

will come in time. I'm almost sure I'll see Charlie yet. Perhaps they will come together."

That report had been going in town. More than one had asked me if it were true that Will had gone to find Charlie and bring him home: for every person was interested in the somewhat melancholy fate of the boy and girl, and, remembering the friendship of the "triplets," I suppose some one had put that construction on Will's continued absence. I wondered if anyone could have been foolish enough to mention it to her; but they told me she had seen no strangers, so it was just her own fancy after all. And a very troublesome one it became as the end drew near. Her impatience to see Charlie, and fear lest he should not know where to find her, were almost dangerous at times. Three or four times a day she would send for me to know if I had been at the station when the trains came in, or if I had written to hurry Will.

I soon satisfied her about Will, for he had written saying he would be home in a few days, and partly to please her, but more because I could not settle down to any kind of work myself, I watched every train that came in east or west, sometimes wishing as they went out again—for I felt blue enough in those days—that I could jump on one and be carried anywhere, anywhere to escape the general wretchedness that seemed to have settled down on every thing.

One evening I dropped in here, on my return from the station, where I had been waiting for the last train, and found what I took to be a letter from Will. But the office was almost dark, and when I lighted a lamp I discovered it was a telegram. If it had come from the other world I could not have been more stunned. But you can read it for yourself. I've always kept it; it seemed like a message from the dead.

"Will be home on last train Thursday. Break it to Annie."

"CHARLIE."

I couldn't believe my eyes. After reading it over and over again, I locked it in my desk, and when half way home came back to make sure I had not been dreaming.

But there it was all right. And where had he come from? Immediately I thought of the advertisement or had Will found him? If not how did he know there was need to break news to Annie? It was all a mystery to me, as every thing had been for the last year and a half.

The next day was Thursday. It was very evident that Annie was sinking fast, in fact the doctor said she might die any moment. So I took my mother's advice, who was afraid of exciting Annie, and said nothing to her of the telegram. Besides she felt so confident of seeing Charlie that, come when he liked, there could be no great surprise.

Of course the train was late that evening, but it did crawl up to the platform at last. While I was looking eagerly among the passengers who alighted for a familiar face or form, I felt an arm slipped through mine.

"All right Phil." Then stooping down to my ear, "How is she?"

The voice seemed strange, but I knew it was Charlie's. Poor Charlie! What a coming home. I hadn't the courage to tell him she was dying, so I merely said Annie was expecting him: and then poured out a volley of questions concerning himself. Where he had been? Why he had been silent so long? and if he had seen Will?

"Don't ask me, Phil; don't ask me. I'm mad, crazy, or will be soon."

Thus silenced, and wondering when the mystery would end, I walked, or rather ran, with Charlie through the old familiar streets. They seemed to have grown two miles longer that night; but at last we reached home, and Charlie caught his breath and muttered something to himself as he stood for a moment looking at the lighted window of an upstairs room. We met the doctor, who was just leaving in the hall. I was pulling off Charlie's overcoat and urging upon him the necessity of being very calm when he saw Annie at first. Coming up to Charlie, he turned his face around to the light. "Oh, why didn't you come five months ago? Why didn't you come five months sooner?" and went out wiping his eyes. Charlie had no time to reply, for my mother appeared just then to take him up to Annie. And I went outside again; the house seemed to suffocate me.