

334 THE LANE THAT HAD NO TURNING

a stupor. The old man came quickly to her and looked into her face. Seeing, he gave a broken cry and said: "Carille, my daughter! Carille!"

He drew her to his breast, and as he did so he groaned aloud, for he knew that inevitable Death was waiting for her at the door. He straightened himself up, clasped the child to his breast, and said: "I, too, am Felion, my little son."

And then he set about to defeat that dark, hovering Figure at the door.

For three long hours he sat beside her, giving her little by little his potent medicines; and now and again he stopped his mouth with his hand, lest he should cry out; and his eyes never wavered from her face, not even to the boy, who lay asleep in the corner.

At last his look relaxed its vigilance, for a dewy look passed over the woman's face, and she opened her eyes and saw him, and gave a little cry of "Father!" and was straightway lost in his arms.

"I have come home to die," she said.

"No, no, to live!" he answered firmly. "Why did you not send me word all these long years?"

"My husband was in shame, in prison, and I in sorrow," she answered sadly. "I could not."

"He did evil? He is—" he paused.

"He is dead," she said. "It is better so." Her eyes wandered round the room restlessly, and then fixed upon the sleeping child, and a smile passed over her face. She pointed to the lad.

The old man nodded. "He brought me here," he said gently. Then he got to his feet. "You must sleep now," he added, and he gave her a cordial. "I must go forth and save the sick."

"Is it a plague?" she asked.