent forward and pressed her lips to the cold forehead, but she drew back hastily with a shudder, for the icy touch chilled her to the marrow. It seemed to break down her unnatural manner, for a vacant look crept into her eyes, and she pressed her hand to her head and knit her brows as if striving to remember something.

"I wish I could cry," she said in a hoarse whisper. "There is a weight like lead on my head."

She swerved a little and he turned to her quickly.

"Perhaps you won't let yourself," he said soothingly. "Shall I go away and leave you for a little while?"

"No! no! don't go," and she clutched his arm with a sudden fierce grip. "I feel as if I should go mad; why doesn't he speak to me or look at me. It can't be Jack, he was never

like that; he was scarcely ever still a moment. It is a mistake," and she gazed at him with wild, imploring eyes. "Jack could not look like that, he was so full of life and spirits. Tell me it is all a mistake and I have been dreaming," and her voice had a piteous wail in it.

Guy moved his lips and tried to speak, but a sob choked his utterance and he turned his head away, for he could not bear the look in her eyes.

She turned again to the silent figure and leaned over it. "Jack," she breathed, "Jack darling, don't you hear me? I'm Madge, your own Madge. You can't go away and leave me; I haven't anyone else. You wouldn't be likely to go and leave me all alone. They told me you were dead, but it must have been because they were jealous; they knew I loved you better than anything else in heaven or earth. Say they only did it to frighten me, Jack."

"He doesn't speak or take any notice," she continued fearfully, the dazed look in her eyes deepening, "Can—it—be—true?"

Then suddenly, with a low cry which Guy never forgot, she threw up her arms and fell forward across the dead man's body.

(To be continued.)

NO. 22.

CHAPTER I.

"CASE coming in, Sister."

"Not another fracture, Mr. Lee, I hope?"

"No, it's a head case. The poor chap was brought into the surgery insensible. He will be in here in five minutes," and the breathless young dresser, who had been sent to prepare the ward for the coming of its new inmate, dashed off again.

The tall Sister to whom he had spoken moved quietly down the long ward when he had gone, giving a few quick orders in her low pleasant voice and with the sunny smile which made all her subordinates her more than willing slaves. And by the time the five minutes named by the dresser had passed, a bed was ready for the new patient; whilst the occupants of the other beds were awaiting eagerly the little excitement of seeing a new case brought in.

"Where's 'e goin'?" one man asked, a man who had been nearly a year in the ward and was thoroughly *au fait* in every item of its management. "22 bed? Oh, that's a good bed that is, just at the corner where you can see both ends of the ward."

"'E won't care about that, 15, don't you be afraid," called the neighbour in the next bed; "'e's bad, 'e is. Mr. Lee, 'e says, 'head case—insensible.' I heard 'im. 'E won't care for no ends of wards, nor nothin' o' that!"

"'E will soon, no notion as 'e's a bit better," retorted 15, the first speaker (using, as hospital patients do, the number of their neighbour's bed instead of his name), "'ere they come," and pulling himself up in bed he watched with the keenest interest the small procession which entered the ward, bearing a silent form upon a stretcher.

The little bustle attendant upon its arrival was quickly over, and in what seemed an incredibly short space of time, the new patient was lying in his bed, whilst the rest of the

ward chatted and chaffed and laughed over its tea.

No place in a hospital can be so lively and bright as the accident ward. The patients for the most part are suffering from some injury which does not materially affect their general health, and they are generally as merry as heart could desire. To-night the customary jokes and laughter went on as usual. Only by that quiet bed where the new patient lay in absolute unconsciousness silence reigned. The Sister looked down at the still form, a little puzzled frown puckering her forehead.

"He looks like a gentleman," she said to the staff nurse; "I wonder how he met with this accident, and who he is. Will you see if he has any card or any means of identification in his pockets? We ought to communicate with his friends directly," and she glanced curiously again at the white face on the pillow. It was a well-bred, rather than a handsome one, but the clear cut lines of cheek and jaw, the broad sweep of the open brow, had a distinctive beauty of their own.

"There is nothing in his pocket," the nurse said, returning to the bedside, "but a handkerchief, a gold pencil-case, some loose silver, and this letter," and Nurse Evans handed it to the Sister.

"No envelope, nurse? And the letter simply begins 'Dear Guy.' Then we are no nearer to the poor man's identity than we were before." She glanced from the address at the top of the paper to the signature at the end. "Oh, it is his wife," she exclaimed, "it is signed, 'Your affectionate wife, Grace Warden'; then I can telegraph to her at once and write as well. What a relief!" and moving from the bed she went quickly to her own small room at the end of the ward, and wrote a telegram which she addressed to

Mrs. Warden
Higham Court,
Senley, Cornwall.

CHAPTER II.

LADY WARDEN came down to breakfast on a morning in July decidedly out of temper. Her maid had discovered the ominous fact at an earlier hour; her sister-in-law was made aware of it when the two ladies met on the great staircase of Higham Court. Lady Warden's first words were pettish; there was a frown on her face.

"It is too annoying of Guy!" she exclaimed, as soon as she caught sight of Miss Warden. "What in the world was he thinking about to allow me to go through such a night? He vowed he would be home by the nine o'clock express, and then not to come, and to leave me in suspense! It is thoughtless of him."

"Perhaps there is some explanation this morning," Miss Warden said gently; "it is not like Guy to put anyone to inconvenience, much less his wife," and she smiled down upon the pretty, petulant face upturned to hers. The evening before she had had to listen *ad nauseam* to her sister-in-law's fretful complaints, and it needs all her patience to endure with equanimity the renewed grumbling in the morning. Lady Warden only shrugged her shoulders at her companion's last words and laughed pettishly, as she swept on down the stairs to the dining-room, "spoilt child" written large in every movement of the small graceful figure, in every line of the lovely face.

"Letters late too!" she exclaimed, as she seated herself at the end of the table; "how I do hate this horrible hole, and how I do wish Guy were not so passionately devoted to it, and that his uncle had never left it to him."

"I don't think you would really care very much for any place in the country, would you, Grace?" her sister-in-law said smiling.

"I don't think I should, but I couldn't detest anything more than I do this. One feels buried, and there is nothing in the wide world to do except to play Lady Bountiful,