mas Day when Ada arrived at the Thatched House.

" What is the matter with you ?" said she, putting her hands on my shoulders and looking at my face, " you look like a changeling, you little white thing ! When shall I get leave to explore your mystery ?"

" To-night," I whispered, and looking round me quickly, shuddered.

Ada laughed at me, and called me a little goose; but I could see that she was wild with curiosity, and eager for bedtime to arrive. I had arranged that we should both occupy my room, in order that if there was anything to be heard, Ada might hear it. " And now what is all this that I have to learn ?" said she, after our door had been fastened for the night, and we sat looking at one another with our dressing-gowns upon our shoulders.

As I had expected a long ringing laugh greeted the recital of my doleful tale. " My dear Lucy," cried Ada, " my poor sick little moped Lucy, you surely don't mean to say that you believe in such vulgar things as ghosts ?"

" But I cannot help it," I said, " I have heard the footstep no less than seven times. If you were to sleep alone in this room every night for a month you would get sick too."

" Not a bit of it " said Ada, stoutly and she sprang up and walked about the chamber. Ada always meant what she said. In half an hour we were both in bed without a further word being spoken on the matter. So strengthened and re-assured was I by her strong happy pre-sence that, wearied out by the excitement of the day, I was quickly fast asleep. When I opened my eyes next morning the first object they met was Ada sitting in the window. She was pale, and her brows were knit in perplexed thought. I had never seen her look so strangely before.

A swift thought struck me, I started up, and cried, " O Ada ! forgive me for going to sleep so soon, *I know you have heard it.*"

She unknit her brows, rose from her seat, and came and sat down on the bed beside me. " I cannot deny it," she said gravely; " I have heard it. Now tell me Lucy, does your aunt know anything of all this ?"

" I am not sure," I said, " because I am afraid to ask her."

" Well," said Ada, " we must tell her nothing till we have sifted this matter to the bottom."

" Why, what are you going to do ?" I asked beginning to tremble.

" Nothing very dreadful little coward !" she said laughing; " only to follow the ghost if it passes our door to-night."

I gazed at Ada with feelings of mingled reverence and admiration. It was in vain that I tried to disuade her from her wild purpose. She bade me hold my tongue, get up and dress, and think no more about ghosts till bedtime. I tried to be obe-dient; and all that day we kept strict silence on the dreadful subject, while our tongues and (seemingly) our heads were kept busily occupied in helping to carry out Aunt Featherstone's thousand-and-one pleasant arrangements for the coming Christmas festivities.

Bedtime arrived again too quickly. We said our prayers, we set the door ajar, we extinguished our light, and we went to bed. I had just commenced to doze a little and to wander into a confused dream, when a sudden squeezing of my hand, which lay in Ada's started me quickly into consciousness. O horror ! there it was— the soft, heavy, unshod footstep going down the corridor outside the door. Ada crept softly from the bed, threw on her dressing-gown, and went swiftly away out of the already open door.

What I suffered in the next few minutes I could never describe. Then through the silence of the night there came a cry. It seemed to come struggling up from the dining-room underneath. Unable to stand the suspense, I sprang out of bed, rushed down stairs, and found myself standing at the door of the haunted dining-room.

" Ada, Ada !" I sobbed out in my shivering terror, and thrust my hand against the heavy panel. The door opened, I staggered in, and fell forward on the floor, but before I fainted quite, I heard a merry voice ringing through the darkness.

" O Lucy ! your Aunt Featherstone is the ghost."

When I recovered, I was lying in bed, with Ada and my aunt both watching by my side. The poor dear old lady had so