

"You *must* have been mistaken, dearest," said Lucinda, not unwilling that the thing should be forgotten.

"Lucy mine, how could I be mistaken? I saw the terrace plain--through the gap in the yew-hedge. One sees through plain from the turn of the road. Come and look at it." They were walking, a day later, about the gardens and near paddocks o' the Hall, and it was a three minutes' walk at most that he proposed.

"See now, Lucy," said he when they arrived. "She came along limping, just like that wretched nightmare dream." . . .

"How could you be sure of the limp, thus far off?"

"H'm!--I might be unsure about the limp. And I might be unsure about the cloak. But the woman was there, or I'm forsworn. And who the devil was she?"

John Rackham, catechised, was uncommunicative. How could he know what was happening t'other side of a ten-foot wall? There might have been a rare company of wenches on the terrace for anything he could naysay. He suggested that the household were untruthful--that undefined conspiracy was afoot, to mislead. As to any woman having passed through his door--well!--the key was lost. You could see that for yourself. No light was thrown on the subject by Mr. Rackham. His manner, that of a reasonlessly unwilling witness, was put down by Oliver to constitutional obstinacy. Lucinda may have noticed its abnormal oddity, and her silence about it may have been due to her wish that the incident should be forgotten.

She was strangely happy during the next few days, seeing how tragic her life had been for so long. Her love for her husband was a reinstated infatuation, and he was cunning enough to know how to strengthen his case for absolution. Do not blame her! Think how glad we all are to make accommodations between choice and duty.