

it's nuts to be able to travel together, you and me, old thing!" hugging Stella's arm affectionately. For during the weeks they had spent together all the old intimacy between the girls had been revived, and the childish love had quite reawakened. "How charmed they'll be to see me back in the ward!"

"I wonder when Harry will take that run down to Shingleby of which he talked before he left us," Mary remarked. She tried not to speak pointedly. Yet she was narrowly watching the effect of her brother-in-law's name upon Wynne's merry face. Whilst as to Stella she openly laughed at her friend's sudden blush.

"How can I tell?" with a great affectation of carelessness. "I wish, Mary," changing the subject with suspicious promptitude, "that you'd let May come with me——"

"You ridiculous creature! Ah, talk of an angel! Well, my treasures," as the two mites trotted happily in, hand in hand. "Really, Wynne, that baby is much better to-day."

"Yes, that baby is *much* better," from sedate Ivy. "It's me is the ill one now," with a grievous sigh, as she put her head on one side, and drooped her curved lashes over the big brown eyes. But her mother laughed heartlessly.

"Are you, my darling? Where do you feel it?"

The small maiden considered for a moment, then lifted her long, Kate Greenaway dress to show a pretty round knee.

"Auntie Wynne bound up May's," she said. "Mine is *velly* bad too, I think."

"But May fell down and bruised herself," remarked Wynne, half puzzled. "Have you had a tumble?"

"No." Then a tear forced itself out, and trickled down her soft cheek. "And May ate *all* the sweeties, movvy!"

"So that's what the ailment is! I expected as much," to Wynne. "There, mother will find some for

you both, when you've said good-night."

It was a lingering operation, but accomplished at length. By-and-by from their bedroom there was to be heard only the sound of May's voice as she crooned over nursery ditties to her doll. Ivy was already asleep when Wynne peeped round the corner for a last glimpse of her god-child.

"Hush!" holding up a warning finger to the mother who was close behind. "Listen!"

Little Jack Horner had just finished his self-praise as they came within hearing. Now May was conversing with her unresponsive child.

"Well, Dora Rosina," she said, "are you weepy? I am; we must go to weep togezzzer." There was some patting and smoothing of the blankets. Then the little one jumped up in bed, and began to hunt all round. "But, dolly dear, I've lost my velly last sweetie. It s'ipped out of my mouf. Have 'ou eated it, dolly dear?" A tiny sigh. "'Cos I'll forgive 'ou if 'ou has, and will on'ey tell your movvy the troof," with the quaintest imitation of Mary's intonation.

Wynne slipped away to laugh at that point. And as quietness reigned thereafter, apparently terms of peace were arranged between the conscious and the unconscious babies.

Whether or not Mrs. Brookes intended to board and lodge the Clives for the remainder of their natural lives, Stella's return to Kingston Lodge had no immediate effect upon the arrangements there. Neither Helen nor Caryl made the slightest suggestion of quitting their comfortable quarters, and every corner of the place seemed pervaded by them. Life promised to be almost unendurable to Stella. Nor did it tend to make matters easier for her, that she now first began to vaguely suspect Guy Ryder's feelings towards herself. His unconcealed delight when he greeted her at the station, together with one or two casual words dropped by