

The philosophy of Mr. Ludolph and his daughter was evidently adapted to fair weather and smooth sailing. Sickness, disease, and the possible results, were things that both dreaded more than they ever confessed to each other. It was most natural that they should, for only in health or life could they enjoy or hope for anything. By their own belief their horizon was narrowed down to time and earth, and they could look for nothing beyond. In Mr. Ludolph's imperious resolute nature, sickness always awakened anger as well as anxiety. It seemed like an enemy threatening his dearest hopes and most cherished ambition, therefore the heavy frown upon his brow as he pushed away the scarcely tasted breakfast.

To Christine the thought of death was simply horrible, and with the whole strength of her will she ever sought to banish it. To her it meant corruption, dust, nothingness. With a few drawbacks she had enjoyed life abundantly, and clung to it with the tenacity of one who believed it was all. With the exception of some slight passing indisposition, both she and her father were seldom sick; and for a number of years now had voyaged on over smooth, sunny seas of prosperity.

Christine's sudden prostration on the morning following the company, was a painful surprise to both.

"I will have Dr. Arten call at once," he said at parting, "and will come up from the store early in the day to see you."

And Christine was left alone with her French maid.

Her mind was too clouded and disturbed by fever to think coherently, and yet a vague sense of danger—trouble—oppressed her, and while lying in a half-unconscious state between sleeping and waking, a thousand fantastic visions presented themselves. But in them all the fiery Cross and Dennis Fleet took some part. At times the Cross seemed to blaze and threaten to burn her to a cinder, while he stood by with stern accusing face. The light from the Cross made him luminous also, and the glare was so terrible that she would start up with a cry of fear. Again, they would both recede till in the far distance they shone like a faint star, and then the black darkness that gathered round her was more dreadful than the light, and with her eyes closed she would reach out her hot hands for the light to return. Once or twice it shone upon her with soft mellow light, and Dennis stood pointing to it, pleading so earnestly and tenderly that tears gathered in

her eyes. Then all was blurred and distorted again.

Within an hour after her father left, she found Dr. Arten feeling her pulse and examining her symptoms. With a great effort she roused herself, and looking at the Doctor with an eager inquiring face said,

"Doctor, tell me the truth. What is matter?"

He tried to smile and evade her question, but she would not let him.

"Well, really, Miss Ludolph," he said, "we can hardly tell yet what is the matter. You have evidently caught a very severe cold, and I hope that is all. When I come this evening I may be able to speak more definitely. In the meantime I will give you something to soothe and reduce your fever."

The French maid followed the Doctor out, leaving the door ajar in her haste, and in an audible whisper said:

"I say, Docteur, is it not de small-pox? Dare is so much around. Tell me true, for I must leave dis very minute."

"Hush, you fool," said the Doctor, and they passed out of hearing.

A sickening dread made Christine's heart almost stand still. When the woman returned she watched her most narrowly as she asked:

"What did the Doctor say to you?"

The maid replied in French that he said she must be still and not talk.

"But you asked him if I had the small-pox. What did he say?"

"Ah Mademoiselle, you make one grand meestake. I ask for a small box to keep your medicine in dat it make no smell."

From the woman's lie in evading her question, and from the fact that she was redolent with camphor used as a preventive, and kept as far away as she could, near the windows, Christine gathered a most painful confirmation of her fears. For a time she lay almost paralyzed by dread.

Then as the medicine relieved her of fever and unclouded her mind, thought and conscience awoke with terrible and resistless power. As never before she realized what cold dark depths were just beneath her gay pleasure-loving life—and how suddenly skies bright and radiant with the richer promise of the future, could become black and threatening. Never had earthly life seemed so attractive, never had her own prospects seemed so brilliant, and her hopes of fame, wealth, and happiness in her future German villa more dazzling than now when they stood out against the dark back-ground of her fears.