

'The steamer is in. Shall be at the station at five o'clock p. m.

'GUY REMINGTON.'

Twice Maddy read it over, experiencing much the same feeling she would have experienced had it been her death warrant she was reading.

'At five o'clock. I must go before that,' she said, sighing as she remembered how, one year ago that day, she was travelling over the very route where Guy was now travelling with his bride. Did he think of it? think of his long waiting at the depot, of that memorable ride to Honedale, the events of which grew more and more distinct in her memory, making her cheeks burn even now, as she recalled his many acts of tenderness and care.

Laying the telegram on the table, she went with Mrs. Noah through the rooms, warmed and made ready for the bride, lingering longest in Lucy's, which the bridal decorations, and the bright fire blazing in the grate, made singularly inviting. As yet, there were no flowers there, and Maddy claimed the privilege of arranging them for this room herself. Agnes had almost stripped the conservatory; but Maddy found enough to form a most tasteful bouquet, which she placed upon a marble dressing table; then within a slip of paper which she folded across the top, she wrote;

'Welcome to the bride.'

'They both will recognize my handwriting; they'll know I've been here,' she thought, as with one long, last, sad look at the room, she walked away.

They were laying the table for dinner now, and with a kind of dizzy, uncertain feeling, Maddy watched the servants hurrying to and fro, bringing out the choicest china, and the glittering silver, in honour of the bride. Comparatively, it was not long since, a little frightened, homesick girl, she first sat down with Guy at that table, from which the proud Agnes would have banished her; but it seemed to her an age, so much of happiness and pain had come to her since then. There was a place for her there now, near Guy; but she should not fill it. She could not stay; and she astonished Agnes and Jessie, just as they were going to make their dinner toilet, by announcing her intention of going home. She was not dressed to meet Mrs. Remington, she said, shuddering as for the first time she pronounced a name which the servants had frequently used, and which jarred on her ear every time she heard it. She was not dressed appropriately to meet an English lady. Flora of course would stay, she said,

as it was natural she should, to greet her new mistress; but she must go; and finding Charlie Green she bade him bring round the buggy.

Agnes was not particularly surprised, for a vague suspicion of something like the truth had gradually been creeping into her brain, as she noticed Maddy's pallid face, and the changes which passed over it whenever Guy was mentioned. Agnes pitied Maddy, for in her own heart there was a little burning spot, when she remembered who was to accompany Dr. Holbrook. So she did not urge her to remain, and she tried to hush Jessie's lamentations when she heard Maddy was going.

One long, sad, wistful look at Guy's and Lucy's home, and Maddy followed Charlie to the buggy waiting for her, and bade him drive rapidly, as there was every indication of a coming storm.

The gray, wintry afternoon was drawing to a close, and the December night was shutting down upon the Honedale hills in sleety rain, when the cottage was reached, and Maddy, passing up the narrow, slippery walk, entered the cold, dreary room, where there was neither fire nor light, nor friendly voice to greet her. No sound save the ticking of the clock; no welcome save the purring of the house-cat, who came crawling at her feet as she knelt before the stove and tried to kindle the fire. Charlie Green had offered to go in and do this for her, as indeed he had offered to return and stay all night but she had declined, preferring to be alone, and with stiffened fingers she laid the kindlings Flora had prepared, and then applying a match, watched the blue flame as it gradually licked up the smoke and burst into a cheerful blaze.

'I shall feel better when it's warm,' she said, crouching over the fire, and shivering with more than bodily cold.

There was a host of nameless terror stealing over her as she sat thinking of the years ago when the inmates of three graves across the meadows were there beneath that very roof where she now sat alone.

'I'll strike a light,' she said, rising to her feet, and trying not to glance at the shadowy corners filling her with fear.

The lamp was found, and its friendly beams soon dispersed the darkness from the corners and the fear from Maddy's heart, but it could not drive from her mind thoughts of what might at that moment be transpiring at Aikenside. If the bride and groom came at all that night, she knew they must have been there for an hour or more, and in fancy she saw the tired, but happy Lucy, as in her pleasant room she made her toilet for