

radiance of heavenly innocence. Let love and faith remain inviolate. Not from his lips, not from his, should Pearl hear the damning truth.

She repeated her question, and he answered with an odd thrill of guilt that mama was ill.

"You know, dearie," he said, "people sometimes fall ill very suddenly."

Yes, she knew that. Had she not had measles and things? And of course, when people were very ill they couldn't be expected to walk or talk properly, could they?

"But what made mama ill?" she asked with the remorseless directness of her age.

He almost choked at that. The honest man does not lie easily with his child's eyes fixed on his own, telling him that every word he says will be believed implicitly to the last syllable. Yet as an honest man shields the woman he loves, trusting his offending soul to its Maker, Herrick answered, "I cannot tell you, dearie. I don't know."

"Then," cried Pearl in an instant concern, "we must send for the doctor quick, quick! He'll be able to find out and make her better."

Herrick held his breath. Send for the doctor to have their shame scientifically diagnosed? How cruel love could be!

"Mama will be better after a sleep," he returned evasively.

Pearl's face gleamed with a new thought. "I shouldn't wonder a bit if it was Lady Stapleton that made her ill," she said, her small lips compressing. "I don't like Lady Stapleton. I think she's nasty, and I believe she did something to mama."

"You must not speak like that, Pearl," her father told her. "Lady Stapleton does a great deal of good."