

"I heard he was with the farm boys down on the meads, and they are drowned."

Drowned! Yes, that was the report; more than that the doctor could not tell us, and we, shivering with dread, and vaguely trying to realize such awful tidings, were sent to bed, but not to sleep. We gathered together by the open window, and sat to listen for tidings. Our nurse came into the room and carefully pulled down the window blind and there sat with us—older, more unable to repress the horror and the sorrow that she felt than we; and gradually through the night we began to hear more. First the tread of a man swiftly running, panting, till his sobbing breath was heard within our chamber, and then a silence, whilst we dared not stir, and then the rattling of a lumbering cart go past. Voices also. They are in the Pill, sunk in the mud, and Mary from her post beside us, said, "It is the milk cart taken to bring the bodies home." And after that, oh! the horror of that next hour! How we sat and watched, and listened! How we thought of the turbid Severn, of the remorseless tide, which had taken the life of so many! How we thought of the darkening night and the wind sweeping cold from the channel, and then in tones of wondering horror spoke of the time one week ago, when Mary with us children, even to the babe and little ones, had crossed this perilous passage. We thought of the Pill, the deep fissure dividing two fields, so full of Severn mud and filled with salt water by every tide, and wondered how we had escaped the fate of the two boys. We pictured them down in the mud covered with the tide, and our horror culminated.

And then again we heard voices. "It is so dark they cannot find them; they have sent for torches." And after that we sat again in silence, and presently a sound

broke on our ears,—only those who have once heard such a sound can appreciate its horror: the tread of a crowd of men, all walking as with one step. It was long in coming; as it came nearer we were ready to scream with terror, and one of us pulled up the blind, and, looking down, saw something white and heavy, borne by men whose shadowy heads lent horror to the scene. She fell back in hysterics, and the blind was pulled down again, and the procession passed on, turned at the cross and bore its burden into the old farm-house, and after that the village street was silent, and in time even that night of horror passed away and the morning rose, pure and beautiful, and the sun was golden on the hilltops.

Then the morning silence was broken by the sonorous clang of the church-bell. It tolled and was silent, and then tolled forth the years the village boys had lived. A few more days and the village church was crowded, the churchyard full, too, with sympathizers of the bereaved.

The church stood in the valley; around it pleasant orchards, above it the everlasting hills, and outside the gates the babble of the little brook.

The minister in his white and flowing robes stood at the gate. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," he said as he went towards the church.

He spoke of life, but our childish eyes saw only the horror and the dread thing, "Death." We sadly turned from the churchyard gate, and left our friends there in their last home on earth. After that we climbed the hilltop, we stood in the old churchyard, and looked down upon its representative.

Afar off the Severn, calm and beautiful, wound its way like a silver thread towards the ocean. We turned from its beauty with a shiver and went home.