

it Sybil's tears fell fast as she saw how the paper shook in the poor trembling hands, as the girl bent her head slightly and read the fatal words which told the sorrowful story of how Neal had died in that strange land without one friend near him.

When she had finished reading a low moan burst from her pale lips, the letter fluttered from her hand to the floor, and she, sinking on her knees by the table hid her face in her hands.

"Leave me, oh! leave me now," she cried piteously when Sybil spoke to her and tried to raise her.

So kissing her forehead tenderly and picking up the letter Mrs. Macdonald went softly from the room.

She paused for a minute in the hall and then quietly turned in the direction of the kitchen.

Christie was there busy ironing and singing softly to herself as she passed the iron over the damp linen, she looked up in astonishment as Sybil came in.

"Law ma'am! I beg your pardon—I didn't hear you comin', but—there isn't anything the matter I hope ma'am," catching sight of Sybil's pale, tear-stained face.

"Yes Christie there is," she replied quietly—"your mistress is in sore trouble just now, she wishes to be left alone for the present, but I feel very anxious about her and I wish you would go in to the parlor in about an hour just to see that she is all right; do not speak to her unnecessarily, you know, but I am afraid she will be ill, she may faint or something."

"Oh! Mrs Macdonald what is it? excuse me for asking you ma'am, but I do love my mistress and she has had so much trouble, oh my poor dear Miss Mollie!"

"You are a faithful girl Christie, and your love for Miss Mollie has been well tested, so I will tell you what this new grief is. Mr. Despard died in Spain about two months ago."

Christie gasped and then her apron went up to her face and she sobbed in genuine distress.

"Has Master Bertie gone to bed Christie?"

"Ye-yes ma'am."

"When is Miss Lesley expected home?"

"She is com—ing home to—to-morrow," answered the faithful servant striving to gulp down her sobs and answer the questions put to her.

"Well remember what I told you, look after your mistress and do not cry when you go into the parlor."

She left the kitchen followed by Christie and together they stood outside the parlor door listening for a sound from within; but none came, and with a deep sigh Sybil turned away and passed out of the hall door which Christie held open for her.

With a kind good night to the girl, she walked down the narrow path and entering her luxurious sleigh was whirled away towards her home, where guests awaited her whom she would entertain with smiles and talk and music, for the remainder of the evening and all the while her heart would be with the sorrowing girl in that little cottage home she had just quitted.

Christie went back to her ironing stopping every now and then to wipe away the tears that gathered thick and fast in her honest eyes.

"Oh dear! oh dear! to think of him dyin' away off in that strange country without ever settin' eyes on Miss Mollie again, he that loved her so well; and she, though she never would own to it, has been hopin' and hopin' in her heart all these years to see him again, and now he's dead."

At this thought she fairly gave way and sitting down covered her face with the inevitable apron and cried aloud.

Oh dear! when I think of that dreadful night when he left Buxly it makes me feel that bad. Poor Miss Mollie near broke her heart and he—oh his face—his face, now dreadful white and stern it looked to be sure, when he spoke to me at the gate and give me the letter for my mistress. That was six years ago, and now he's dead! oh me! oh me!"

"But I'll no more believe that he took that money, than Miss Mollie herself does; though who could have taken it, is a mystery."

Christie was one of the few who were acquainted with the story of the robbery and influenced by her mistress's steady trust in Mr. Despard's innocence—for she had involuntarily betrayed herself to her servant in the same way that she had done to her friend—the girl had come to believe as

implicitly in the young man's innocence as Mollie herself.

In little more than an hour's time Christie crept to the parlor and listened; there was a sound within. She knocked, there was no answer, again she knocked and with the same result. Growing alarmed at this silence she opened the door and went in. The sight that met her eyes brought a cry from her lips. Her mistress lay, face downward, stretched on the floor a little way from the table. She knelt down and lifted her head, her face was deathly in its stillness and its awful pallor, the heavy dark lashes rested on the colorless cheeks and in the sweet sad lips there was not a vestige of color.

Raising the slight form in her strong arms Christie carried her at once up to her bedroom and laid her on the bed. She then tried every means she could think of to restore her to consciousness, but in vain. At last she gave up the attempt and with a sinking heart went into Bertie's room and gently roused the boy from his sleep. Telling him that his auntie had been taken suddenly ill, she begged him to dress himself at once and go for the doctor. She was obliged to soothe the boy's agonized alarm by assuring him that it was nothing more than an obstinate fainting fit, and intreated him to be calm and brave for his aunt's sake.

Bertie mastered his fear and though pale and trembling quickly dressed and set off for the doctor, while Christie returned to Mollie.

In a few minutes the doctor came. He looked grave when he saw Mollie, but said little; for hours he laboured patiently at the sick girl's bedside before she unclosed her eyes. But alas! when she did open them it was with a wild, vacant look in them which told that she was not in her right mind.

Before morning came she was raving in delirium and the doctor said she was suffering under an attack of brain fever.

(To be Continued.)

### Imaginary Evils.

Let to-morrow take care of to-morrow;

Leave things of the future to fate,

What's the use to anticipate sorrow?

Life's troubles come never too late!

If to hope over much be an error,

'Tis one that the wise have preferred;

And how often have hearts beat in terror

Of evils that never occurred.

Have faith—and thy faith will sustain thee—

Permit not suspicion and care

With invisible bonds to embrace thee,

But bear what God gives thee to bear.

Thy spirit supported and gladdened

Be ne'er by "forbodings" deterred!

But think how oft hearts have been saddened

By fear—of what never occurred.

Let to-morrow take care of to-morrow;

Short and dark as our life may appear,

We may make it still shorter by sorrow—

Still shorter by folly and fear.

Half our troubles are half our invention,

And often from blessing conferred

Have we shrunk in wild apprehension

Of evils—that never occurred.

[Written for THE FAMILY CIRCLE.]

### UP THE LAKES.

"What do you think, Charlie," (said I to the doctor, as we embarked at Sarnia on board the fine steamer Manitoba, of the N. W. Transportation Company's Line,) "of the prospect of a pleasant night on the lake?"

"Well," said the doctor, "that depends upon circumstances that have not yet announced themselves, and therefore I cannot speak positively; we shall certainly have a fine steady boat, commanded by a careful and skillful captain, and, as report says good fare is the order of the day on board this boat, I am cultivating my appetite so as to do justice to the steward's good taste by exercising my own; however, we want