

creased in fury ; but the Yule logs were piled high, the curtains drawn, and every house, *save one*, in the handsome street to which my story leads me, was all aglow, all ablaze with light.

In a lull of the storm the sounds of music and merry-making would rise and swell on the air, as light feet tripped merrily amid the mazes of the dance ; or a silvery peal of laughter would break easily on the wayfarer's ear. The reflection of the light through the crimson curtains shed a warm, rosy glow over the snowy ground, brightening the gloom of that stormy winter's night.

But rising dark, grim, and gloomy amid those gayly lighted mansions, stood a large, quaint building of dark-red sandstone. It stood by itself, spectral, shadowy, and grand. No ray of light came from the gloomy windows that seemed to be hermetically sealed. All around was stern, black, and forbidding.

And yet—yes, from one solitary window there *did* stream a long, thin line of light. But even this did not look bright and cheerful like the rest ; it had a cold, yellowish glare, making the utter blackness of the rest of the mansion blacker still by contrast.

The room from which the light issued was high and lofty. The uncarpeted floor was of black polished oak, as also were the wainscoting and mantel. The walls were covered with landscape paper, representing the hideous Dance of Death, in all its variety of frightful forms. The high windows were hung with heavy green damask, now black with dirt and age. A large circular table of black marble stood in one shadowy corner, and a dark, hard sofa, so long and black that it resembled a coffin, stood in the other.

A smoldering sea-coal fire, the only cheerful thing in that gloomy room, struggled for life in the wide, yawn-