

was stopped by a hollow cough that completely racked her wasted frame, and then went on in a faint voice :

“I couldn’t rest, though, and the priest did not give me any comfort. Then I heard Willie there tell what the kind young ladies said about going to Heaven directly we die, and never a word of purgatory, and I thought maybe one of you could tell me something to ease my heart.”

“What can I do?” Asked Mabel of herself—“What can I say? My heart seems frozen, and my lips powerless to tell her what she is dying to hear. How can I tell her what I have never experienced? How can I comfort her with words that have never comforted me?”

She laid her head down on the torn coverlet, and prayed for strength and wisdom—but no strength—no wisdom seemed to come—the Heavens seemed as brass above her—she felt nothing but a dreary blank.

And yet the woman was dying, she must do something.

For a brief moment—like a flash—she pictured herself in the dying woman’s place, and felt the horror of being there without hope. With a convulsive shudder she rose and sitting down by the bedside, she took the woman’s thin wasted hand in hers, and asked her if indeed she had no hope.

“Hope!” she repeated. “I read in that book—he called it the word of God—that the wages of sin is death. The priest said it was only purgatory, but I know more than he thinks I do—and I know what death that means—No, I have no hope. I know what a sinner I have been, and I know what the wages of sin are.”