

before I had time to answer, the door opened and my cousin's maid, Janet, with a white, scared face entered the room; she started, at seeing me up; but hastened to tell her errand. My cousin was ill, and Mrs Godfrey was not in her room; would I go to Miss Godfrey while she (Janet) searched for her mother?

Scarcely waiting for my reply the girl hurried away; and as quickly as my trembling fingers would permit, I threw on a loose morning wrapper, thrust my feet into a pair of slippers, and flew to Helen's room.

An involuntary cry escaped me as I looked upon the rigid form upon the bed; the face was ghastly white, while the lips were perfectly blue. Was she dead? I placed my hand over her heart, its action was fearfully irregular; now it would beat furiously; then seem to stop altogether. "Thank God," I cried, "my darling still lives!" But as I looked again into her face a sudden thought darted into my mind "Helen had heart disease!" But did Mrs. Godfrey know it? Surely if so, she would not have thwarted her as she had done. I commenced to rub the little hands vigorously, I knew not what was the proper thing to do, and impatiently awaited the entrance of Mrs. Godfrey and Janet. Minute after minute passed away and they did not come; but presently to my great relief I saw the blueness fade away from the young girl's lips and a faint color steal into them; presently she opened her eyes and gazed about her with a dazed, frightened look. Then starting up, she cried wildly:

"Mamma, mamma, the will; for God's sake don't burn the will!"

These incoherent words of Helen's dispelled the last lingering doubt I had had of the paper's, destroyed by Mrs. Godfrey, being the missing will. But my cousin's critical condition drove all other thoughts from my mind for the time being, for she had fainted again, and I was just about to call for assistance, when I heard some one coming, Mrs. Godfrey, followed by Janet and Mrs. Griswold, the housekeeper, entered the room; the former pushing me almost roughly from the bedside, took my place there; and as I watched the agonized expression in the wretched mother's face, I felt some faint stirring of pity for her in my heart. Restoratives were applied to the fainting girl, and were so far successful that she recovered sufficiently to open her eyes and gaze vacantly around the room; but when at last they rested on her mother, who was murmuring endearing epithets, which sounded to me curiously strange, from those cruel lips, Helen uttered a low, pained cry and shrank from her; I turned away unable to witness the unhappy mother writhe under that action.

Turning to Janet, I inquired if the doctor had been sent for; she said yes; and that Mrs. Griswold advised telegraphing for Dr. Rathburn also. I wondered I had not thought of this sooner, and went away to write down the message, which the servant could take to the village as soon as he returned from fetching the doctor.

In a few moments the doctor arrived, having come on horse-back as being the quickest mode of conveying himself to the Manor. The man-servant was also riding, and when I ran out and gave him the telegram for Douglas, he rode off with it to the village without an instant's delay. I then ran up to my room, dressed myself properly, and then went out into the corridor to wait till the doctor came from Helen's room. I had not very long to wait, for presently the boudoir door opened and Janet's white, frightened face appeared. "Miss Enis, come quickly, she is dying."

Dying! a cold, deathly shiver ran through me, and I staggered back, clutching at the wall for support.

Helen dying! then merciful God forgive me! for indirectly yet surely I had been the cause of it. With a heavy heart I followed Janet into the chamber of death.

Of death! yes I could not doubt it when I looked upon the greyish pallor of Helen's face. She was gasping pitifully for breath and through her night-dress I could see the violent beating of her heart as though it would leap from her breast. I could utter no word. My heart was too full of passionate sorrow and remorse. Too late! too late! In my blind egotism, I had done wrong that good might come, and this was my punishment. In the death of this dear girl whom I had learned to love as dearly as my own sister, I was destined to obtain the end which I had sought and to receive my punishment at one and the same time.

Speechless with grief, I sank on my knees by the bed and clasped Helen's hand to mine. She turned her dimmed eyes upon me, and smiled, a sweet, forgiving smile that stabbed me more sharply than repulsion would have done, for it made me feel more and more how contemptible, how wicked I had been! "Leave us!" she gasped, turning to the others: the doctor and Janet went at once into the adjoining room; but Mrs. Godfrey lingered.

"Will you send me away my child?" she murmured brokenly.

"Yes, a moment" answered the dying girl, and with one last kiss, the wretched mother left the room with slow, lagging steps.

But, alas! whatever the poor girl had wished to say to me was destined never to be told. Scarcely had her mother left the room when that awful gasping for breath began again, and she lay, panting and writhing in her agony, unable to utter a word and only the wistful longing in her eyes telling of her desire to speak the words she was so powerless to utter.

It was terrible to witness her suffering: there is always a dread, more or less, in the hearts of watchers by a death-bed; the soul is filled with awe, and the poor human heart quakes as the King of Terrors stalks into your presence and reminds you, with grim and fearful certainty, of that time when he will come and set his seal upon your brow, as he even now has upon that pale face on the pillow. But awful as death is at all times, its terrors are fearfully multiplied when the soul's departure from this world is accompanied by great bodily suffering.

This was the case with Helen, and my weak heart trembled and sank within me, for I had never looked on death before; strange as it may seem.

I raised her in my arms and rested her head upon my breast, and never for an instant did the wistful eyes leave my face.

Could it be of Douglas she wished to speak? I wondered; "Helen darling" I whispered, "is it about Douglas you wish to speak? I have sent for him; he will be here soon."

She shook her head and smiled feebly, and as another thought came into my mind, I was about to ask her if she wished to speak of the lost will, when a strong, convulsive shudder ran through her slight frame, she threw up her arms and her head fell back on my shoulder. A terrified scream burst from my lips and I let the limp form fall heavily on the pillow, and sprang to my feet. That cry of mine brought the others hurrying into the room; Mrs. Godfrey, fearless and haggard, her eyes blood-shot and wild-looking, flung herself down on her knees by the bed. The doctor, after one close look into the dead face, had drawn back, and stood with folded arms, his eyes fixed on the floor; Janet stood just within the room, her hands pressed to her bosom.

For a long time, it seemed to me, a deep, deep silence reigned in the chamber of death. Then a voice, soft and low, full of tenderest love, broke the stillness.

"Helen my child, my little one, forgive me the harsh words I spoke to you in my anger last night; I was never harsh to you before, darling, was I? Why do you not speak to your poor mother Helen? I will do as you wish dearest. You were right when you said it was a crime; I will confess that I destroyed the will; we will go away from here, you and I Helen, and Alex. Godfrey shall have his own again. Will not that satisfy you? why do you not speak nor look at me Helen?" The poor crazed creature turned to the doctor and whispered, pointing to her dead child—"Why does she not speak nor move; why does she look like that?"

Very kindly and gently the physician laid his hand on her shoulder and said sadly:

"Your daughter is dead, my dear lady; had you not better come with me into the next room?"

"Dead!" she shrieked, flinging his hand off and rising to her feet. "Dead!" she turned and stooped over the bed, lifted one of the lifeless hands in hers and let it fall. Clutching her hair in both hands, she stared wildly around the room; when her gaze fell upon me, a rapid change came over her face; fiendish hate and rage glared from her blood-shot eyes, and the thin lips were drawn back tightly, disclosing the large white teeth. "My child is dead—dead!" she shrieked—"and you have killed her; *murderess!*"

She reached me in one spring and I felt her cold fingers clutch my throat and saw her mad eyes glare into mine;