HD WIDENER
HW KQVX U

Digitized by Google
Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

22425.20

HARVARD
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Contents.

Bulwer Lytton, Sir E. (G. E. L.). A Strange Story. B. 1862.

Mathews, C. Big Abel, and The Little Manhattan. N. Y. 1845.

Thackeray, Wm. The Ricklebergs on the Rhine. N. Y. 1851.

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

A Strange Story.

Lilias Falconer at the Monks Well.

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

A STRANGE STORY.

BY

SIR E. BULWER-LYTTON.

WITH

ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL BY F. O. FREEMAN.

DRAWINGS BY J. N. HYDE,

FROM DESIGNS BY GARDNER A. FULLER.

BOSTON:
GARDNER A. FULLER.
1862.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

22435.20
2

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862, by

GARDNER A. FULLER,

n the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

CAMBRIDGE:

Allen & Farnham, Stereotypers and Printers.

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

A STRANGE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

In the year 18— I settled as a physician at one of the wealthiest of our great English towns, which I will designate by the initial L——. I was yet young, but I had acquired some reputation by a professional work which is, I believe, still among the received authorities on the subject of which it treats. I had studied at Edinburgh and at Paris, and had borne away from both those illustrious schools of medicine whatever guarantees for future distinction the praise of professors may concede to the ambition of students. On becoming a member of the College of Physicians, I made a tour of the principal cities of Europe, taking letters of introduction to eminent medical men; and, gathering from many theories and modes of treatment hints to enlarge the foundations of unprejudiced and comprehensive practice, I had resolved to fix my ultimate residence in London. But before this preparatory tour was completed my resolve was changed by one of those unexpected events which determine the fate man in vain would work out for himself. In passing through the Tyrol, on my way into the north of Italy, I found in a small inn, remote from medical attendance, an English traveller — seized with acute inflammation of the lungs, and in a state of imminent danger. I devoted myself to him night and day, and, perhaps more through careful nursing than active remedies, I had the happiness to effect his complete recovery. The traveller proved to be Julius Faber, a physician of great distinction — contented to reside, where he was born, in the provincial city of L——, but whose reputation as a profound and original pathologist was widely spread, and whose writings had formed no unimportant part of my special studies. It was during a short holiday excursion, from which he was about to return with renovated vigor, that he had been thus stricken down. The patient so accidentally met with became the founder of my professional fortunes. He conceived a warm

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

attachment for me; perhaps the more affectionate because he was a childless bachelor, and the nephew who would succeed to his wealth evinced no desire to succeed to the toils by which the wealth had been acquired. Thus, having an heir for the one, he had long looked about for an heir to the other, and now resolved on finding that heir in me. So when we parted Dr. Faber made me promise to correspond with him regularly, and it was not long before he disclosed by letter the plans he had formed in my favor. He said that he was growing old; his practice was beyond his strength; he needed a partner; he was not disposed to put up to sale the health of patients whom he had learned to regard as his children. Money was no object to him; but it was an object close at his heart that the humanity he had served, and the reputation he had acquired should suffer no loss in his choice of a successor. In fine, he proposed that I should at once come to L—— as his partner, with the view of succeeding to his entire practice at the end of two years, when it was his intention to retire.

The opening into fortune thus afforded to me was one that rarely presents itself to a young man entering upon an overcrowded profession. And to an aspirant less allured by the desire of fortune than the hope of distinction, the fame of the physician who thus generously offered to me the inestimable benefits of his long experience, and his cordial introduction, was in itself an assurance that a metropolitan practice is not essential to a national renown.

I went, then, to L——, and before the two years of my partnership had expired, my success justified my kind friend's selection, and far more than realized my own expectations. I was fortunate in effecting some notable cures in the earliest cases submitted to me, and it is every thing in the career of a physician when good luck wins betimes for him that confidence which patients rarely accord except to lengthened experience. To the rapid facility with which my way was made, some circumstances apart from professional skill probably combined. I was saved from the suspicion of a medical adventurer by the accidents of birth and fortune. I belonged to an ancient family (a branch of the once powerful border clan of the Fenwicks), that had for many generations held a fair estate in the neighborhood of Windermere. As an only son I had succeeded to that estate on attaining my majority, and had sold it to pay off the debts which had been made by my father, who had the costly tastes of an antiquarian and collector. The residue on the sale insured me a modest independence apart from the profits of a profession, and as I had not been legally bound to defray my father's debts, so I obtained that character for disinterestedness and integrity which always in England tends to propitiate the public to the successes achieved by industry or talent. Perhaps,

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

too, any professional ability I might possess was the more readily conceded, because I had cultivated with assiduity the sciences and the scholarship which are collaterally connected with the study of medicine. Thus, in a word, I established a social position which came in aid of my professional repute, and silenced much of that envy which usually imbitters and sometimes impedes success.

Dr. Faber retired at the end of the two years agreed upon. He went abroad, and being, though advanced in years, of a frame still robust, and habits of mind still inquiring and eager, he commenced a lengthened course of foreign travel, during which our correspondence, at first frequent, gradually languished, and finally died away.

I succeeded at once to the larger part of the practice which the labors of thirty years had secured to my predecessor. My chief rival was a Dr. Lloyd, a benevolent, fervid man, not without genius — if genius be present where judgment is absent; not without science, if that may be science which fails in precision. One of those clever desultory men who, in adopting a profession, do not give up to it the whole force and heat of their minds. Men of that kind habitually accept a mechanical routine, because in the exercise of their ostensible calling their imaginative faculties are drawn away to pursuits more alluring. Therefore, in their proper vocation they are seldom bold or inventive — out of it they are sometimes both to excess. And when they do take up a novelty in their own profession they cherish it with an obstinate tenacity, and an extravagant passion, unknown to those quiet philosophers who take up novelties every day, examine them with the sobriety of practised eyes, to lay down altogether, modify in part, or accept in whole, according as inductive experiment supports or destroys conjecture.

Dr. Lloyd had been esteemed a learned naturalist long before he was admitted to be a tolerable physician. Amidst the privations of his youth he had contrived to form, and with each succeeding year he had perseveringly increased, a zoölogical collection of creatures, not alive, but, happily for the beholder, stuffed or embalmed. From what I have said it will be truly inferred that Dr. Lloyd's earlier career as a physician had not been brilliant; but of late years he had gradually rather *aged* than worked himself into that professional authority and station which time confers on a thoroughly respectable man, whom no one is disposed to envy and all are disposed to like.

Now in L—— there were two distinct social circles: that of the wealthy merchants and traders, and that of a few privileged families, inhabiting a part of the town aloof from the marts of commerce, and called the Abbey Hill. These superb Areopagites exercised over the wives and daughters of the inferior citizens to whom all of L——, except the Abbey Hill, owed

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

its prosperity, the same kind of mysterious influence which the fine ladies of Mayfair and Belgravia are reported to hold over the female denizens of Bloomsbury and Marylebone.

Abbey Hill was not opulent, but it was powerful by a concentration of its resources in all matters of patronage. Abbey Hill had its own milliner, and its own draper, its own confectioner, butcher, baker, and tea-dealer, and the patronage of Abbey Hill was like the patronage of royalty — less lucrative in itself than as a solemn certificate of general merit. The shops on which Abbey Hill conferred its custom were certainly not the cheapest, possibly not the best. But they were undeniably the most imposing. The proprietors were decorously pompous — the shopmen superciliously polite. They could not be more so if they had belonged to the State, and been paid by a public which they benefited and despised. The ladies of Low Town (as the city subjacent to the Hill had been styled from a date remote in the feudal ages) entered those shops with a certain awe, and left them with a certain pride. There they had learned what the Hill approved. There they had bought what the Hill had purchased. It is much in this life to be quite sure that we are in the right, whatever that conviction may cost us. Abbey Hill had been in the habit of appointing, among other objects of patronage, its own physician. But that habit had fallen into disuse during the latter years of my predecessor's practice. His superiority over all other medical men in the town had become so incontestible that, though he was emphatically the doctor of Low Town, the head of its hospitals and infirmaries, and by birth related to its principal traders, still as Abbey Hill was occasionally subject to the physical infirmities of meaner mortals, so on those occasions it deemed it best not to push the point of honor to the wanton sacrifice of life. Since Low Town possessed one of the most famous physicians in England, Abbey Hill magnanimously resolved not to crush him by a rival. Abbey Hill let him feel its pulse.

When my predecessor retired I had presumptuously expected that the Hill would have continued to suspend its normal right to a special physician, and shown to me the same generous favor it had shown to him, who had declared me worthy to succeed to his honors. I had the more excuse for this presumption because the Hill had already allowed me to visit a fair proportion of its invalids, had said some very gracious things to me about the great respectability of the Fenwick family, and sent me some invitations to dinner, and a great many invitations to tea.

But my self-conceit received a notable check. Abbey Hill declared that the time had come to reassert its dormant privilege — it must have a doctor of its own choosing — a doctor who might, indeed, be permitted to visit Low Town from motives of humanity or gain, but who must emphat-

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

ically assert his special allegiance to Abbey Hill by fixing his home on that venerable promontory. Miss Brabazon, a spinster of uncertain age, but undoubted pedigree, with small fortune, but high nose, which she would pleasantly observe was a proof of her descent from Humphrey Duke of Gloucester (with whom, indeed, I have no doubt, in spite of chronology, that she very often dined), was commissioned to inquire of me diplomatically, and without committing Abbey Hill too much by overture, whether I would take a large and antiquated mansion, in which abbots were said to have lived many centuries ago, and which was still popularly styled Abbots' House, situated on the verge of the Hill, as in that case the "Hill" would think of me.

"It is a large house for a single man, I allow," said Miss Brabazon, candidly; and then added, with a sidelong glance of alarming sweetness, "but when Dr. Fenwick has taken his true position (so old a family!) among Us, he need not long remain single unless he prefer it."

I replied, with more asperity than the occasion called for, that I had no thought of changing my residence at present. And if the Hill wanted me, the Hill must send for me.

Two days afterward Dr. Lloyd took Abbots' House, and in less than a week was proclaimed medical adviser to the Hill. The election had been decided by the fiat of a great lady, who reigned supreme on the sacred eminence, under the name and title of Mrs. Colonel Poyntz.

"Dr. Fenwick," said this lady, "is a clever young man and a gentleman, but he gives himself airs — the Hill does not allow any airs but its own. Besides, he is a new-comer: resistance to new-comers, and, indeed, to all things new, except caps and novels, is one of the bonds that keep old established societies together. Accordingly, it is by my advice that Dr. Lloyd has taken Abbots' House; the rent would be too high for his means if the Hill did not feel bound in honor to justify the trust he has placed in its patronage. I told him that all my friends, when they had any thing the matter with them, would send for him; those who are my friends will do so. What the Hill does, plenty of common people down *there* will do also — so that question is settled!" And it was settled.

Dr. Lloyd, thus taken by the hand, soon extended the range of his visits beyond the Hill, which was not precisely a mountain of gold to doctors, and shared with myself, though in a comparatively small degree, the much more lucrative practice of Low Town.

I had no cause to grudge his success, nor did I. But to my theories of medicine his diagnosis was shallow, and his prescriptions obsolete. When we were summoned to a joint consultation, our views as to the proper course of treatment seldom agreed. Doubtless he thought I ought to have deferred to his seniority in years, but I held the doctrine which youth

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

deems a truth and age a paradox, namely, that in science the young men are the practical elders, inasmuch as they are schooled in the latest experiences science has gathered up, while their seniors are cramped by the dogmas they were schooled to believe when the world was some decades the younger.

Meanwhile my reputation continued rapidly to advance; it became more than local; my advice was sought even by patients from the metropolis. That ambition which, conceived in early youth, had decided my career and sweetened all its labors — the ambition to take a rank and leave a name as one of the great pathologists to whom humanity accords a grateful, if calm, renown — saw before it a level field and a certain goal.

I know not whether a success far beyond that usually attained at the age I had reached served to increase, but it seemed to myself to justify the main characteristic of my moral organization — intellectual pride.

Though mild and gentle to the sufferers under my care, as a necessary element of professional duty, I was intolerant of contradiction from those who belonged to my calling, or even from those who, in general opinion, opposed my favorite theories.

I had espoused a school of medical philosophy severely rigid in its inductive logic. My creed was that of stern materialism. I had a contempt for the understanding of men who accepted with credulity what they could not explain by reason. My favorite phrase was "common sense." At the same time I had no prejudice against bold discovery, and discovery necessitates conjecture; but I dismissed as idle all conjecture that could not be brought to a practical test.

As in medicine I had been the pupil of Broussais, so in metaphysics I was the disciple of Condillac. I believed with that philosopher that "all our knowledge we owe to Nature; that in the beginning we can only instruct ourselves through her lessons, and that the whole art of reasoning consists in continuing as she has compelled us to commence." Keeping natural philosophy apart from the doctrines of revelation, I never assailed the last, but I contended that by the first no accurate reasoner could arrive at the existence of the soul as a third principle of being equally distinct from mind and body. That by a miracle man might live again, was a question of faith and not of understanding. I left faith to religion, and banished it from philosophy. How define with a precision to satisfy the logic of philosophy what was to live again? The body? We know that the body rests in its grave till by the process of decomposition its elemental parts enter into other forms of matter. The mind? But the mind was as clearly the result of the bodily organization as the music of the harpsichord is the result of the instrumental mechanism. The mind

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

shared the decrepitude of the body in extreme old age, and in the full vigor of youth a sudden injury to the brain might forever destroy the intellect of a Plato or a Shakspeare. But the third principle — the soul — the something lodged within the body, which yet was to survive it? Where was that soul hid out of the ken of the anatomist? When philosophers attempted to define it, were they not compelled to confound its nature and its actions with those of the mind? Could they reduce it to the mere moral sense, varying according to education, circumstances, and physical constitution? But even the moral sense in the most virtuous of men may be swept away by a fever. Such at the time I now speak of were the views I held. Views certainly not original nor pleasing; but I cherished them with as fond a tenacity as if they had been consolatory truths of which I was the first discoverer. I was intolerant to those who maintained opposite doctrines — despised them as irrational, or disliked them as insincere. Certainly if I had fulfilled the career which my ambition predicted — become the founder of a new school in pathology, and summed up my theories in academical lectures, I should have added another authority, however feeble, to the sects which circumscribe the interests of man to the life which has its close in his grave.

Possibly that which I have called my intellectual pride was more nourished than I should have been willing to grant by that self-reliance which an unusual degree of physical power is apt to bestow. Nature had blessed me with the thews of an athlete. Among the hardy youths of the Northern Athens I had been preëminently distinguished for feats of activity and strength. My mental labors and the anxiety which is inseparable from the conscientious responsibilities of the medical profession, kept my health below the par of keen enjoyment, but had in no way diminished my rare muscular force. I walked through the crowd with the firm step and lofty crest of the mailed knight of old, who felt himself, in his casement of iron, a match against numbers. Thus the sense of a robust individuality, strong alike in disciplined reason and animal vigor — habituated to aid others, needing no aid for itself — contributed to render me imperious in will and arrogant in opinion. Nor were such defects injurious to me in my profession; on the contrary, aided as they were by a calm manner, and a presence not without that kind of dignity which is the livery of self-esteem, they served to impose respect and to inspire trust.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER II.

I HAD been about six years at L——, when I became suddenly involved in a controversy with Dr. Lloyd. Just as this ill-fated man appeared at the culminating point of his professional fortunes, he had the imprudence to proclaim himself not only an enthusiastic advocate of mesmerism, as a curative process, but an ardent believer of the reality of somnambular clairvoyance as an invaluable gift of certain privileged organizations. To these doctrines I sternly opposed myself—the more sternly, perhaps, because on these doctrines Dr. Lloyd founded an argument for the existence of soul, independent of mind, as of matter, and built thereon a superstructure of physiological phantasies, which, could it be substantiated, would replace every system of metaphysics on which recognized philosophy condescends to dispute.

About two years before he became a disciple rather of Puysegur than Mesmer (for Mesmer had little faith in that gift of clairvoyance of which Puysegur was, I believe, the first audacious assertor), Dr. Lloyd had been afflicted with the loss of a wife many years younger than himself, and to whom he had been tenderly attached. And this bereavement, in directing the hopes that consoled him to a world beyond the grave, had served perhaps to render him more credulous of the phenomena in which he greeted additional proofs of purely spiritual existence. Certainly, if, in controverting the notions of another physiologist, I had restricted myself to that fair antagonism which belongs to scientific disputants anxious only for the truth, I should need no apology for sincere conviction and honest argument; but when, with condescending good-nature, as if to a man much younger than himself, who was ignorant of the phenomena which he nevertheless denied, Dr. Lloyd invited me to attend his *séances* and witness his cures, my *amour propre* became roused and nettled, and it seemed to me necessary to put down what I asserted to be too gross an outrage on common sense to justify the ceremony of examination. I wrote, therefore, a small pamphlet on the subject, in which I exhausted all the weapons that irony can lend to contempt. Dr. Lloyd replied, and as he was no very skilful arguer, his reply injured him perhaps more than my assault. Meanwhile, I had made some inquiries as to the moral character of his favorite clairvoyants. I imagined that I had learned enough to justify me in treating them as flagrant cheats, and himself as their egregious dupe.

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Low Town soon ranged itself, with very few exceptions, on my side. The Hill at first seemed disposed to rally round its insulted physician, and to make the dispute a party question, in which the Hill would have been signally worsted, when suddenly the same lady paramount, who had secured to Dr. Lloyd the smile of the Eminence, spoke forth against him, and the Eminence frowned.

"Dr. Lloyd," said the Queen of the Hill, "is an amiable creature, but on this subject decidedly cracked. Cracked poets may be all the better for being cracked; cracked doctors are dangerous. Besides, in deserting that old-fashioned routine, his adherence to which made his claim to the Hill's approbation; and unsettling the mind of the Hill with wild revolutionary theories, Dr. Lloyd has betrayed the principles on which the Hill itself rests its social foundations. Of those principles Dr. Fenwick has made himself champion; and the Hill is bound to support him. There, the question is settled!"

And it was settled.

From the moment Mrs. Colonel Poyntz thus issued the word of command, Dr. Lloyd was demolished. His practice was gone, as well as his repute. Mortification or anger brought on a stroke of paralysis, which, disabling my opponent, put an end to our controversy. An obscure Dr. Jones, who had been the special pupil and protégé of Dr. Lloyd, offered himself as a candidate for the Hill's tongues and pulses. The Hill gave him little encouragement. It once more suspended its electoral privileges, and, without insisting on calling me up to it, it quietly called me in whenever its health needed other advice than that of its visiting apothecary. Again it invited me, sometimes to dinner, often to tea. And again Miss Brabazon assured me by a sidelong glance that it was no fault of hers if I were still single.

I had almost forgotten the dispute which had obtained for me so conspicuous a triumph, when one winter's night I was roused from sleep by a summons to attend Dr. Lloyd, who, attacked by a second stroke a few hours previously, had, on recovering sense, expressed a vehement desire to consult the rival by whom he had suffered so severely. I dressed myself in haste and hurried to his house.

A February night, sharp and bitter. An iron-gray frost below — a spectral melancholy moon above. I had to ascend the Abbey Hill by a steep, blind lane between high walls. I passed through stately gates, which stood wide open, into the garden ground that surrounded the old Abbots' House. At the end of a short carriage-drive the dark and gloomy building cleared itself from leafless skeleton trees, the moon resting keen and cold on its abrupt gables and lofty chimney-stacks. An old woman servant received me at the door, and, without saying a word, led me

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

through a long low hall, and up dreary oak stairs, to a broad landing, at which she paused for a moment, listening. Round and about hall, staircase, and landing, were ranged the dead specimens of the savage world which it had been the pride of the naturalist's life to collect. Close where I stood yawned the open jaws of the fell anaconda — its lower coils hid, as they rested on the floor below, by the winding of the massive stairs. Against the dull wainscot walls were pendant cases stored with grotesque unfamiliar mummies, seen imperfectly by the moon that shot through the window-panes, and the candle in the old woman's hand. And as now she turned toward me, nodding her signal to follow, and went on up the shadowy passage, rows of gigantic birds — ibis and vulture, and huge sea glaucus — glared at me in the false life of their angry eyes.

So I entered the sick-room, and the first glance told me that my art was powerless there.

The children of the stricken widower were grouped round his bed, the the eldest apparently about fifteen, the youngest four; one little girl — the only female child — was clinging to her father's neck, her face pressed to his bosom, and in that room her sobs alone were loud.

As I passed the threshold Dr. Lloyd lifted his face, which had been bent over the weeping child, and gazed on me with an aspect of strange glee, which I failed to interpret. Then, as I stole toward him softly and slowly, he pressed his lips on the long fair tresses that streamed wild over his breast, motioned to a nurse who stood beside his pillow to take the child away, and, in a voice clearer than I could have expected in one on whose brow lay the unmistakable hand of death, he bade the nurse and the children quit the room. All went sorrowfully, but silently, save the little girl, who, borne off in the nurse's arms, continued to sob as if her heart were breaking.

I was not prepared for a scene so affecting; it moved me to the quick. My eyes wistfully followed the children, so soon to be orphans, as one after one went out into the dark chill shadow, and amidst the bloodless forms of the dumb brute nature, ranged in grisly vista beyond the death-room of man. And when the last infant shape had vanished, and the door closed with a jarring click, my sight wandered loiteringly around the chamber before I could bring myself to fix it on the broken form, beside which I now stood in all that glorious vigor of frame which had fostered the pride of my mind.

In the moment consumed by my mournful survey the whole aspect of the place impressed itself ineffaceably on life-long remembrance. Through the high, deep-sunken casement, across which the thin, faded curtain was but half-drawn, the moonlight rushed, and then settled on the floor in one shroud of white glimmer, lost under the gloom of the death-bed. The

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

roof was low, and seemed lower still by heavy intersecting beams, which I might have touched with my lifted hand. And the tall, guttering candle by the bed-side, and the flicker from the fire struggling out through the fuel but newly heaped on it, threw their reflection on the ceiling just over my head in a reek of quivering blackness, like an angry cloud.

Suddenly I felt my arm grasped, with his left hand (the right side was already lifeless); the dying man drew me toward him nearer and nearer, till his lips almost touched my ear. And, in a voice now firm, now splitting into gasp and hiss, thus he said:

"I have summoned you to gaze on your own work! You have stricken down my life at the moment when it was most needed by my children, and most serviceable to mankind. Had I lived a few years longer, my children would have entered on manhood, safe from the temptations of want and undejected by the charity of strangers. Thanks to you, they will be penniless orphans. Fellow-creatures afflicted by maladies your pharmacopœia had failed to reach, came to me for relief, and they found it. 'The effect of imagination,' you say. What matters, if I directed the imagination to cure? Now you have mocked the unhappy ones out of their last chance of life. They will suffer and perish. Did you believe me in error? Still you knew that my object was research into truth. You employed against your brother in art venomous drugs and a poisoned probe. Look at me! Are you satisfied with your work?"

I sought to draw back and pluck my arm from the dying man's grasp. I could not do so without using a force that would have been inhuman. His lips drew nearer still to my ear.

"Vain pretender, do not boast that you brought a genius for epigram to the service of science. Science is lenient to all who offer experiment as the test of conjecture. You are of the stuff of which inquisitors are made. You cry that truth is profaned when your dogmas are questioned. In your shallow presumption you have meted the dominions of nature, and where your eye halts its vision, you say, 'There, nature must close;' in the bigotry which adds crime to presumption, you would stone the discoverer who, in annexing new realms to her chart, unsettles your arbitrary landmarks. Verily, retribution shall await you. In those spaces which your sight has disdained to explore you shall yourself be a lost and bewildered straggler. Hist! I see them already! The gibbering phantoms are gathering round you!"

The man's voice stopped abruptly; his eye fixed in a glazing stare; his hand relaxed its hold; he fell back on his pillow. I stole from the room; on the landing-place I met the nurse and the old woman servant. Happily the children were not there. But I heard the wail of the female child from some room not far distant.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

I whispered hurriedly to the nurse, "All is over!" — passed again under the jaws of the vast anaconda — and on through the blind lane between the dead walls — on through the ghastly streets, under the ghastly moon — went back to my solitary home.

CHAPTER III.

It was some time before I could shake off the impression made on me by the words and look of that dying man.

It was not that my conscience upbraided me. What had I done? Denounced that which I held, in common with most men of sense in or out of my profession, to be one of those illusions by which quackery draws profit from the wonder of ignorance. Was I to blame if I had refused to treat with the grave respect due to asserted discovery in legitimate science pretensions to powers akin to the fables of wizards? was I to descend from the Academe of decorous science to examine whether a slumbering sibyl could read from a book placed at her back, or tell me at L—— what at that moment was being done by my friend at the Antipodes?

And what though Dr. Lloyd himself might be a worthy and honest man, and a sincere believer in the extravagances for which he demanded an equal credulity in others, do not honest men every day incur the penalty of ridicule if, from a defect of good sense, they make themselves ridiculous? Could I have foreseen that a satire so justly provoked would inflict so deadly a wound? Was I inhumanly barbarous because the antagonist destroyed was morbidly sensitive? My conscience, therefore, made me no reproach, and the public was as little severe as my conscience. The public had been with me in our contest — the public knew nothing of my opponent's death-bed accusations — the public knew only that I had attended him in his last moments — it admired the respect to his memory which I evinced in the simple tomb that I placed over his remains, inscribed with an epitaph that did justice to his incontestable benevolence and integrity: — above all, it saw me walk beside the bier that bore him to his grave — it praised the energy with which I set on foot a subscription for his orphan children, and the generosity with which I headed that subscription by a sum that was large in proportion to my means.

To that sum I did not, indeed, limit my contribution. The sobs of the poor female child rang still on my heart. As her grief had been keener than that of her brothers, so she might be subjected to sharper trials than they, when the time came for her to fight her own way through the world; therefore I secured to her, but with such precautions that the gift

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

could not be traced to my hand, a sum to accumulate till she was of marriageable age, and which then might suffice for a small wedding portion; or, if she remained single, for an income that would place her beyond the temptation of want, or the bitterness of a servile dependence.

That Dr. Lloyd should have died in poverty was a matter of surprise at first, for his profits during the last few years had been considerable, and his mode of life far from extravagant. But just before the date of our controversy he had been induced to assist the brother of his lost wife, who was a junior partner in a London bank, with the loan of his accumulated savings. This man proved dishonest; he embezzled that and other sums intrusted to him, and fled the country. The same sentiment of conjugal affection which had cost Dr. Lloyd his fortune kept him silent as to the cause of the loss. It was reserved for his executors to discover the treachery of the brother-in-law whom he, poor man, would have generously screened from additional disgrace.

The mayor of L——, a wealthy and public-spirited merchant, purchased the museum which Dr. Lloyd's passion for natural history had induced him to form; and the sum thus obtained, together with that raised by subscription, sufficed, not only to discharge all debts due by the deceased, but to insure to the orphans the benefits of an education that might fit at least the boys to enter fairly armed into that game, more of skill than of chance, in which Fortune is really so little blinded that we see, in each turn of her wheel, wealth and its honors pass away from the lax fingers of ignorance and sloth to the resolute grasp of labor and knowledge.

Meanwhile a relation in a distant country undertook the charge of the orphans; they disappeared from the scene, and the tides of life in a commercial community soon flowed over the place which the dead man had occupied in the thoughts of his bustling townsfolk.

One person at L——, and only one, appeared to share and inherit the rancor with which the poor physician had denounced me on his death-bed. It was a gentleman named Vigors, distantly related to the deceased, and who had been, in point of station, the most eminent of Dr. Lloyd's partisans in the controversy with myself; a man of no great scholastic acquirements, but of respectable abilities. He had that kind of power which the world concedes to respectable abilities, when accompanied with a temper more than usually stern, and a moral character more than usually austere. His ruling passion was to sit in judgment upon others; and, being a magistrate, he was the most active and the most rigid of all the magistrates L—— had ever known.

Mr. Vigors at first spoke of me with great bitterness, as having ruined, and in fact killed, his friend by the uncharitable and unfair acerbity which he declared I had brought into what ought to have been an un-

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

prejudiced examination of a simple matter of fact. But finding no sympathy in these charges, he had the discretion to cease from making them, contenting himself with a solemn shake of his head if he heard my name mentioned in terms of praise, and an oracular sentence or two, such as, "Time will show;" "All's well that ends well," etc. Mr. Vigors, however, mixed very little in the more convivial intercourse of the townspeople. He called himself domestic; but, in truth, he was ungenial. A stiff man, starched with self-esteem. He thought that his dignity of station was not sufficiently acknowledged by the merchants of Low Town, and his superiority of intellect not sufficiently recognized by the exclusives of the Hill. His visits were, therefore, chiefly confined to the houses of neighboring squires, to whom his reputation as a magistrate, conjoined with his solemn exterior, made him one of those oracles by which men consent to be awed on condition that the awe is not often inflicted. And though he opened his house three times a week, it was only to a select few, whom he first fed and then biologized. Electro-biology was very naturally the special entertainment of a man whom no intercourse ever pleased in which his will was not imposed upon others. Therefore he only invited to his table persons whom he could stare into the abnegation of their senses, willing to say that beef was lamb, or brandy was coffee, according as he willed them to say. And, no doubt, the persons asked would have said any thing he willed so long as they had, in substance as well as in idea, the beef and the brandy, the lamb and the coffee. I did not, then, often meet Mr. Vigors at the houses in which I occasionally spent my evenings. I heard of his enmity as a man safe in his home hears the sough of a wind on the common without. If now and then we chanced to pass in the streets, he looked up at me (he was a small man walking on tip-toe) with the sullen scowl of dislike. And from the height of my stature I dropped upon the small man and sullen scowl the affable smile of supreme indifference.

CHAPTER IV.

I HAD now arrived at that age when an ambitious man, satisfied with his progress in the world without, begins to feel, in the cravings of unsatisfied affection, the void of a solitary hearth. I resolved to marry, and looked out for a wife. I had never hitherto admitted into my life the passion of love. In fact, I had regarded that passion, even in my earlier youth, with a certain superb contempt — as a malady engendered by an effeminate idleness, and fostered by a sickly imagination.

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

I wished to find in a wife a rational companion, an affectionate and trust-worthy friend. No views of matrimony could be less romantic, more soberly sensible, than those which I conceived. Nor were my requirements mercenary or presumptuous. I cared not for fortune; I asked nothing from connections. My ambition was exclusively professional; it could be served by no titled kindred, accelerated by no wealthy dower. I was no slave to beauty. I did not seek in a wife the accomplishments of a finishing school-teacher.

Having decided that the time had come to select my helpmate, I imagined that I should find no difficulty in a choice that my reason would approve. But day upon day, week upon week passed away, and though among the families I visited there were many young ladies who possessed more than the qualifications with which I conceived that I should be amply contented, and by whom I might flatter myself that my proposals would not be disdained, I saw not one to whose life-long companionship I should not infinitely have preferred the solitude I found so irksome.

One evening, in returning home from visiting a poor female patient whom I attended gratuitously, and whose case demanded more thought than that of any other in my list — for though it had been considered hopeless in the hospital, and she had come home to die, I felt certain that I could save her, and she seemed recovering under my care — one evening, it was the 12th of May, I found myself just before the gates of the house that had been inhabited by Dr. Lloyd. Since his death the house had been unoccupied; the rent asked for it by the proprietor was considered high; and from the sacred Hill on which it was situated shyness or pride banished the wealthier traders. The garden gates stood wide open, as they had stood in the winter night on which I had passed through them to the chamber of death. The remembrance of that death-bed came vividly before me, and the dying man's fantastic threat rang again in my startled ears. An irresistible impulse, which I could not then account for, and which I cannot account for now — an impulse the reverse of that which usually makes us turn away with quickened step from a spot that recalls associations of pain — urged me on through the open gates, up the neglected, grass-grown road; urged me to look, under the westering sun of the joyous spring, at that house which I had never seen but in the gloom of a winter night, under the melancholy moon. As the building came in sight, with dark red bricks, partially overgrown with ivy, I perceived that it was no longer unoccupied. I saw forms passing athwart the open windows; a van laden with articles of furniture stood before the door; a servant in livery was beside it giving directions to the men who were unloading. Evidently some family was just entering into possession. I felt somewhat ashamed of my trespass and turned round

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

quickly to retrace my steps. I had retreated but a few yards when I saw before me, at the entrance gates, Mr. Vigors, walking beside a lady apparently of middle age; while just at hand a path cut through the shrubs gave a view of a small wicket-gate at the end of the grounds. I felt unwilling not only to meet the lady, whom I guessed to be the new occupier, and to whom I should have to make a somewhat awkward apology for intrusion, but still more to encounter the scornful look of Mr. Vigors, in what appeared to my pride a false or undignified position. Involuntarily, therefore, I turned down the path which would favor my escape unobserved. When about half way between the house and the wicket-gate the shrubs that had clothed the path on either side suddenly opened to the left, bringing into view a circle of sward, surrounded by irregular fragments of old brick-work, partially covered with ferns, creepers, or rock-plants, weeds, or wild-flowers, and in the centre of the circle a fountain, or rather water-cistern, over which was built a Gothic monastic dome, or canopy, resting on small Norman columns, time-worn, dilapidated. A large willow overhung this unmistakable relic of the ancient abbey. There was an air of antiquity, romance, legend about this spot, so abruptly disclosed amidst the delicate green of the young shrubberies. But it was not the ruined wall nor the Gothic well that chained my footstep and charmed my eye.

It was a solitary human form — seated there amidst the mournful ruins. The form was so slight, the face so young, that at the first glance I murmured to myself, "What a lovely child!" But as my eye lingered, it recognized in the upturned, thoughtful brow, in the sweet, serious aspect, in the rounded outlines of that slender shape, the inexpressible dignity of virgin woman.

A book was on her lap, at her feet a little basket, half filled with violets and blossoms culled from the rock plants that nestled amidst the ruins. Behind her, the willow, like an emerald waterfall, showered down its arching abundant green, bough after bough, from the tree-top to the sward, descending in wavy verdure, bright toward the summit, in the smile of the setting sun, and darkening into shadow as it neared the earth.

She did not notice, she did not see me; her eyes were fixed upon the horizon, where it sloped furthest into space, above the tree-tops and the ruins — fixed so intently that mechanically I turned my own gaze to follow the flight of hers. It was as if she watched for some expected familiar sign to grow out from the depths of heaven; perhaps to greet, before other eyes beheld it, the ray of the earliest star.

The birds dropped from the boughs on the turf around her, so fearlessly that one alighted amidst the flowers in the little basket at her feet. There is a famous German poem, which I had read in my youth,

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

called "The Maiden from Abroad," variously supposed to be an allegory of Spring, or of Poetry, according to the choice of commentators; it seemed to me as if the poem had been made for her. Verily, indeed, in her poet or painter might have seen an image equally true to either of those adorners of the earth; both outwardly a delight to sense, yet both wakening up thoughts within us, not sad, but akin to sadness.

I heard now a step behind me, and a voice which I recognized to be that of Mr. Vigors. I broke from the charm by which I had been so lingeringly spell-bound, hurried on confusedly, gained the wicket-gate from which a short flight of stairs descended into the common thoroughfare. And there the everyday life lay again before me. On the opposite side houses, shops, church-spires; a few steps more, and the bustling streets! How immeasurably far from, yet how familiarly near to the world in which we move and have being is that fairy land of romance which opens out from the hard earth before us, when Love steals at first to our side, fading back into the hard earth again as Love smiles or sighs its farewell!

CHAPTER V.

And before that evening I had looked on Mr. Vigors with supreme indifference — what importance he now assumed in my eyes! The lady with whom I had seen him was doubtless the new tenant of that house in which the young creature by whom my heart was so strangely moved evidently had her home. Most probably the relation between the two ladies was that of mother and daughter. Mr. Vigors, the friend of one, might himself be related to both — might prejudice them against me — might — here, starting up, I snapped the thread of conjecture, for right before my eyes, on the table beside which I had seated myself on entering the room, lay a card of invitation:

Mrs. Poyntz.
At Home,
Wednesday, May 15.
Early.

Mrs. Poyntz — Mrs. Colonel Poyntz! the Queen of the Hill. There, at her house, I could not fail to learn all about the new-comers, who could never without her sanction have settled on her domain.

I hastily changed my dress, and, with beating heart, wound my way up the venerable eminence.

I did not pass through the lane which led direct to Abbots' House (for that old building stood solitary amidst its grounds, a little apart from the

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

spacious platform on which the society of the Hill was concentred), but up the broad causeway, with vistaed gas-lamps; the gayer shops still unclosed, the tide of busy life only slowly ebbing from the still animated street, on to a square, in which the four main thoroughfares of the city converged, and which formed the boundary of Low Town. A huge dark archway, popularly called Monk's Gate, at the angle of this square, made the entrance to Abbey Hill. When the arch was passed, one felt at once that one was in the town of a former day. The pavement was narrow and rugged; the shops small, their upper stories projecting, with here and there, plastered fronts, quaintly arabesqued. An ascent, short, but steep and tortuous, conducted at once to the old Abbey Church, nobly situated in a vast quadrangle, round which were the genteel and gloomy dwellings of the Areopagites of the Hill. More genteel and less gloomy than the rest — lights at the windows and flowers on the balcony — stood forth, flanked by a garden wall at either side, the mansion of Mrs. Colonel Poyntz.

As I entered the drawing-room I heard the voice of the hostess; it was a voice clear, decided, metallic, bell-like, uttering these words: "Taken Abbots' House? I will tell you."

CHAPTER VI.

Mrs. Poyntz was seated on the sofa; at her right sat fat Mrs. Bruce, who was a Scotch lord's grand-daughter; at her left thin Miss Brabazon, who was an Irish baronet's niece. Around her — a few seated, many standing — had grouped all the guests, save two old gentlemen, who remained aloof with Colonel Poyntz near the whist-table, waiting for the fourth old gentleman, who was to make up the rubber, but who was at that moment spell-bound in the magic circle, which curiosity, that strongest of social demons, had attracted round the hostess.

"Taken Abbots' House? I will tell you. Ah, Dr. Fenwick! charmed to see you. You know Abbots' House is let at last? Well, Miss Brabazon, dear, you ask who has taken it. I will tell you — a particular friend of mine."

"Indeed! Dear me!" said Miss Brabazon, looking confused. "I hope I did not say any thing to —"

"Wound my feelings. Not in the least. You said your uncle, Sir Phelim, had a coach-maker named Ashleigh, that Ashleigh was an uncommon name, though Ashley was a common one; you intimated an appalling suspicion that the Mrs. Ashleigh who had come to the Hill was the

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

coach-maker's widow. I relieve your mind — she is not; she is the widow of Gilbert Ashleigh, of Kirby Hall."

"Gilbert Ashleigh," said one of the guests, a bachelor, whose parents had reared him for the church, but who, like poor Goldsmith, did not think himself good enough for it — a mistake of over-modesty, for he matured into a very harmless creature. "Gilbert Ashleigh. I was at Oxford with him — a gentleman commoner of Christ Church. Good-looking man — very: *sapped* —"

"Sapped! what's that? Oh, studied. That he did all his life. He married young — Anne Chaloner; she and I were girls together: married the same year. They settled at Kirby Hall — nice place, but dull. Poyntz and I spent a Christmas there. Ashleigh when he talked was charming, but he talked very little. Anne, when she talked, was common-place, and she talked very much. Naturally, poor thing, she was so happy. Poyntz and I did not spend another Christmas there. Friendship is long, but life is short. Gilbert Ashleigh's life was short indeed; he died in the fifth year of his marriage, leaving only one child, a girl. Since then, though I never spent another Christmas at Kirby Hall, I have frequently spent a day there, doing my best to cheer up Anne. She was no longer talkative, poor dear. Wrapt up in her child, who has now grown into a beautiful girl of eighteen — such eyes, her father's — the real dark blue — rare; sweet creature, but delicate; not, I hope, consumptive, but delicate; quiet — wants life. My girl Jane adores her. Jane has life enough for two."

"Is Miss Ashleigh the heiress to Kirby Hall?" asked Mrs. Bruce, who had an unmarried son.

"No. Kirby Hall passed to Ashleigh Sumner, the male heir, a cousin. And the luckiest of cousins! Gilbert's sister, showy woman (indeed, all show), had contrived to marry her kinsman, Sir Walter Ashleigh Haughton, the head of the Ashleigh family, — just the man made to be the reflector of a showy woman! He died years ago, leaving an only son, Sir James, who was killed last winter by a fall from his horse. And here, again, Ashleigh Sumner proved to be the male heir at law. During the minority of this fortunate youth, Mrs. Ashleigh had rented Kirby Hall of his guardian. He is now just coming of age, and that is why she leaves. Lilian Ashleigh will have, however, a very good fortune — is what we genteel paupers call an heiress. Is there any thing more you want to know?"

Said thin Miss Brabazon, who took advantage of her thinness to wedge herself into every one's affairs, "A most interesting account. But what brings Mrs. Ashleigh here?"

Answered Mrs. Colonel Poyntz, with the military frankness by which she kept her company in good-humor, as well as awe:

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Why do any of us come here? Can any one tell me?"

There was a blank silence, which the hostess herself was the first to break.

"None of us present can say why we came here. I can tell you why Mrs. Ashleigh came. Our neighbor Mr. Vigors is a distant connection of the late Gilbert Ashleigh, one of the executors of his will, and the guardian to the heir-at-law. About ten days ago Mr. Vigors called on me, for the first time since I felt it my duty to express my opinion about the strange vagaries of our poor dear friend, Dr. Lloyd. And when he had taken his chair, just where you now sit, Dr. Fenwick, he said, in a sepulchral voice, stretching out two fingers, so, as if I were one of the what-do-you-call-'ems who go to sleep when he bids them, 'marm, you know Mrs. Ashleigh? You correspond with her.' 'Yes, Mr. Vigors; is there any crime in that? You look as if there were.' 'No crime, marm,' said the man, quite seriously. 'Mrs. Ashleigh is a lady of amiable temper, and you are a woman of masculine understanding.'"

Here there was a general titter. Mrs. Colonel Poyntz hushed it with a look of severe surprise. "What is there to laugh at? All women would be men if they could. If my understanding is masculine, so much the better for me. I thanked Mr. Vigors for his very handsome compliment, and he then went on to say, 'that though Mrs. Ashleigh would now have to leave Kirby Hall in a very few weeks, she seemed quite unable to make up her mind where to go; that it had occurred to him that, as Miss Ashleigh was now of an age to see a little of the world, she ought not to remain buried in the country; while, being of quiet mind, she recoiled from the dissipation of London. Between the seclusion of the one and the turmoil of the other, the society of L—— was a happy medium. He should be glad of my opinion. He had put off asking for it, because he owned his belief that I had behaved unkindly to his lamented friend, Dr. Lloyd; but he now found himself in rather an awkward position. His ward, young Ashleigh Sumner, had prudently resolved on fixing his country residence at Kirby Hall, rather than at Haughton Park, the much larger seat, which had so suddenly passed to his inheritance, and which he could not occupy without a vast establishment, that to a single man, so young, would be but a cumbersome and costly trouble. Mr. Vigors was pledged to his ward to obtain him possession of Kirby Hall the precise day agreed upon, but Mrs. Ashleigh did not seem disposed to stir—could not decide where else to go. Mr. Vigors was loth to press hard on his old friend's widow and child. It was a thousand pities Mrs. Ashleigh could not make up her mind; she had had ample time for preparation. A word from me, at this moment, would be an effective kindness. Abbots' House was vacant, with a garden so extensive that the ladies would not miss the country. Another party was after it, but—' 'Say no more,' I cried;

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

'no party but my dear old friend, Anne Ashleigh, shall have Abbots' House. So that question is settled.' I dismissed Mr. Vigors, sent for my carriage — that is, for Mr. Barker's yellow fly and his best horses — and drove that very day to Kirby Hall, which, though not in this county, is only twenty-five miles distant. I slept there that night. By nine o'clock the next morning I had secured Mrs. Ashleigh's consent, on the promise to save her all trouble, came back, sent for the landlord, settled the rent, lease, agreement; engaged Forbes' vans to remove the furniture from Kirby Hall, told Forbes to begin with the beds. When her own bed came, which was last night, Anne Ashleigh came too. I have seen her this morning. She likes the place, so does Lilian. I asked them to meet you all here to-night; but Mrs. Ashleigh was tired. The last of the furniture was to arrive to-day; and though dear Mrs. Ashleigh is an undecided character, she is not inactive. But it is not only the planning where to put tables and chairs that would have tired her to-day; she has had Mr. Vigors on her hands all the afternoon, and he has been — here's her little note — what are the words? no doubt, 'most overpowering and oppressive' — no, 'most kind and attentive' — different words, but, as applied to Mr. Vigors, they mean the same thing."

"And now next Monday — we must leave them in peace till then — you will all call on the Ashleighs. The Hill knows what is due to itself; it cannot delegate to Mr. Vigors, a respectable man indeed, but who does not belong to its set, its own proper course of action towards those who would shelter themselves on its bosom. The Hill cannot be kind and attentive, overpowering or oppressive, by proxy. To those new born into its family circle it cannot be an indifferent godmother; it has toward them all the feelings of a mother, or of a step-mother, as the case may be. Where it says, 'This can be no child of mine,' it is a step-mother indeed; but, in all those whom I have presented to its arms, it has hitherto, I am proud to say, recognized desirable acquaintances, and to them the Hill has been a Mother. And now, my dear Mr. Sloman, go to your rubber; Poyntz is impatient, though he don't show it. Miss Brabazon, love, oblige us at the piano; something gay, but not very noisy — Mr. Leopold Smythe will turn the leaves for you. Mrs. Bruce, your own favorite set at vingt-un, with four new recruits. Dr. Fenwick, you are like me, don't play cards, and don't care for music: sit here, and talk or not, as you please, while I knit."

The other guests thus disposed of, some at the card-tables, some round the piano, I placed myself at Mrs. Poyntz's side, on a seat niched in the recess of a window, which an evening unusually warm for the month of May permitted to be left open. I was next to one who had known Lilian as a child, one from whom I had learned by what sweet name to call the image which my thoughts had already shrined. How much that I still

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

longed to know she could tell me! But in what form of question could *I* lead to the subject, yet not betray my absorbing interest in it? Longing to speak, I felt as if stricken dumb; stealing an unquiet glance toward the face beside me, and deeply impressed with that truth which the Hill had long ago reverently acknowledged, that Mrs. Colonel Poyntz was a very superior woman — a very powerful creature.

And there she sat knitting — rapidly, firmly: a woman somewhat on the other side of forty, complexion a bronzed paleness, hair a bronzed brown, in strong ringlets, cropped short behind — handsome hair for a man; lips that, when closed, showed inflexible decision, when speaking, became supple and flexile with an easy humor and a vigilant finesse; eyes of a red hazel, quick but steady; observant, piercing, dauntless eyes; altogether a fine countenance — would have been a very fine countenance in a man; profile sharp, straight, clear-cut, with an expression, when in repose, like that of a sphinx; a frame robust, not corpulent, of middle height, but with an air and carriage that made her appear tall; peculiarly white firm hands, indicative of vigorous health, not a vein visible on the surface.

There she sat knitting, knitting, and I by her side, gazing now on herself, now on her work, with a vague idea that the threads in the skein of my own web of love or of life were passing quick through those noiseless fingers. And, indeed, in every web of romance, the fondest, one of the Parcæ is sure to be some matter-of-fact she, social Destiny, as little akin to romance herself — as was this worldly Queen of the Hill.

CHAPTER VII.

I HAVE given a sketch of the outward woman of Mrs. Colonel Poyntz. The inner woman was a recondite mystery, deep as that of the sphinx, whose features her own resembled. But between the outward and the inward woman there is ever a third woman — the conventional woman — such as the whole human being appears to the world — always mantled, sometimes masked.

I am told that the fine people of London do not recognize the title of "Mrs. Colonel." If that be true, the fine people of London must be clearly in the wrong, for no people in the universe could be finer than the fine people of Abbey Hill; and they considered their sovereign had as good a right to the title of Mrs. Colonel as the Queen of England has

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

to that of "our Gracious Lady." But Mrs. Poyntz herself never assumed the title of Mrs. Colonel; it never appeared on her cards any more than the title of "Gracious Lady" appears on the cards which convey the invitation that a Lord Steward or Lord Chamberlain is commanded by her Majesty to issue. To titles, indeed, Mrs. Poyntz evinced no superstitious reverence. Two peeresses related to her, not distantly, were in the habit of paying her a yearly visit, which lasted two or three days. The Hill considered these visits an honor to its eminence. Mrs. Poyntz never seemed to esteem them an honor to herself; never boasted of them; never sought to show off her grand relations, nor put herself the least out of the way to receive them. Her mode of life was free from ostentation. She had the advantage of being a few hundreds a year richer than any other inhabitant of the Hill; but she did not devote her superior resources to the invidious exhibition of superior splendor. Like a wise sovereign, the revenues of her exchequer were applied to the benefit of her subjects, and not to the vanity of egotistical parade. As no one else on the Hill kept a carriage, she declined to keep one. Her entertainments were simple, but numerous. Twice a week she received the Hill, and was genuinely at home to it. She contrived to make her parties proverbially agreeable. The refreshments were of the same kind as those which the poorest of her old maids of honor might proffer; but they were better of their kind, the best of their kind — the best tea, the best lemonade, the best cakes. Her rooms had an air of comfort which was peculiar to them. They looked like rooms accustomed to receive, and receive in a friendly way; well warmed, well lighted, card-tables and piano in the place that made cards and music inviting. On the walls a few old family portraits, and three or four other pictures, said to be valuable, and certainly pleasing — two Watteau's, a Canaletti, a Weenix — plenty of easy chairs and settees covered with a cheerful chintz. In the arrangement of the furniture generally, an indescribable careless elegance. She herself was studiously plain in dress, more conspicuously free from jewelry and trinkets than any married lady on the Hill. But I have heard from those who were authorities on such a subject, that she was never seen in a dress of the last year's fashion. She adopted the mode as it came out, just enough to show that she was aware it was out; but with a sober reserve, as much as to say, "I adopt the fashion as far as it suits myself; I do not permit the fashion to adopt me." In short, Mrs. Colonel Poyntz was sometimes rough, sometimes coarse, always masculine; and yet, somehow or other, masculine in a womanly way; but she was never vulgar, because never affected. It was impossible not to allow that she was a thorough gentlewoman, and she could do things that lower other gentlewomen without any loss of dignity. Thus she was an admirable

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

mimic, certainly in itself the least lady-like condescension of humor. But when she mimicked, it was with so tranquil a gravity, or so royal a good-humor, that one could only say, "What talents for society dear Mrs. Colonel has!" As she was a gentlewoman emphatically, so the other colonel, the he-colonel, was emphatically a gentleman; rather shy, but not cold; hating trouble of every kind, pleased to seem a cipher in his own house. If the sole study of Mrs Colonel had been to make her husband comfortable, she could not have succeeded better than by bringing friends about him and then taking them off his hands. Colonel Poyntz, the he-colonel, had seen in his youth actual service; but had retired from his profession many years ago, shortly after his marriage. He was a younger brother of one of the principal squires in the county; inherited the house he lived in, with some other valuable property in and about L——, from an uncle; was considered a good landlord; and popular in Low Town, though he never interfered in its affairs. He was punctiliously neat in his dress; a thin youthful figure, crowned with a thick youthful wig. He never seemed to read any thing but the newspapers and the *Meteorological Journal;* was supposed to be the most weather-wise man in all L——. He had another intellectual predilection—whist. But in that he had less reputation for wisdom. Perhaps it requires a rarer combination of mental faculties to win an odd trick than to divine a fall in the glass. For the rest, the he-colonel, many years older than his wife, despite the thin youthful figure, was an admirable aid-de-camp to the general in command, Mrs. Colonel; and she could not have found one more obedient, more devoted, or more proud of a distinguished chief.

In giving to Mrs. Colonel Poyntz the appellation of Queen of the Hill, let there be no mistake. She was not a constitutional sovereign; her monarchy was absolute. All her proclamations had the force of laws.

Such ascendency could not have been attained without considerable talents for acquiring and keeping it. Amidst all her off-hand, brisk, imperious frankness, she had the ineffable discrimination of tact. Whether civil or rude, she was never civil or rude but what she carried public opinion along with her. Her knowledge of general society must have been limited, as must be that of all female sovereigns. But she seemed gifted with an intuitive knowledge of human nature which she applied to her special ambition of ruling it. I have not a doubt that if she had been suddenly transferred, a perfect stranger, to the world of London, she would have soon forced her way to its selectest circles, and, when once there, held her own against a duchess.

I have said that she was not affected; this might be one cause of her

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

sway over a set in which nearly every other female was trying rather to seem, than to be, a somebody.

But if Mrs. Colonel Poyntz was not artificial, she was artful, or perhaps I might more justly say — artistic. In all she said and did there were conduct, system, plan. She could be a most serviceable friend, a most damaging enemy; yet I believe she seldom indulged in strong likings or strong hatreds. All was policy — a policy akin to that of a grand party chief, determined to raise up those whom, for any reason of state, it was prudent to favor, and to put down those whom, for any reason of state, it was expedient to humble or to crush.

Ever since the controversy with Dr. Lloyd this lady had honored me with her benignest countenance. And nothing could be more adroit than the manner in which, while imposing me on others as an oracular authority, she sought to subject to her will the oracle itself.

She was in the habit of addressing me in a sort of motherly way as if she had the deepest interest in my welfare, happiness, and reputation. And thus, in every compliment, in every seeming mark of respect, she maintained the superior dignity of one who takes from responsible station the duty to encourage rising merit: so that, somehow or other, despite all that pride which made me believe that I needed no helping hand to advance or to clear my way through the world, I could not shake off from my mind the impression that I was mysteriously patronized by Mrs. Colonel Poyntz.

We might have sat together five minutes, side by side — in silence as complete as if in the cave of Trophonius — when, without looking up from her work, Mrs. Poyntz said abruptly,

"I am thinking about you, Dr. Fenwick. And you — are thinking about some other woman. Ungrateful man!"

"Unjust accusation! My very silence should prove how intently my thoughts were fixed on you, and on the weird web which springs under your hand in meshes that bewilder the gaze and snare the attention."

Mrs. Poyntz looked up at me for a moment — one rapid glance of the bright red hazel eye — and said,

"Was I really in your thoughts? Answer truly."

"Truly, I answer, you were."

"That is strange! Who can it be?"

"Who can it be! What do you mean?"

"If you were thinking of me, it was in connection with some other person — some other person of my own sex. It is certainly not poor dear Miss Brabazon. Who-else can it be?"

Again the red eye shot over me, and I felt my cheek redden beneath it.

"Hush!" she said, lowering her voice; "you are in love!"

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"In love!—I! Permit me to ask you why you think so?"

"The signs are unmistakable; you are altered in your manner, even in the expression of your face, since I last saw you; your manner is generally quiet and observant, it is now restless and distracted; your expression of face is generally proud and serene, it is now humbled and troubled. You have something on your mind! It is not anxiety for your reputation, that is established; nor for your fortune, that is made; it is not anxiety for a patient, or you would scarcely be here. But anxiety it is, an anxiety that is remote from your profession, that touches your heart and is new to it!"

I was startled, almost awed. But I tried to cover my confusion with a forced laugh.

"Profound observer! Subtle analyst! You have convinced me that I must be in love, though I did not suspect it before. But when I strive to conjecture the object, I am as much perplexed as yourself; and with you, I ask, who can it be!"

"Whoever it be," said Mrs. Poyntz, who had paused, while I spoke, from her knitting, and now resumed it very slowly and very carefully, as if her mind and her knitting worked in unison together. "Whoever it be, love in you would be serious; and, with or without love, marriage is a serious thing to us all. It is not every pretty girl that would suit Allen Fenwick."

"Alas! is there any pretty girl whom Allen Fenwick would suit?"

"Tut! You should be above the fretful vanity that lays traps for a compliment. Yes; the time has come in your life and your career when you would do well to marry. I give my consent to that," she added, with a smile as if in jest, and a slight nod as if in earnest. The knitting here went on more decidedly, more quickly.

"But I do not yet see the person. No! 'Tis a pity, Allen Fenwick" (whenever Mrs. Poyntz called me by my Christian name, she always assumed her majestic motherly manner), "a pity that, with your birth, energies, perseverance, talents, and, let me add, your advantages of manner and person — a pity that you did not choose a career that might achieve higher fortunes and louder fame than the most brilliant success can give to a provincial physician. But in that very choice you interest me. My choice has been much the same. A small circle, but the first in it. Yet, had I been a man, or had my dear colonel been a man whom it was in the power of woman's art to raise one step higher in that metaphorical ladder which is not the ladder of the angels, why, then — what then? No matter! I am contented. I transfer my ambition to Jane. Do you not think her handsome?"

"There can be no doubt of that," said I, carelessly and naturally.

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"I have settled Jane's lot in my own mind," resumed Mrs. Poyntz, striking firm into another row of the knitting. "She will marry a country gentleman of large estate. He will go into Parliament. She will study his advancement as I study Poyntz's comfort. If he be clever, she will help to make him a minister; if he be not clever, his wealth will make her a personage, and lift him into a personage's husband. And, now that you see I have no matrimonial designs on you, Allen Fenwick, think if it be worth while to confide in me. Possibly I may be useful —"

"I know not how to thank you. But, as yet I have nothing to confide."

While thus saying, I turned my eyes toward the open window, beside which I sat. It was a beautiful soft night. The May moon in all her splendor. The town stretched, far and wide, below with all its numberless lights; below — but somewhat distant — an intervening space was covered, here, by the broad quadrangle (in the midst of which stood, massive and lonely, the grand old church); and, there, by the gardens and scattered cottages or mansions that clothed the sides of the hill.

"Is not that house," I said, after a short pause, "yonder, with the three gables, the one in which — which poor Dr. Lloyd lived — Abbots' House?"

I spoke abruptly, as if to intimate my desire to change the subject of conversation. My hostess stopped her knitting, half rose, looked forth.

"Yes. But what a lovely night! How is it that the moon blends into harmony things of which the sun only marks the contrast? That stately old church tower, gray with its thousand years — those vulgar tile-roofs and chimney-pots raw in the freshness of yesterday; now, under the moonlight, all melt into one indivisible charm!"

As my hostess thus spoke she had left her seat, taking her work with her, and passed from the window into the balcony. It was not often that Mrs. Poyntz condescended to admit what is called "sentiment" into the range of her sharp, practical, worldly talk, but she did so at times; always, when she did, giving me the notion of an intellect much too comprehensive not to allow that sentiment has a place in this life, but keeping it in its proper place by that mixture of affability and indifference with which some high-born beauty allows the genius but checks the presumption of a charming and penniless poet. For a few minutes her eyes roved over the scene in evident enjoyment; then, as they slowly settled upon the three gables of Abbots' House, her face regained that something of hardness which belonged to its decided character; her fingers again mechanically resumed their knitting, and she said, in her clear, unsoftened, metallic chime of voice, "Can you guess why I took so much trouble to oblige Mr. Vigors and locate Mrs. Ashleigh yonder?"

"You favored us with a full explanation of your reasons."

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Some of my reasons; not the main one. People who undertake the task of governing others, as I do, be their rule a kingdom or a hamlet, must adopt a principle of government and adhere to it. The principle that suits best with the Hill is respect for the Proprieties. We have not much money; *entre nous*, we have no great rank. Our policy is, then, to set up the Proprieties as an influence which money must court and rank is afraid of. I had learned just before Mr. Vigors called on me that Lady Sarah Bellasis entertained the idea of hiring Abbots' House. London has set its face against her; a provincial town would be more charitable. An earl's daughter, with a good income and an awfully bad name, of the best manners and of the worst morals, would have made sad havoc among the Proprieties. How many of our primmest old maids would have deserted Tea and Mrs. Poyntz, for Champagne and her ladyship? The Hill was never in so imminent a danger. Rather than Lady Sarah Bellasis should have had that house I would have taken it myself and stocked it with owls.

"Mrs. Ashleigh turned up just in the critical moment. Lady Sarah is foiled, the Proprieties safe, and so that question is settled."

"And it will be pleasant to have your early friend so near you."

Mrs. Poyntz lifted her eyes full upon me.

"Do you know Mrs. Ashleigh?"

"Not the least."

"She has many virtues and few ideas. She is commonplace weak, as I am commonplace strong. But commonplace weak can be very lovable. Her husband, a man of genius and learning, gave her his whole heart — a heart worth having; but he was not ambitious, and he despised the world."

"I think you said your daughter was very much attached to Miss Ashleigh? Does her character resemble her mother's?"

I was afraid while I spoke that I should again meet Mrs. Poyntz's searching gaze, but she did not this time look up from her work.

"No; Lilian is any thing but commonplace."

"You describe her as having delicate health; you implied a hope that she was not consumptive. I trust that there is no serious reason for apprehending a constitutional tendency which at her age would require the most careful watching!"

"I trust not. If she were to die — Dr. Fenwick, what is the matter?"

So terrible had been the picture which this woman's words had brought before me, that I started as if my own life had received a shock.

"I beg pardon," I said, faltering and pressing my hand to my heart; "a sudden spasm here — it is over now. You were saying that — that —"

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"I was about to say—" and here Mrs. Poyntz laid her hand lightly on mine. "I was about to say, that if Lilian Ashleigh were to die, I should mourn for her less than I might for one who valued the things of the earth more. But I believe there is no cause for the alarm my words so inconsiderately excited in you. Her mother is watchful and devoted; and if the least thing ailed Lilian, she would call in medical advice. Mr. Vigors would, I know, recommend Dr. Jones."

Closing our conference with those stinging words, Mrs. Poyntz here turned back into the drawing-room.

I remained some minutes on the balcony, disconcerted, enraged. With what consummate art had this practised diplomatist wound herself into my secret. That she had read my heart better than myself was evident from that Parthian shaft, barbed with Dr. Jones, which she had shot over her shoulder in retreat. That from the first moment in which she had decoyed me to her side, she had detected "the something" on my mind, was perhaps but the ordinary quickness of female penetration. But it was with no ordinary craft that her whole conversation afterward had been so shaped as to learn the something, and lead me to reveal the some one to whom the something was linked. For what purpose? What was it to her? What motive could she have beyond the mere gratification of curiosity? Perhaps, at first, she thought I had been caught by her daughter's showy beauty, and hence the half-friendly, half-cynical frankness with which she had avowed her ambitious projects for that young lady's matrimonial advancement. Satisfied by my manner that I cherished no presumptuous hopes in that quarter, her scrutiny was doubtless continued from that pleasure in the exercise of a wily intellect which impels schemers and politicians to an activity for which, without that pleasure itself, there would seem no adequate inducement; and besides, the ruling passion of this petty sovereign was power. And if knowledge be power, there is no better instrument of power over a contumacious subject than that hold on his heart which is gained in the knowledge of its secret.

But "secret!" Had it really come to this? Was it possible that the mere sight of a human face, never beheld before, could disturb the whole tenor of my life—a stranger of whose mind and character I knew nothing, whose very voice I had never heard? It was only by the intolerable pang of anguish that had rent my heart in the words, carelessly, abruptly spoken, "if she were to die," that I had felt how the world would be changed to me, if indeed that face were seen in it no more! Yes, secret it was no longer to myself—I loved! And like all on whom love descends, sometimes softly, slowly, with the gradual wing of the cushat settling down into its nest, sometimes with the swoop of the eagle

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

on his unsuspecting quarry, I believed that none ever before loved as I loved; that such love was an abnormal wonder, made solely for me, and I for it. Then my mind insensibly hushed its angrier and more turbulent thoughts, as my gaze rested upon the roof-tops of Lilian's home, and the shimmering silver of the moonlit willow, under which I had seen her gazing into the roseate heavens.

CHAPTER VIII.

When I returned to the drawing-room, the party was evidently about to break up. Those who had grouped round the piano were now assembled round the refreshment table. The card-players had risen, and were settling or discussing gains and losses. While I was searching for my hat, which I had somewhere mislaid, a poor old gentleman, tormented by tic doloreux, crept timidly up to me — the proudest and the poorest of all the hidalgoes settled on the Hill. He could not afford a fee for a physician's advice, but pain had humbled his pride, and I saw at a glance that he was considering how to take a surreptitious advantage of social intercourse, and obtain the advice without paying the fee. The old man discovered the hat before I did, stooped, took it up, extended it to me with the profound bow of the old school, while the other hand, clenched and quivering, was pressed into the hollow of his cheek, and his eyes met mine with wistful mute entreaty. The instinct of my profession seized me at once. I could never behold suffering without forgetting all else in the desire to relieve it.

"You are in pain," said I, softly. "Sit down and describe the symptoms. Here, it is true, I am no professional doctor, but I am a friend who is fond of doctoring, and knows something about it."

So we sat down a little apart from the other guests, and, after a few questions and answers, I was pleased to find that his "tic" did not belong to the less curable kind of that agonizing neuralgia. I was especially successful in my treatment of similar sufferings for which I had discovered an anodyne that was almost specific. I wrote on a leaf of my pocket-book a prescription which I felt sure would be efficacious, and as I tore it out and placed it in his hand, I chanced to look up, and saw the hazel eyes of my hostess fixed upon me with a kinder and softer expression than they often condescended to admit into their cold and penetrating lustre. At that moment, however, her attention was drawn from me

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

to a servant, who entered with a note, and I heard him say, though in an undertone, "From Mrs. Ashleigh."

She opened the note, read it hastily, ordered the servant to wait without the door, retired to her writing-table, which stood near the place at which I still lingered, rested her face on her hand, and seemed musing. Her meditation was very soon over. She turned her head, and, to my surprise, beckoned to me. I approached.

"Sit here," she whispered; "turn your back toward those people, who are no doubt watching us. Read this."

She placed in my hand the note she had just received. It contained but a few words to this effect:

"DEAR MARGARET,—I am so distressed. Since I wrote to you, a few hours ago, Lilian is taken suddenly ill, and I fear seriously. What medical man should I send for? Let my servant have his name and address. A. A."

I sprang from my seat.

"Stay," said Mrs. Poyntz. "Would you much care if I sent the servant to Dr. Jones?"

"Ah, Madam, you are cruel! What have I done that you should become my enemy?"

"Enemy! No. You have just befriended one of my friends. In this world of fools, intellect should ally itself with intellect. No; I am not your enemy! But you have not yet asked me to be your friend."

Here she put into my hands a note she had written while thus speaking. "Receive your credentials. If there be any cause for alarm, or if I can be of use, send for me." Resuming the work she had suspended, but with lingering, uncertain fingers, she added, "So far, then, this is settled. Nay, no thanks; it is but little that is settled as yet."

CHAPTER IX.

In a very few minutes I was once more in the grounds of that old gable house. The servant, who went before me, entered them by the stairs and the wicket-gate of the private entrance; that way was the shortest. So again I passed by the circling glade and the monastic well — sward, trees, and ruins, all suffused in the limpid moonlight.

And now I was in the house; the servant took up stairs the note with which I was charged, and a minute or two afterward returned and con-

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

ducted me to the corridor above, in which Mrs. Ashleigh received me. I was the first to speak. "Your daughter — is — is — not seriously ill, I hope. What is it?"

"Hush!" she said, under her breath. "Will you step this way for a moment?" She passed through a door-way to the right. I followed her, and as she placed on the table the light she had been holding, I looked round with a chill at the heart — it was the room in which Dr. Lloyd had died. Impossible to mistake. The furniture, indeed, was changed — there was no bed in the chamber; but the shape of the room, the position of the high casement, which was now wide open, and through which the moonlight streamed more softly than on that drear winter night, the great square beams intersecting the low ceiling — all were impressed vividly on my memory. The chair to which Mrs. Ashleigh beckoned me was placed just on the spot where I had stood by the bed-head of the dying man.

I shrank back — I could not have seated myself there. So I remained leaning against the chimney-piece, while Mrs. Ashleigh told her story.

She said that on their arrival the day before, Lilian had been in more than usually good health and spirits, delighted with the old house, the grounds, and especially the nook by the Monk's Well, at which Mrs. Ashleigh had left her that evening in order to make some purchases in the town, in company with Mr. Vigors. When Mrs. Ashleigh returned, she and Mr. Vigors had sought Lilian in that nook, and Mrs. Ashleigh then detected, with a mother's eye, some change in Lilian, which alarmed her. She seemed listless and dejected, and was very pale; but she denied that she felt unwell. On regaining the house she had sat down in the room in which we then were — "which," said Mrs. Ashleigh, "as it is not required for a sleeping-room, my daughter, who is fond of reading, wished to fit up as her morning-room, or study. I left her here and went into the drawing-room below with Mr. Vigors. When he quitted me, which he did very soon, I remained for nearly an hour giving directions about the placing of furniture, which had just arrived from our late residence. I then went up stairs to join my daughter, and to my terror found her apparently lifeless in her chair. She had fainted away."

I interrupted Mrs. Ashleigh here. "Has Miss Ashleigh been subject to fainting fits?"

"No, never. When she recovered she seemed bewildered — disinclined to speak. I got her to bed, and as she then fell quietly to sleep, my mind was relieved. I thought it only a passing effect of excitement, in a change of abode; or caused by something like malaria in the atmosphere of that part of the grounds in which I had found her seated."

"Very likely. The hour of sunset at this time of year is trying to delicate constitutions. Go on."

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"About three-quarters of an hour ago she woke up with a loud cry, and has been ever since in a state of great agitation, weeping violently, and answering none of my questions. Yet she does not seem light-headed, but rather what we call hysterical."

"You will permit me now to see her. Take comfort — in all you tell me I see nothing to warrant serious alarm."

CHAPTER X.

To the true physician there is an inexpressible sanctity in the sick-chamber. At its threshold the more human passions quit their hold on his heart. Love there would be profanation. Even the grief permitted to others he must put aside. He must enter that room — a Calm Intelligence. He is disabled for his mission if he suffer aught to obscure the keen quiet glance of his science. Age or youth, beauty or deformity, innocence or guilt, merge their distinctions in one common attribute — human suffering appealing to human skill.

Woe to the households in which the trusted Healer feels not on his conscience the solemn obligations of his glorious art. Reverently, as in a temple, I stood in the virgin's chamber. When her mother placed her hand in mine, and I felt the throb of its pulse, I was aware of no quicker beat of my own heart. I looked with a steady eye on the face, more beautiful from the flush that deepened the delicate hues of the young cheek, and the lustre that brightened the dark blue of the wandering eyes. She did not at first heed me; did not seem aware of my presence; but kept murmuring to herself words which I could not distinguish.

At length, when I spoke to her, in that low, soothing tone which we learn at the sick-bed, the expression of her face altered suddenly; she passed the hand I did not hold over her forehead, turned round, looked at me full and long, with unmistakable surprise, yet not as if the surprise displeased her; less the surprise which recoils from the sight of a stranger than that which seems doubtfully to recognize an unexpected friend! Yet on the surprise there seemed to creep something of apprehension — of fear; her hand trembled, her voice quivered, as she said,

"Can it be, can it be? Am I awake? Mother, who is this?"

"Only a kind visitor, Dr. Fenwick, sent by Mrs. Poyntz, for I was uneasy about you darling. How are you now?"

"Better. Strangely better."

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

She removed her hand gently from mine, and with an involuntary modest shrinking, turned towards Mrs. Ashleigh, drawing her mother toward herself, so that she became at once hidden from me.

Satisfied that there was here no delirium, nor even more than the slight and temporary fever which often accompanies a sudden nervous attack in constitutions peculiarly sensitive, I retired noiselessly from the room, and went not into that which had been occupied by the deceased inmate, but down stairs into the drawing-room, to write my prescription. I had already sent the servant off with it to the chemist's before Mrs. Ashleigh joined me.

"She seems recovering surprisingly; her forehead is cooler; she is perfectly self-possessed, only she cannot account for her own seizure, cannot account either for the fainting or the agitation with which she awoke from sleep."

"I think I can account for both. The first room in which she entered — that in which she fainted — had its window open; the sides of the window are overgrown with rank, creeping plants in full blossom. Miss Ashley had already predisposed herself to injurious effects from the effluvia, by fatigue, excitement, imprudence in sitting out at the fall of a heavy dew. The sleep after the fainting fit was the more disturbed, because nature, always alert and active in subjects so young, was making its own effort to right itself from an injury. Nature has nearly succeeded. What I have prescribed will a little aid and accelerate that which nature has yet to do, and in a day or two I do not doubt that your daughter will be perfectly restored. Only let me recommend care to avoid exposure to the open air during the close of the day. Let her avoid also the room in which she was first seized, for it is a strange phenomenon in nervous temperaments that a nervous attack may, without visible cause, be repeated in the same place where it was first experienced. You had better shut up the chamber for at least some weeks, burn fires in it, repaint and paper it, sprinkle chloroform. You are not, perhaps, aware that Dr. Lloyd died in that room after a prolonged illness. Suffer me to wait till your servant returns with the medicine, and let me employ the interval in asking a few questions. Miss Ashleigh, you say, never had a fainting fit before. I should presume that she is not what we call strong. But has she ever had any illness that alarmed you?"

"Never."

"No great liability to cold and cough, to attacks of the chest or lungs?"

"Certainly not. Still I have feared that she may have a tendency to consumption. Do you think so? Your questions alarm me!"

"I do not think so; but before I pronounce a positive opinion, one

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

question more. You say you feared a tendency to consumption. Is that disease in her family? She certainly did not inherit it from you. But on her father's side?"

"Her father," said Mrs. Ashleigh, with tears in her voice, "died young, but of brain fever, which the medical men said was brought on by over-study."

"Enough, my dear Madam. What you say confirms my belief that your daughter's constitution is the very opposite to that in which the seeds of consumption lurk. It is rather that far nobler constitution which the keenness of the nervous susceptibility renders delicate but elastic — as quick to recover as it is to suffer."

"Thank you, thank you, Dr. Fenwick, for what you say. You take a load from my heart. For Mr. Vigors, I know, thinks Lilian consumptive, and Mrs. Poyntz has rather frightened me at times by hints to the same effect. But when you speak of nervous susceptibility, I do not quite understand you. My daughter is not what is commonly called nervous. Her temper is singularly even."

"But if not excitable, should you also say that she is not impressionable? The things which do not disturb her temper may, perhaps, deject her spirits. Do I make myself understood?"

"Yes, I think I understand your distinction. But I am not quite sure if it applies. To most things that affect the spirits she is not more sensitive than other girls, perhaps less so. But she is certainly very impressionable in some things."

"In what?"

"She is more moved than any one I ever knew by objects in external nature, rural scenery, rural sounds, by music, by the books that she reads — even books that are not works of imagination. Perhaps in all this she takes after her poor father, but in a more marked degree — at least, I observe it more in her. For he was peculiarly silent and reserved. And perhaps also her peculiarities have been fostered by the seclusion in which she has been brought up. It was with a view to make her a little more like girls of her own age that our friend, Mrs. Poyntz, induced me to come here. Lilian was reconciled to this change; but she shrank from the thoughts of London which I should have preferred. Her poor father could not endure London."

"Miss Ashleigh is fond of reading?"

"Yes, she is fond of reading, but more fond of music. She will sit by herself for hours without book or work, and seem as abstracted as if in a dream. She was so even in her earliest childhood. Then she would tell me, what she had been conjuring up to herself. She would say that she had seen — positively seen — beautiful lands far away from earth; flowers

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

and trees not like ours. As she grew older this visionary talk displeased me, and I scolded her, and said that if others heard her they would think that she was not only silly, but very untruthful. So of late years she never ventures to tell me what, in such dreamy moments, she suffers herself to imagine; but the habit of musing continues still. Do you not agree with Mrs. Poyntz, that the best cure would be a little cheerful society among other young people?"

"Certainly," said I, honestly, though with a jealous pang. "But here comes the medicine. Will you take it up to her, and then sit with her half an hour or so? By that time I expect she will be asleep. I will wait here till you return. Oh, I can amuse myself with the newspapers and books on your table. Stay! one caution: be sure there are no flowers in Miss Ashleigh's sleeping-room. I think I saw a treacherous rose-tree in a stand by the window. If so, banish it."

Left alone, I examined the room in which, O thought of joy! I had surely now won the claim to become a privileged guest. I touched the books Lilian must have touched; in the articles of furniture, as yet so hastily disposed that the settled look of home was not about them, I still knew that I was gazing on things which her mind must associate with the history of her young life. That lute-harp must be surely hers, and the scarf, with a girl's favorite colors — pure white and pale blue — and the bird-cage, and the childish ivory work-case, with implements too pretty for use, all spoke of her.

It was a blissful, intoxicating reverie, which Mrs. Ashleigh's entrance disturbed.

Lilian was sleeping calmly. I had no pretence to linger there any longer.

"I leave you, I trust, with your mind quite at ease," said I. "You will allow me to call to-morrow in the afternoon?"

"Oh yes, gratefully."

Mrs. Ashleigh held out her hand as I made toward the door.

Is there a physician who has not felt at times how that ceremonious fee throws him back from the garden land of humanity into the market-place of money — seems to put him out of the pale of equal friendship, and say, "True, you have given health and life. Adieu! there, you are paid for it." With a poor person there would have been no dilemma, but Mrs. Ashleigh was affluent: to depart from custom here was almost impertinence. But had the penalty of my refusal been the doom of never again beholding Lilian, I could not have taken her mother's gold. So I did not appear to notice the hand held out to me, and passed by with a quickened step.

"But, Dr. Fenwick, stop!"

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"No, ma'am, no! Miss Ashleigh would have recovered as soon without me. Whenever my aid is really wanted, then — but Heaven grant that time may never come! We will talk again about her to-morrow."

I was gone. Now in the garden ground, odorous with blossoms; now in the lane, inclosed by the narrow walls; now in the deserted streets, over which the moon shone full as in that winter night when I hurried from the chamber of death. But the streets were not ghastly now, and the moon was no longer Hecate, that dreary goddess of awe and spectres, but the sweet, simple Lady of the Stars, on whose gentle face lovers have gazed ever since (if that guess of astronomers be true) she was parted from earth to rule the tides of its deeps from afar, even as love from love divided rules the heart that yearns toward it with mysterious law!

CHAPTER XI.

With what increased benignity I listened to the patients who visited me the next morning! The whole human race seemed to me worthier of love, and I longed to diffuse among all some rays of the glorious hope that had dawned upon my heart. My first call, when I went forth, was on the poor young woman from whom I had been returning the day before, when an impulse, which seemed like a fate, had lured me into the grounds where I had first seen Lilian. I felt grateful to this poor patient; without her, Lilian herself might be yet unknown to me.

The girl's brother, a young man employed in the police, and whose pay supported a widowed mother and the suffering sister, received me at the threshold of the cottage.

"Oh, Sir! she is so much better to-day; almost free from pain. Will she live now? can she live?"

"If my treatment has really done the good you say; if she be really better under it, I think her recovery may be pronounced. But I must [illegible]."

To my more [illegible] was indeed wonderfully better. I felt that my skill was [illegible] many more [illegible] al triumph, but that day even my intellectual pride was [illegible] consumption [illegible] luxurious unfolding of that sense of heart which had so [illegible] with much [illegible] blossom.

[illegible] the treatment of [illegible] threshold I smiled on the brother who was still lingering [illegible] days after I heard [illegible] ill — kept her room Waby. She needs now chiefly wine and good [illegible] returning the visits [illegible]

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

though light nourishment; these you wil[illegible]t at my house; call there for them every day."

"God bless you, Sir! If ever I can serve you —" His tongue faltered — he could say no more.

Serve me — Allen Fenwick — that poor policeman! Me, whom a king could not serve! What did I ask from earth but Fame and Lilian's heart? Thrones and bread man wins from the aid of others. Fame and woman's heart he can only gain through himself.

So I strode gayly up the hill, through the iron gates into the fairy ground, and stood before Lilian's home.

The man-servant, on opening the door, seemed somewhat confused, and said, hastily, before I spoke,

"Not at home, Sir; a note for you."

I turned the note mechanically in my hand; I felt stunned.

"Not at home! Miss Ashleigh cannot be out. How is she?"

"Better, Sir, thank you."

I still could not open the note; my eyes turned wistfully towards the windows of the house, and there — at the drawing-room window — I encountered the scowl of Mr. Vigors. I colored with resentment, divined that I was dismissed, and walked away with a proud crest and [illegible] step.

When I was out of the gates, in the blind lane, I opened the note. It began formally, "Mrs. Ashleigh presents her compliments," and went on to thank me, civilly enough, for my attendance the night before, would not give me the trouble to repeat my visit, and inclosed a fee double the amount of the fee prescribed by custom. I flung the money, as an asp that had stung me, over the high wall, and tore the note into shreds. Having thus idly vented my rage, a dull gnawing sorrow came heavily down upon all other emotions, stilling and replacing them. At the mouth of the lane I halted. I shrank from the thought of the crowded streets beyond. I shrank yet more from the routine of duties which stretched before me in the desert into which daily life was so suddenly smitten. I sat down by the roadside, shading my dejected face with a nerveless hand. I looked up as the sound of steps reached my ear, and saw Dr. [illegible] coming briskly along the lane, evidently from Abbots' House. He must have been there at the very time I had called. I was not only supplanted. I rose before he reached the spot on which I stood, myself, and went my way into the town, went through the usual round of professional visits, but my attentions were not so [illegible] skill so genially quickened by the glow of benevolence as my patients had found them in the morning.

I have said how a physician should enter th[illegible]

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Intelligence!" But if you strike a blow on the heart, the intellect suffers. Little wrth, I suspect, was my "calm intelligence" that day. Bichat, in his famous book upon Life and Death, divides life into two classes — animal and organic. Man's intellect, with the brain for its centre, belongs to life aimal; his passions to life organic, centred in the heart, in the viscera. Alas! if the noblest passions, through which alone we lift ourselves into the moral realm of the sublime and beautiful, really have their centre in the life which the very vegetable, that lives organically, shares with us! And, alas! if it be that life which we share with the vegetable, that can cloud, obstruct, suspend, annul that life centred in the brain, which we share with every being howsoever angelic, in every star howsoever remote, on whom the Creator bestows the faculty of thought!

CHAPTER XII.

But suddenly I remembered Mrs. Poyntz. I ought to call on her. So a close of my round of visits at her door. But the day was then far advanced, and the servant politely informed me that Mrs. Poyntz was at dinner. I could only leave my card, with a message that I would pay my respects to her the next day. That evening I received from her this note:

"Dear Dr. Fenwick, — I regret much that I cannot have the pleasure of seeing you to-morrow. Poyntz and I are going to visit his brother, at the other end of the county, and we start early. We shall be away some days. Sorry to hear from Mrs. Ashleigh that she has been persuaded by Mr. Vigors to consult Dr. Jones about Lilian. Vigors and Jones both frighten the poor mother, and insist upon consumptive tendencies. Unluckily, you seem to have said there was little the matter. Some doctors gain their practice, as some preachers fill their churches, by adroit use of the appeals to terror. You do not want patients; Dr. Jones does. And, after all, better perhaps as it is. Yours, etc.

"M. Poyntz."

To my more selfish grief anxiety for Lilian was now added. I had seen many more patients die from being mistreated for consumption than from consumption itself. And Dr. Jones was a mercenary, cunning, needy man, with much crafty knowledge of human foibles, but very little skill in the treatment of human maladies. My fears were soon confirmed. A few days after I heard from Miss Brabazon that Miss Ashleigh was seriously ill — kept her room. Mrs. Ashleigh made this excuse for not immediately returning the visits which the Hill had showered upon her. Miss

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Brabazon had seen Dr. Jones, who had shaken his head; said it was a serious case, but that time and care (his time and his care!) might effect wonders.

How stealthily at the dead of the night I would climb the Hi, and look toward the windows of the old sombre house — one window, in which a light burned dim and mournful, the light of a sick-room — of hers!

At length Mrs. Poyntz came back, and I entered her house, having fully resolved beforehand on the line of policy to be adopted toward the potentate whom I hoped to secure as an ally. It was clear that neither disguise nor half-confidence would baffle the penetration of so keen an intellect, nor propitiate the good-will of so imperious and resolute a temper. Perfect frankness here was the wisest prudence; and, after all, it was most agreeable to my own nature, and most worthy of my own honor.

Luckily, I found Mrs. Poyntz alone, and, taking in both mine the hand she somewhat coldly extended to me, I said, with the earnestness of suppressed emotion:

"You observed, when I last saw you, that I had not yet asked you to be my friend. I ask it now. Listen to me with all the indulgence you can vouchsafe, and let me at least profit by your counsel if you refuse to give me your aid."

Rapidly, briefly, I went on to say how I had first seen Lilian, and how sudden, how strange to myself had been the impression which that first sight of her had produced.

"You remarked the change that had come over me," said I; "you divined the cause before I divined it myself; divined it as I sat there beside you, thinking that through you, I might see, in the freedom of social intercourse, the face that was then haunting me. You know what has since passed. Miss Ashleigh is ill; her case is, I am convinced, wholly misunderstood. All other feelings are merged in one sense of anxiety — of alarm. But it has become due to me, due to all, to incur the risk of your ridicule even more than of your reproof, by stating to you thus candidly, plainly, bluntly, the sentiment which renders alarm so poignant, and which if scarcely admissible to the romance of some wild, dreamy boy, may seem an unpardonable folly in a man of my years and my sober calling; due to me, to you, to Mrs. Ashleigh; because still the dearest thing in life to me is honor. And if you, who know Mrs. Ashleigh so intimately, who must be more or less aware of her plans or wishes for her daughter's future; if you believe that those plans or wishes lead to a lot far more ambitious than an alliance with me could offer to Miss Ashleigh, then aid Mr. Vigors in excluding me from the house; aid me in suppressing a presumptuous, visionary passion. I cannot enter that house without love and hope at my heart. And the threshold of that house I must not cross.

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

such love and such hope would be a sin and a treachery in the eyes of its owner. I might restore Miss Ashleigh to health; her gratitude might — I cannot continue. This danger must not be to me nor to her, if her mother has views far above such a son-in-law. And I am the more bound to consider all this while it is yet time, because I heard you state that Miss Ashleigh had a fortune — was what would be here termed an heiress. And the full consciousness that whatever fame one in my profession may live to acquire, does not open those vistas of social power and grandeur which are opened by professions to my eyes less noble in themselves — that full consciousness, I say, was forced upon me by certain words of your own. For the rest, you know my descent is sufficiently recognized as that amidst well-born gentry to have rendered me no mésalliance to families the most proud of their ancestry, if I had kept my hereditary estate and avoided the career that makes me useful to man. But I acknowledge that on entering a profession such as mine — entering any profession except that of arms or the senate — all leave their pedigree at its door, an erased or dead letter. All must come as equals, high-born or low-born, into that arena in which men ask aid from a man as he makes himself; to them his dead forefathers are idle dust. Therefore, to the advantage of birth I cease to have a claim. I am but a provincial physician, whose station would be the same had he been a cobbler's son. But gold retains its grand privilege in all ranks. He who has gold is removed from the suspicion that attaches to the greedy fortune-hunter. My private fortune, swelled by my savings, is sufficient to secure to any one I married a larger settlement than many a wealthy squire can make. I need no fortune with a wife; if she have one, it would be settled on herself. Pardon these vulgar details. Now, have I made myself understood?"

"Fully," answered the Queen of the Hill, who had listened to me quietly, watchfully, and without one interruption.

"Fully. And you have done well to confide in me with so generous an unreserve. But before I say further, let me ask, what would be your advice for Lilian, supposing that you ought not to attend her? You have no trust in Dr. Jones; neither have I. And Anne Ashleigh's note received to-day, begging me to call, justifies your alarm. Still you think there is no tendency to consumption?"

"Of that I am certain, so far as my slight glimpse of a case that to me, however, seems a simple and not uncommon one, will permit. But in the alternative you put — that my own skill, whatever its worth, is forbidden — my earnest advice is, that Mrs. Ashleigh should take her daughter at once to London, and consult there those great authorities to whom I cannot compare my own opinion or experience; and by their counsel abide."

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Mrs. Poyntz shaded her eyes with her hand for a few moments, and seemed in deliberation with herself. Then she said, with her peculiar smile, half grave, half ironical:

"In matters more ordinary you would have won me to your side long ago. That Mr. Vigors should have presumed to cancel my recommendation to a settler on the Hill, was an act of rebellion, and involved the honor of my prerogative. But I suppressed my indignation at an affront so unusual, partly out of pique against yourself, but much more, I think, out of regard for you."

"I understand. You detected the secret of my heart; you knew that Mrs. Ashleigh would not wish to see her daughter the wife of a provincial physician."

"Am I sure, or are you sure, that the daughter herself would accept that fate; or if she accepted it, would not repent?"

"Do not think me the vainest of men when I say this — that I cannot believe I should be so enthralled by a feeling at war with my reason, unfavored by any thing I can detect in my habits of mind, or even by the dreams of a youth which exalted science and excluded love, unless I was intimately convinced that Miss Ashleigh's heart was free — that I could win, and that I could keep it! Ask me why I am convinced of this, and I can tell you no more why I think that she could love me, than I can tell you why I love her!"

"I am of the world, worldly. But I am woman, womanly — though I may not care to be thought it. And therefore, though what you say is — regarded in a worldly point of view, sheer nonsense — regarded in a womanly point of view, it is logically sound. But still you cannot know Lilian as I do. Your nature and hers are in strong contrast. I do not think she is a safe wife for you. The purest, the most innocent creature imaginable, certainly that, but always in the seventh heaven. And you in the seventh heaven just at this moment, but with an irresistible gravitation to the solid earth, which will have its way again when the honeymoon is over. I do not believe you two would harmonize by intercourse. I do not believe Lilian would sympathize with you, and I am sure you could not sympathize with her throughout the long dull course of this work-day life. And therefore, for your sake as well as hers, I was not displeased to find that Dr. Jones had replaced you; and now, in return for your frankness, I say, frankly — do not go again to that house. Conquer this sentiment, fancy, passion, whatever it be. And I will advise Mrs. Ashleigh to take Lilian to town. Shall it be so settled?"

I could not speak. I buried my face in my hands — misery, misery, desolation! I know not how long I remained thus silent, perhaps many minutes. At length I felt a cold, firm, but not ungentle hand placed upon mine; and a clear, full, but not discouraging voice said to me:

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Leave me to think well over this conversation, and to ponder well the value of all you have shown that you so deeply feel. The interests of life do not fill both scales of the balance. The heart which does not always go in the same scale with the interests, still has its weight in the scale opposed to them. I have heard a few wise men say, as many a silly woman says, 'Better be unhappy with one we love, than be happy with one we love not.' Do you say that, too?"

"With every thought of my brain, every beat of my pulse, I say it."

"After that answer, all my questionings cease. You shall hear from me to-morrow. By that time I shall have seen Anne and Lilian. I shall have weighed both scales of the balance, and the heart here, Allen Fenwick, seems very heavy. Go, now. I hear feet on the stairs. Poyntz bringing up some friendly gossiper; gossipers are spies."

I passed my hand over my eyes, tearless, but how tears would have relieved the anguish that burdened them! and, without a word, went down the stairs, meeting at the landing-place Colonel Poyntz and the old man whose pain my prescription had cured. The old man was whistling a merry tune, perhaps first learned on the play-ground. He broke from it to thank, almost to embrace me, as I slid by him. I seized his jocund blessing as a good omen, and carried it with me as I passed into the broad sunlight. Solitary — solitary. Should I be so evermore?

CHAPTER XIII.

The next day I had just dismissed the last of my visiting patients, and was about to enter my carriage and commence my round, when I received a twisted note containing but these words:

"Call on me to-day, as soon as you can.

M. Poyntz."

A few minutes afterward I was in Mrs. Poyntz's drawing-room.

"Well, Allen Fenwick," said she, "I do not serve friends by halves. No thanks! I but adhere to a principle I have laid down for myself. I spent last evening with the Ashleighs. Lilian is certainly much altered — very weak, I fear very ill, and I believe very unskilfully treated by Dr. Jones. I felt that it was my duty to insist on a change of physician, but there was something else to consider before deciding who that physician should be. I was bound, as your confidant, to consult your own scruples

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

of honor. Of course I could not say point-blank to Mrs. Ashleigh, Dr. Fenwick admires your daughter, would you object to him as a son-in-law? Of course I could not touch at all on the secret with which you intrusted me; but I have not the less arrived at a conclusion, in agreement with my previous belief, that not being a woman of the world, Anne Ashleigh has none of the ambition which women of the world would conceive for a daughter who has a good fortune and considerable beauty; that her predominant anxiety is for her child's happiness, and her predominant fear is that her child will die. She would never oppose any attachment which Lilian might form, and if that attachment were for one who had preserved her daughter's life, I believe her own heart would gratefully go with her daughter's. So far, then, as honor is concerned, all scruples vanish."

I sprang from my seat, radiant with joy. Mrs. Poyntz dryly continued: "You value yourself on your common sense, and to that I address a few words of counsel which may not be welcome to your romance. I said that I did not think you and Lilian would suit each other in the long-run; reflection confirms me in that supposition. Do not look at me so incredulously and so sadly. Listen and take heed. Ask yourself what, as a man whose days are devoted to a laborious profession, whose ambition is entwined with its success, whose mind must be absorbed in its pursuits — ask yourself what kind of wife you would have sought to win, had not this sudden fancy for a charming face rushed over your better reason, and obliterated all previous plans and resolutions. Surely some one with whom your heart would have been quite at rest; by whom your thoughts would have been undistracted from the channels into which your calling should concentrate their flow; in short, a serene companion in the quiet holiday of a trustful home. Is it not so?"

"You interpret my own thoughts when they have turned toward marriage. But what is there in Lilian Ashleigh that should mar the picture you have drawn?"

"What is there in Lilian Ashleigh which in the least accords with the picture? In the first place, the wife of a young physician should not be his perpetual patient. The more he loves her, and the more worthy she may be of love, the more her case will haunt him wherever he goes. When he returns home, it is not to a holiday; the patient he most cares for, the anxiety that most gnaws him, awaits him there."

"But, good Heavens! why should Lilian Ashleigh be a perpetual patient? The sanitary resources of youth are incalculable. And —"

"Let me stop you; I cannot argue against a physician in love! I will give up that point in dispute, remaining convinced that there is a

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

something in Lilian's constitution which will perplex, torment, and baffle you. It was so with her father, whom she resembles in face and in character. He showed no symptoms of any grave malady. His outward form was like Lilian's, a model of symmetry, except in this, that, like hers, it was too exquisitely delicate; but, when seemingly in the midst of perfect health, at any slight jar on the nerves he would become alarmingly ill. I was sure that he would die young, and he did so."

"Ay, but Mrs. Ashleigh said that his death was from brain-fever brought on by over-study. Rarely, indeed, do women so fatigue the brain. No female patient, in the range of my practice ever died of purely mental exertion."

"Of purely mental exertion, no; but of *heart* emotion many female patients, perhaps? Oh, you own that; I know nothing about nerves. But I suppose that, whether they act on the brain or the heart, the result to life is much the same if the nerves be too finely strung for life's daily wear and tear. And this is what I mean when I say you and Lilian will not suit. As yet she is a mere child; her nature undeveloped, and her affections, therefore, untried. You might suppose that you had won her heart; she might believe that she gave it to you, and both be deceived. If fairies nowadays condescended to exchange their offspring with those of mortals, and if the popular tradition did not represent a fairy changeling as an ugly peevish creature with none of the grace of its parents, I should be half inclined to suspect that Lilian was one of the elfin people. She never seems at home on earth; and I do not think she will ever be contented with a prosaic earthly lot. Now I have told you why I do not think she will suit you. I must leave it to yourself to conjecture how far you would suit her. I say this in due season, while you may yet set a guard upon impulse; while you may yet watch, and weigh, and meditate; and from this moment on that subject I say no more. I lend advice, but I never throw it away."

She came here to a dead pause, and began putting on her bonnet and scarf which lay on the table beside her. I was a little chilled by her words, and yet more by the blunt, shrewd, hard look and manner which aided the effect of their delivery. But the chill melted away on the sudden glow of my heart when she again turned toward me and said:

"Of course you guess, from these preliminary cautions, that you are going into danger? Mrs. Ashleigh wishes to consult you about Lilian, and I propose to take you to her house."

"Oh, my friend, my dear friend, how can I ever repay you!" I caught her hand, the white firm hand, and lifted it to my lips.

She drew it somewhat hastily away, and laying it gently on my shoulder, said, in a soft voice, "poor Allen, how little the world knows either

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

of us! But how little, perhaps, do we know ourselves. Come, your carriage is here? That is right; we must put down Dr. Jones publicly and in all our state."

In the carriage Mrs. Poyntz told me the purport of that conversation with Mrs. Ashleigh to which I owed my reintroduction to Abbots' House. It seems that Mr. Vigors had called early the morning after my first visit; had evinced much discomposure on hearing that I had been summoned; dwelt much on my injurious treatment of Dr. Lloyd, whom, as distantly related to himself, and he (Mr. Vigors) being distantly connected to the late Gilbert Ashleigh, he endeavored to fasten upon his listener as one of her husband's family, whose quarrel she was bound in honor to take up. He spoke of me as an infidel "tainted with French doctrines," and as a practitioner rash and presumptuous, proving his own freedom from presumption and rashness by flatly deciding that my opinion must be wrong. Previous to Mrs. Ashleigh's migration to L——, Mr. Vigors had interested her in the pretended phenomena of mesmerism. He had consulted a clairvoyant much esteemed by poor Dr. Lloyd, as to Lilian's health, and the clairvoyant had declared her to be constitutionally predisposed to consumption. Mr. Vigors persuaded Mrs. Ashleigh to come at once with him and see this clairvoyant herself, armed with a lock of Lilian's hair and a glove she had worn, as the media of mesmerical rapport.

The clairvoyant, one of those I had publicly denounced as an impostor, naturally enough denounced me in return. On being asked solemnly by Mr. Vigors "to look at Dr. Fenwick and see if his influence would be beneficial to the subject," the sibyl had become violently agitated, said that, "when she looked at us together, we were enveloped in a black cloud; that this portended affliction and sinister consequences; that our rapport was antagonistic." Mr. Vigors then told her to dismiss my image and conjure up that of Dr. Jones. Therewith the somnambule became more tranquil, and said, "Dr. Jones would do well if he would be guided by higher lights than his own skill, and consult herself daily as to the proper remedies. The best remedy of all would be mesmerism. But since Dr. Lloyd's death she did not know of a mesmerist, sufficiently gifted, in affinity with the patient." In fine, she impressed and awed Mrs. Ashleigh, who returned in haste, summoned Dr. Jones, and dismissed myself.

"I could not have conceived Mrs. Ashleigh to be so utterly wanting in common sense," said I. "She talked rationally enough when I saw her."

"She has common sense in general, and plenty of the sense most common," answered Mrs. Poyntz. "But she is easily led and easily frightened wherever her affections are concerned, and therefore just as easily as she had been persuaded by Mr. Vigors and terrified by the somnambule, I persuaded her against the one, and terrified her against the other. I

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

had positive experience on my side, since it was clear that Lilian had been getting rapidly worse under Dr. Jones's care. The main objections I had to encounter in inducing her to consult you again were, first, in Mrs. Ashleigh's reluctance to disoblige Mr. Vigors, as a friend and connection of Lilian's father; and, secondly, a sentiment of shame in reinviting your opinion after having treated you with so little respect. Both these difficulties I took upon myself. I bring you to her house, and, on leaving you, I shall go on to Mr. Vigors, and tell him what is done is my doing, and not to be undone by him; so that matter is settled. Indeed, if you were out of the question, I should not suffer Mr. Vigors to reintroduce all these mummeries of clairvoyance and mesmerism into the precincts of the Hill. I did not demolish a man I really liked in Dr. Lloyd, to set up a Dr. Jones, whom I despise, in his stead. Clairvoyance on Abbey Hill, indeed! I saw enough of it before."

"True; your strong intellect detected at once the absurdity of the whole pretence — the falsity of mesmerism — the impossibility of clairvoyance."

"No, my strong intellect did nothing of the kind. I do not know whether mesmerism be false or clairvoyance impossible; and I don't wish to know. All I do know is, that I saw the Hill in great danger; young ladies allowing themselves to be put to sleep by gentlemen, and pretending they had no will of their own against such fascination! Improper and shocking! And Miss Brabazon beginning to prophesy, and Mrs. Leopold Smythe questioning her maid (whom Dr. Lloyd declared to be highly gifted) as to all the secrets of her friends. When I saw this, I said, 'The Hill is being demoralized; the Hill is making itself ridiculous; the Hill must be saved!' I remonstrated with Dr. Lloyd, as a friend; he remained obdurate. I annihilated him as an enemy, not to me, but to the State. I slew my best lover for the good of Rome. Now you know why I took your part; not because I have any opinion one way or the other as to the truth or falsehood of what Dr. Lloyd asserted; but I have a strong opinion that whether they be true or false, his notions were those which are not to be allowed on the Hill. And so, Allen Fenwick, that matter was settled."

Perhaps at another time I might have felt some little humiliation to learn that I had been honored with the influence of this great potentate, not as a champion of truth, but as an instrument of policy; and I might have owned to some twinge of conscience in having assisted to sacrifice a seeker after science — misled, no doubt, but preferring his independent belief to his worldly interest — and sacrifice him to those deities with whom science is ever at war — the Prejudices of a Clique sanctified into the Proprieties of the world. But at that moment the words I

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

heard made no perceptible impression on my mind. The gables of Abbots' House were visible above the evergreens and lilacs; another moment, and the carriage stopped at the door.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mrs. Ashleigh received us in the dining-room. Her manner to me, at first, was a little confused and shy. But my companion soon communicated something of her own happy ease to her gentler friend. After a short conversation we all three went to Lilian, who was in a little room on the ground-floor, fitted up as her study. I was glad to perceive that my interdict of the death-chamber had been respected.

She reclined on a sofa near the window, which was, however, jealously closed; the light of the bright May-day obscured by blinds and curtains; a large fire on the hearth; the air of the room that of a hot-house — the ignorant, insensible, exploded system of nursing into consumption those who are confined on suspicion of it. She did not heed us as we entered noiselessly; her eyes were drooped languidly on the floor, and with difficulty I suppressed the exclamation that rose to my lips on seeing her. She seemed within the last few days so changed, and on the aspect of the countenance there was so profound a melancholy. But as she slowly turned at the sound of our footsteps, and her eyes met mine, a quick blush came into the wan cheek, and she half rose, but sank back as if the effect exhausted her. There was a struggle for breath, and a low hollow cough. Was it possible that I had been mistaken, and that in that cough was heard the warning knell of the most insidious enemy to youthful life?

I sat down by her side. I lured her on to talk of indifferent subjects — the weather, the gardens, the bird in the cage, which was placed on the table near her. Her voice, at first low and feeble, became gradually stronger, and her face lighted up with a child's innocent playful smile. No, I had not been mistaken. That was no lymphatic nerveless temperament on which consumption fastens as its lawful prey — here there was no hectic pulse, no hurried waste of the vital flame. Quietly and gently I made my observations, addressed my questions, applied my stethoscope; and when I turned my face towards her mother's anxious, eager eyes, that face spoke for me, for her mother sprang forward, clasped my hand, and said, through her struggling tears,

"You smile! You see nothing to fear?"

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Fear—no, indeed! You will soon be again yourself, Miss Ashleigh, will you not?"

"Yes," she said, with her sweet laugh, "I shall be well now very soon. But may I not have the window open? may I not go into the garden? I so long for fresh air."

"No, no, darling," exclaimed Mrs. Ashleigh, "not while the east winds last. Dr. Jones said on no account. On no account, Dr. Fenwick, eh?"

"Will you take my arm, Miss Ashleigh, and walk about the room?" said I. "We will then see how far we may rebel against Dr. Jones."

She rose with some little effort, but there was no cough. At first her step was languid—it became lighter and more elastic after a few moments.

"Let her come out," said I to Mrs. Ashleigh. "The wind is not in the east, and, while we are out, pray bid your servant lower to the last bar in the grate, that fire—only fit for Christmas."

"But—"

"Ah, no buts. He is a poor doctor who is not a stern despot."

So the straw hat and mantle were sent for. Lilian was wrapped with unnecessary care, and we all went forth into the garden. Involuntarily we took the way to the Monk's well, and at every step Lilian seemed to revive under the bracing air and temperate sun. We paused by the well.

"You do not feel fatigued, Miss Ashleigh?"

"No."

"But your face seems changed. It is grown sadder."

"Not sadder."

"Sadder than when I first saw it—saw it when you were seated here!" I said this in a whisper. I felt her hand tremble as it lay on my arm.

"You saw me seated here!"

"Yes. I will tell you how some day."

Lilian lifted her eyes to mine, and there was in them that same surprise which I had noticed on my first visit—a surprise that perplexed me, blended with no displeasure, but yet with a something of vague alarm.

We soon returned to the house.

Mrs. Ashleigh made me a sign to follow her into the drawing-room, leaving Mrs. Poyntz with Lilian.

"Well?" said she, tremblingly.

"Permit me to see Dr. Jones's prescriptions. Thank you. Ay, I thought so. My dear Madam, the mistake here has been in depressing nature instead of strengthening; in narcotics instead of stimulants. The main stimulants which leave no reaction are air and light. Promise me

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

that I may have my own way for a week; that all I recommend will be implicitly heeded?"

"I promise. But that cough; you noticed it?"

"Yes. The nervous system is terribly lowered, and nervous exhaustion is a strange impostor — it imitates all manner of complaints with which it has no connection. The cough will soon disappear! But pardon my question. Mrs. Poyntz tells me that you consulted a clairvoyant about your daughter. Does Miss Ashleigh know that you did so?"

"No, I did not tell her."

"I am glad of that. And pray, for Heaven's sake, guard her against all that may set her thinking on such subjects. Above all, guard her against concentring attention on any malady that your fears erroneously ascribe to her. It is among the phenomena of our organization that you cannot closely rivet your consciousness on any part of the frame, however healthy, but it will soon begin to exhibit morbid sensibility. Try to fix all your attention on your little finger for half an hour, and before the half hour is over the little finger will be uneasy, probably even painful. How serious then is the danger to a young girl at the age in which imagination is most active, most intense, if you force upon her a belief that she is in danger of a mortal disease; it is a peculiarity of youth to brood over the thought of early death much more resignedly, much more complacently, than we do in maturer years. Impress on a young imaginative girl, as free from pulmonary tendencies as you and I are, the conviction that she must fade away into the grave, and though she may not actually die of consumption, you instil slow poison into her system. Hope is the natural aliment of youth. You impoverish nourishment where you discourage hope. As soon as this temporary illness is over, reject for your daughter the melancholy care which seems to her own mind to mark her out from others of her age. Rear her for the air — which is the kindest life-giver; to sleep with open windows; to be out at sunrise. Nature will do more for her than all our drugs can do. You have been hitherto fearing nature, now trust to her."

Here Mrs. Poyntz joined us, and having, while I had been speaking, written my prescription and some general injunctions, I closed my advice with an appeal to that powerful protectress.

"This, my dear Madam, is a case in which I need your aid, and I ask it. Miss Ashleigh should not be left with no other companion than her mother. A change of faces is often as salutary as a change of air. If you could devote an hour or two this very evening to sit with Miss Ashleigh, to talk to her with your usual easy cheerfulness, and —"

"Anne," interrupted Mrs. Poyntz, "I will come and drink tea with

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

you at half-past seven, and bring my knitting; and perhaps, if you ask him, Dr. Fenwick will come too! He can be tolerably entertaining when he likes it."

"It is too great a tax on his kindness, I fear," said Mrs. Ashleigh. "But," she added cordially, "I should be grateful indeed if he would spare us an hour of his time."

I murmured an assent, which I endeavored to make not too joyous.

"So that matter is settled," said Mrs. Poyntz; "and now I shall go to Mr. Vigors and prevent his further interference."

"Oh! but, Margaret, pray don't offend him; a connection of my poor dear Gilbert's. And so tetchy! I am sure I do not know how you'll manage to—"

"To get rid of him? Never fear. As I manage every thing and everybody," said Mrs. Poyntz, bluntly. So she kissed her friend on the forehead, gave me a gracious nod, and, declining the offer of my carriage, walked with her usual brisk, decided tread down the short path toward the town.

Mrs. Ashleigh timidly approached me, and again the furtive hand bashfully insinuating the hateful fee!

"Stay," said I; "this is a case which needs the most constant watching. I wish to call so often that I should seem the most greedy of doctors if my visits were to be computed at guineas. Let me be at ease to effect my cure; my pride of science is involved in it. And when among all the young ladies of the Hill you can point to none with a fresher bloom, or a fairer promise of healthful life than the patient you intrust to my care, why, then the fee and the dismissal. Nay, nay; I must refer you to our friend, Mrs. Poyntz. It was so settled with her before she brought me here to displace Dr. Jones." Therewith I escaped.

CHAPTER XV.

In less than a week Lilian was convalescent; in less than a fortnight she regained her usual health; nay Mrs. Ashleigh declared that she had never known her daughter appear so cheerful and look so well. I had established a familiar intimacy at Abbots' House; most of my evenings were spent there. As horse exercise formed an important part of my advice, Mrs. Ashleigh had purchased a pretty and quiet horse for her daughter; and, except the weather was very unfavorable, Lilian now

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

rode daily with Colonel Poyntz, who was a notable equestrian, and often accompanied by Miss Jane Poyntz, and other young ladies of the Hill. I was generally relieved from my duties in time to join her as she returned homeward. Thus we made innocent appointments openly, frankly, in her mother's presence, she telling me beforehand in what direction excursions had been planned with Colonel Poyntz, and I promising to fall in with the party — if my avocations would permit. At my suggestion, Mrs. Ashleigh now opened her house almost every evening to some of the neighboring families. Lilian was thus habituated to the intercourse of young persons of her own age. Music and dancing and childlike games made the old house gay. And the Hill gratefully acknowledged to Mrs. Poyntz "that the Ashleighs were indeed a great acquisition."

But my happiness was not uncheckered. In thus unselfishly surrounding Lilian with others, I felt the anguish of that jealousy which is inseparable from those earlier stages of love — when the lover as yet has won no right to that self-confidence which can only spring from the assurance that he is loved.

In these social reunions I remained aloof from Lilian. I saw her courted by the gay young admirers whom her beauty and her fortune drew around her; her soft face brightening in the exercise of the dance, which the gravity of my profession rather than my years forbade me to join — and her laugh, so musically subdued, ravishing my ear and fretting my heart as if the laugh were a mockery on my sombre self and my presumptuous dreams. But no, suddenly, shyly, her eyes would steal away from those about her, steal to the corner in which I sat, as if they missed me, and, meeting my own gaze, their light softened before they turned away; and the color on her cheek would deepen, and to her lip there came a smile different from the smile that it shed on others. And then — and then — all jealousy, all sadness vanished, and I felt the glory which blends with the growing belief that we are loved.

In that diviner epoch of man's mysterious passion, when ideas of perfection and purity, vague and fugitive before, start forth and concentre themselves round one virgin shape — that rises out from the sea of creation, welcomed by the Houries and adorned by the Graces — how the thought that this archetype of sweetness and beauty singles himself from the millions, singles himself for her choice, ennobles and lifts up his being. Though after experience may rebuke the mortal's illusion that mistook for a daughter of heaven a creature of clay like himself, yet for a while the illusion has grandeur. Though it comes from the senses which shall later oppress and profane it, the senses at first shrink into shade, awed and hushed by the presence that charms them. All that is brightest and best in the man has soared up like long dormant instincts of Heaven, to

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

greet and to hallow what to him seems life's fairest dream of the heavenly! Take the wings from the image of Love, and the god disappears from the form!

Thus, if at moments jealous doubt made my torture, so the moment's relief from it sufficed for my rapture. But I had a cause for disquiet less acute but less varying than jealousy.

Despite Lilian's recovery from the special illness which had more immediately absorbed my care, I remained perplexed as to its cause and true nature. To her mother I gave it the convenient epithet of "nervous." But the epithet did not explain to myself all the symptoms I classified by it. There was still, at times, when no cause was apparent or conjecturable, a sudden change in the expression of her countenance; in the beat of her pulse; the eye would become fixed, the bloom would vanish, the pulse would sink feebler and feebler till it could be scarcely felt; yet there was no indication of heart disease, of which such sudden lowering of life is, in itself, sometimes a warning indication. The change would pass away after a few minutes, during which she seemed unconscious, or, at least, never spoke — never appeared to heed what was said to her. But in the expression of her countenance there was no character of suffering or distress; on the contrary, a wondrous serenity that made her beauty more beauteous, her very youthfulness younger; and when this spurious or partial kind of syncope passed, she recovered at once without effort, without acknowledging that she had felt faint or unwell, but rather with a sense of recruited vitality, as the weary obtain from a sleep. For the rest, her spirits were more generally light and joyous than I should have premised from her mother's previous description. She would enter mirthfully into the mirth of young companions round her; she had evidently quick perception of the sunny sides of life; an infantine gratitude for kindness; an infantine joy in the trifles that amuse only those who delight in tastes pure and simple. But when talk rose into graver and more contemplative topics, her attention became earnest and absorbed, and sometimes a rich eloquence, such as I have never before or since heard from lips so young, would startle me first into a wondering silence, and soon into a disapproving alarm. For the thoughts she then uttered seemed to me too fantastic, too visionary, too much akin to the vagaries of a wild though beautiful imagination. And then I would seek to check, to sober, to distract fancies with which my reason had no sympathy, and the indulgence of which I regarded as injurious to the normal functions of the brain.

When thus, sometimes with a chilly sentence, sometimes with a half-sarcastic laugh, I would repress outpourings frank and musical as the songs of a forest bird, she would look at me with a kind of plaintive sor-

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

row — sometimes sigh and shiver as she turned away. Only in these modes did she show displeasure; otherwise ever sweet and docile, and ever, if, seeing that I had pained her, I asked forgiveness, humbling herself rather to ask mine, and brightening our reconciliation with her angel smile. As yet I had not dared to speak of love; as yet I gazed on her as the captive gazes on the flowers and the stars through the gratings of his cell, murmuring to himself, "When shall the doors unclose?"

CHAPTER XVI.

It was with a wrath suppressed in the presence of the fair embassadress that Mr. Vigors had received from Mrs. Poyntz the intelligence that I had replaced Dr. Jones at Abbots' House, not less abruptly than Dr. Jones had previously supplanted me. As Mrs. Poyntz took upon herself the whole responsibility of this change, Mr. Vigors did not venture to condemn it to her face: for the Administrator of Laws was at heart no little in awe of the Autocrat of Proprieties; as Authority, howsoever established, is in awe of Opinion, howsoever capricious.

To the mild Mrs. Ashleigh, the magistrate's anger was more decidedly manifested. He ceased from his visits; and in answer to a long and deprecatory letter with which she endeavored to soften his resentment and win him back to the house, he replied by an elaborate combination of homily and satire. He began by excusing himself from accepting her invitations on the ground that *his* time was valuable, *his* habits domestic; and though ever willing to sacrifice both time and habits where he could do good, he owed it to himself and to mankind to sacrifice neither where his advice was rejected and his opinion contemned. He glanced briefly, but not hastily, at the respect with which her late husband had deferred to his judgment, and the benefits which that deference had enabled him to bestow. He contrasted the husband's deference with the widow's contumely, and hinted at the evils which the contumely would not permit him to prevent. He could not presume to say what women of the world might think due to deceased husbands, but even women of the world generally allowed the claims of living children, and did not act with levity where their interests were concerned, still less where their lives were at stake. As to Dr. Jones, he, Mr. Vigors, had the fullest confidence in his skill. Mrs. Ashleigh must judge for herself whether Mrs. Poyntz was as good an authority upon medical science as he had no doubt she was upon shawls and ribbons. Dr. Jones was a man of caution and modesty; he did not

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

indulge in the hollow boasts by which charlatans decoyed their dupes; but Dr. Jones had privately assured him that though the case was one that admitted of no rash experiments, he had no fear of the result if his own prudent system were persevered in. What might be the consequences of any other system Dr. Jones would not say, because he was too high-minded to express his distrust of the rival who had made use of underhand arts to supplant him. But Mr. Vigors was convinced, from other sources of information (meaning, I presume, the oracular prescience of his clairvoyants), that the time would come when the poor young lady herself would insist on discarding Dr. Fenwick, and when "that person" would appear in a very different light to many who now so fondly admired and so reverentially trusted him. When that time arrived he, Mr. Vigors, might again be of use; but, meanwhile, though he declined to renew his intimacy at Abbots' House, or to pay unavailing visits of mere ceremony, his interest in the daughter of his old friend remained undiminished, nay, was rather increased by compassion; that he should silently keep his eye upon her; and whenever any thing to her advantage suggested itself to him, he should not be deterred by the slight with which Mrs. Ashleigh had treated his judgment from calling on her, and placing before her conscience as a mother his ideas for her child's benefit, leaving to herself then, as now, the entire responsibility of rejecting the advice which he might say, without vanity, was deemed of some value by those who could distinguish between sterling qualities and specious pretences.

Mrs. Ashleigh's was that thoroughly womanly nature which instinctively leans upon others. She was diffident, trustful, meek, affectionate. Not quite justly had Mrs. Poyntz described her as "commonplace and weak," for though she might be called weak, it was not because she was commonplace; she had a goodness of heart, a sweetness of disposition, to which that disparaging definition could not apply. She could only be called commonplace, inasmuch as in the ordinary daily affairs of life she had a great deal of ordinary daily commonplace good sense. Give her a routine to follow, and no routine could be better adhered to. In the allotted sphere of a woman's duties she never seemed in fault. No household, not even Mrs. Poyntz's, was more happily managed. The old Abbots' House had merged its original antique gloom in the softer character of pleasing repose. All her servants adored Mrs. Ashleigh; all found it a pleasure to please her; her establishment had the harmony of clock-work; comfort diffused itself round her like quiet sunshine round a sheltered spot. To gaze on her pleasing countenance, to listen to the simple talk that lapsed from her guileless lips in even, slow, and lulling murmur, was in itself a respite from "eating cares." She was to the mind what the color of green is to the eye. She had, therefore, excellent sense in all

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

that relates to everyday life. There, she needed not to consult another; there, the wisest might have consulted her with profit. But the moment any thing, however in itself trivial, jarred on the routine to which her mind had grown wedded; the moment an incident hurried her out of the beaten track of woman's daily life, then her confidence forsook her; then she needed a confidant, an adviser, and by that confidant or adviser she could be credulously lured or submissively controlled. Therefore, when she lost, in Mr. Vigors, the guide she had been accustomed to consult whenever she needed guidance, she turned helplessly and piteously, first to Mrs. Poyntz, and then yet more imploringly to me, because a woman of that character is never quite satisfied without the advice of a man. And where an intimacy more familiar than that of his formal visits is once established with a physician, confidence in him grows fearless and rapid, as the natural result of sympathy concentred on an object of anxiety in common between himself and the home which opens its sacred recess to his observant but tender eye. Thus Mrs. Ashleigh had shown me Mr. Vigors' letter, and forgetting that I might not be as amiable as herself, besought me to counsel her how to conciliate and soften her lost husband's friend and connection. That character clothed him with dignity and awe in her soft forgiving eyes. So, smothering my own resentment, less perhaps at the tone of offensive insinuation against myself than at the arrogance with which this prejudiced intermeddler implied to a mother the necessity of his guardian watch over a child under her own care, I sketched a reply which seemed to me both dignified and placatory, abstaining from all discussion, and conveying the assurance that Mrs Ashleigh would be at all times glad to hear, and disposed to respect, whatever suggestion so esteemed a friend of her husband's would kindly submit to her for the welfare of her daughter.

There all communication had stopped for about a month since the date of my reintroduction to Abbots' House. One afternoon I unexpectedly met Mr. Vigors at the entrance of the blind lane, I on my way to Abbots' House, and my first glance at his face told me that he was coming from it, for the expression of that face was more than usually sinister; the sullen scowl was lit into significant menace by a sneer of unmistakable triumph. I felt at once that he had succeeded in some machination against me, and with ominous misgivings quickened my steps.

I found Mrs. Ashleigh seated alone in front of the house, under a large cedar-tree that formed a natural arbor in the centre of the sunny lawn. She was perceptibly embarrassed as I took my seat beside her.

"I hope," said I, forcing a smile, "that Mr. Vigors has not been telling you that I shall kill my patient, or that she looks much worse than she did under Dr. Jones's care?"

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"No," she said. "He owned cheerfully that Lilian was grown quite strong, and said, without any displeasure, that he had heard how gay she had been; riding out and even dancing — which is very kind in him — for he disapproves dancing, on principle.

"But still, I can see he has said something to vex or annoy you; and, to judge by his countenance when I met him in the lane, I should conjecture that that something was intended to lower the confidence you so kindly repose in me."

"I assure you not; he did not mention your name, either to me or to Lilian. I never knew him more friendly; quite like old times. He is a good man at heart, very; and was much attached to my poor husband."

"Did Mr. Ashleigh profess a very high opinion of Mr. Vigors?"

"Well, I don't quite know that, because my dear Gilbert never spoke to me much about him. Gilbert was naturally very silent. But he shrank from all trouble — all worldly affairs — and Mr. Vigors managed his estate, and inspected his steward's books, and protected him through a long lawsuit which he had inherited from his father. It killed his father. I don't know what we should have done without Mr. Vigors, and I am so glad he has forgiven me."

"Hem! Where is Miss Ashleigh? In-doors?"

"No; somewhere in the grounds. But my dear Dr. Fenwick, do not leave me yet: you are so very, very kind; and somehow I have grown to look on you quite as an old friend. Something has happened which has put me out — quite put me out."

She said this wearily and feebly, closing her eyes as if she were indeed put out in the sense of extinguished.

"The feeling of friendship you express," said I, with earnestness, "is reciprocal. On my side it is accompanied with a peculiar gratitude. I am a lonely man, by a lonely fireside — no parents, no near kindred, and in this town, since Dr. Faber left it, no cordial intimacy till I knew you. In admitting me so familiarly to your hearth, you have given me what I have never known before since I came to man's estate: a glimpse of the happy domestic life; the charm and relief to eye, heart, and spirit, which is never known but in households cheered by the face of woman: thus my sentiment for you and yours is indeed that of an old friend; and in any private confidence you show me, I feel as if I were no longer a lonely man, without kindred, without home."

Mrs. Ashleigh seemed much moved by these words, which my heart had forced from my lips, and after replying to me with simple unaffected warmth of kindness, she rose, took my arm, and continued thus as we walked slowly to and fro the lawn:

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"You know, perhaps, that my poor husband left a sister, now a widow as myself, Lady Haughton."

"I remember that Mrs. Poyntz said you had such a sister, but I never heard you mention Lady Haughton till now. Well!"

"Well, Mr. Vigors has brought me a letter from her, and it is that which has put me out. I dare say you have not heard me speak before of Lady Haughton, for I am ashamed to say I had almost forgotten her existence. She is many years older than my husband was; of a very different character. Only came once to see him after our marriage. Hurt me by ridiculing him as a book-worm. Offended him by looking a little down on me, as a nobody without spirit and fashion, which was quite true. And, except by a cold and unfeeling letter of formal condolence after I lost my dear Gilbert, I never heard from her since I have been a widow, till to-day. But, after all, she is my poor husband's sister, and his elder sister, and Lilian's aunt; and, as Mr. Vigor says, 'Duty is duty.'"

Had Mrs. Ashleigh said "Duty is torture," she could not have uttered the maxim with more mournful and despondent a resignation.

"And what does this lady require of you, which Mr. Vigors deems it your duty to comply with?"

"Dear me! what penetration! You have guessed the exact truth. But I think you will agree with Mr. Vigors. Certainly I have no option; yes, I must do it."

"My penetration is in fault now. Do what? Pray explain?"

"Poor Lady Haughton, six months ago, lost her only son, Sir James. Mr. Vigors says he was a very fine young man, of whom any mother would have been proud; I had heard he was wild. Mr. Vigors says, however, that he was just going to reform, and marry a young lady whom his mother chose for him, when, unluckily, he would ride a steeple-chase, not being quite sober at the time, and broke his neck. Lady Haughton has been, of course, in great grief. She has retired to Brighton; and she wrote to me from thence, and Mr. Vigors brought the letter. He will go back to her to-day."

"Will go back to Lady Haughton? What! has he been to her? Is he, then, as intimate with Lady Haughton as he was with her brother?"

"No; but there has been a long and constant correspondence. She had a settlement on the Kirby estate — a sum which was not paid off during Gilbert's life; and a very small part of the property went to Sir James, which part Mr. Ashleigh Sumner, the heir-at-law to the rest of the estate, wished Mr. Vigors, as his guardian, to buy during his minority, and as it was mixed up with Lady Haughton's settlement, her consent was necessary as well as Sir James's. So there was much negotiation,

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

and, since then, Ashleigh Sumner has come into the Haughton property, on poor Sir James's decease; so, that complicated all affairs between Mr. Vigors and Lady Haughton, and he has just been to Brighton to see her. And poor Lady Haughton, in short, wants me and Lilian to come and visit her. I don't like it at all. But you said the other day you thought sea air might be good for Lilian during the heat of the summer, and she seems well enough now for the change. What do you think?"

"She is well enough, certainly. But Brighton is not the place I would recommend for the summer; it wants shade, and is much hotter than L——."

"Yes, but unluckily Lady Haughton foresaw that objection, and she has a jointure-house some miles from Brighton, and near the sea. She says the grounds are well wooded, and the place is proverbially cool and healthy, not far from St. Leonard's Forest. And, in short, I have written to say we will come. So we must, unless, indeed, you positively forbid it."

"When do you think of going?"

"Next Monday. Mr. Vigors would have me fix the day. If you knew how I dislike moving when I am once settled; and I do so dread Lady Haughton, she is so fine, and so satirical. But Mr. Vigors says she is very much altered, poor thing! I should like to show you her letter, but I had just sent it to Margaret — Mrs. Poyntz — a minute or two before you came. She knows something of Lady Haughton. Margaret knows everybody. And we shall have to go in mourning for poor Sir James, I suppose; and Margaret will choose it, for I am sure I can't guess to what extent we should be supposed to mourn. I ought to have gone in mourning before — poor Gilbert's nephew — but I am so stupid, and I had never seen him. And — but oh, this *is* kind! Margaret herself — my dear Margaret!"

We had just turned away from the house, in our up and down walk; and Mrs. Poyntz stood immediately fronting us.

"So Anne, you have actually accepted this invitation — and for Monday next?"

"Yes. Did I do wrong?"

"What does Dr. Fenwick say? Can Lilian go with safety?"

I could not honestly say she might not go with safety, but my heart sank like lead as I answered:

"Miss Ashleigh does not now need merely medical care; but more than half her cure has depended on keeping her spirits free from depression. She may miss the cheerful companionship of your own daughter, and other young ladies of her own age; a very melancholy house, saddened by a recent bereavement, without other guests; a hostess to whom

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

she is a stranger, and whom Mrs. Ashleigh herself appears to deem formidable, certainly these do not make that change of scene which a physician would recommend. When I spoke of sea air being good for Miss Ashleigh, I thought of our own northern coasts, at a later time of the year, when I could escape myself for a few weeks and attend her. The journey, too, would be shorter and less fatiguing; the air more invigorating.

"No doubt that would be better," said Mrs. Poyntz, dryly; "but so far as your objections to visiting Lady Haughton have been stated, they are groundless. Her house will not be melancholy; she will have other guests, and Lilian will find other companions young like herself — young ladies and young gentlemen too!"

There was something ominous, something compassionate, in the look which Mrs. Poyntz cast upon me, in concluding her speech, which in itself was calculated to rouse the fears of a lover. Lilian away from me, in the house of a worldly fine lady — such as I judged Lady Haughton to be — surrounded by young gentlemen, as well as young ladies, by admirers, no doubt, of a higher rank and more brilliant fashion than she had yet known! I closed my eyes, and with strong effort suppressed a groan.

"My dear Anne, let me satisfy myself that Dr. Fenwick really *does* consent to this journey. He will say to me what he may not to you. Pardon me, then, if I take him aside for a few minutes. Let me find you here again under this cedar-tree."

Placing her arm in mine, and without waiting for Mrs. Ashleigh's answer, Mrs. Poyntz drew me into the more sequestered walk that belted the lawn; and, when we were out of Mrs. Ashleigh's sight and hearing, said:

"From what you have now seen of Lilian Ashleigh, do you still desire to gain her as your wife?"

"Still? Oh! with an intensity proportioned to the fear with which I now dread that she is about to pass away from my eyes — from my life!"

"Does your judgment confirm the choice of your heart? Reflect before you answer."

"Such selfish judgment as I had before I knew her would not confirm, but oppose it. The nobler judgment that now expands all my reasonings, approves and seconds my heart. No, no; do not smile so sarcastically. This is not the voice of a blind and egotistical passion. Let me explain myself if I can. I concede to you that Lilian's character is undeveloped. I concede to you that, amidst the childlike freshness and innocence of her nature, there is at times a strangeness, a mystery, which I

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

have not yet traced to its cause. But I am certain that the intellect is organically as sound as the heart, and that intellect and heart will ultimately — if under happy auspices — blend in that felicitous union which constitutes the perfection of woman. But it is because she does, and may for years, may perhaps always, need a more devoted, thoughtful care than natures less tremulously sensitive, that my judgment sanctions my choice; for whatever is best for her is best for me. And who would watch over her as I should?"

"You have never yet spoken to Lilian as lovers speak?"

"Oh no, indeed."

"And, nevertheless, you believe that your affection would not be unreturned?"

"I thought so once — I doubt now — yet, in doubting, hope. But why do you alarm me with these questions? You, too, forebode that in this visit I may lose her forever?"

"If you fear that, tell her so, and perhaps her answer may dispel your fear."

"What, now — already, when she has scarcely known me a month! Might I not risk all if too premature?"

"There is no almanac for love. With many women love is born the moment they know they are beloved. All wisdom tells us that a moment once gone is irrevocable. Were I in your place I should feel that I approached a moment that I must not lose. I have said enough; now I shall rejoin Mrs. Ashleigh."

"Stay — tell me first what Lady Haughton's letter really contained to prompt the advice with which you so transport, and yet so daunt, me when you proffer it."

"Not now — later, perhaps — not now. If you wish to see Lilian alone, she is by the old Monk's Well; I saw her seated there as I came that way to the house."

"One word more — only one. Answer this question frankly, for it is one of honor. Do you still believe now that my suit to her daughter would not be disapproved by Mrs. Ashleigh?"

"At this moment I am sure it would not; a week hence I might not give you the same answer."

So she passed on, with her quick but measured tread, back through the shady walk on to the open lawn, till the last glimpse of her pale gray robe disappeared under the boughs of the cedar-tree. Then, with a start, I broke the irresolute tremulous suspense in which I had vainly endeavored to analyze my own mind, solve my own doubts, concentrate my own will, and went the opposite way, skirting the circle of that haunted ground; as now, on one side its lofty terrace, the houses of the

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

neighboring city came full and close into view, divided from my fairy-land of life but by the trodden murmurous thoroughfare winding low beneath the ivied parapets; and as now, again, the world of men abruptly vanished behind the screening foliage of luxuriant June.

At last the enchanted glade opened out from the verdure, its borders fragrant with syringa, and rose, and woodbine; and there, by the gray memorial of the gone Gothic age, my eyes seemed to close their unquiet wanderings, resting spell-bound on that image which had become to me the incarnation of earth's bloom and youth.

She stood amidst the Past, backed by the fragments of walls which man had raised to seclude him from human passion, locking under those lids so downcast the secret of the only knowledge I asked from the boundless Future.

Ah, what mockery there is in that grand word, the world's fierce war-cry, Freedom! Who has not known one period of life, and that so solemn that its shadows may rest over all life hereafter, when one human creature has over him a sovereignty more supreme and absolute than Orient servitude adores in the symbols of diadem and sceptre? What crest so haughty that has not bowed before a hand which could exalt or humble? What heart so dauntless that has not trembled to call forth the voice at whose sound ope the gates of rapture or despair? That life alone is free which rules and suffices for itself. That life we forfeit when we love!

CHAPTER XVII.

How did I utter it? By what words did my heart make itself known? I remember not. All was as a dream that falls upon a restless, feverish night, and fades away as the eyes unclose on the peace of a cloudless heaven, on the bliss of a golden sun. A new morrow seemed indeed upon the earth when I awoke from a lifelong yesterday, her dear hand in mine, her sweet face bowed upon my breast.

And then there was that melodious silence in which there is no sound audible from without; yet within us there is heard a lulling celestial music, as if our whole being, grown harmonious with the universe, joined from its happy deeps in the hymn that unites the stars.

In that silence our two hearts seemed to make each other understood, to be growing near and nearer, blending by mysterious concord into the

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

completedness of a solemn union, never henceforth to be rent asunder.

At length I said softly: "And it was here, on this spot, that I first saw you — here that I for the first time knew what power to change our world and to rule our future goes forth from the charm of a human face!"

And Lilian asked me timidly, and without lifting her eyes, how I had so seen her, reminding me that I promised to tell her, and had never yet done so.

And then I told her of the strange impulse that had led me into the grounds, and by what chance my steps had been diverted down the path that wound to the glade; how suddenly her form had shone upon my eyes, gathering round itself the rose hues of the setting sun; and how wistfully those eyes had followed her own silent gaze into the distant heaven.

As I spoke her hand pressed mine eagerly, convulsively, and, raising her face from my breast, she looked at me with an intent, anxious earnestness. That look! — twice before it had thrilled and perplexed me.

"What is there in that look, oh, my Lilian, which tells me that there is something that startles you — something you wish to confide, and yet shrink from explaining? See how, already, I study the fair book from which the seal has been lifted, but as yet you must aid me to construe its language."

"If I shrink from explaining, it is only because I fear that I cannot explain so as to be understood or believed. But you have a right to know the secrets of a life which you would link to your own. Turn your face aside from me; a reproving look, an incredulous smile, chill — oh! you cannot guess how they chill me — when I would approach that which to me is so serious and so solemnly strange."

I turned my face aside, and her voice grew firmer as, after a brief pause, she resumed:

"As far back as I can remember in my infancy, there have been moments when there seems to fall a soft, hazy veil between my sight and the things around it, thickening and deepening till it has the likeness of one of those white fleecy clouds which gather on the verge of the horizon when the air is yet still, but the winds are about to rise, and then this vapor or veil will suddenly open, as clouds open, and let in the blue sky."

"Go on," I said, gently, for here she came to a stop.

She continued, speaking somewhat more hurriedly.

"Then, in that opening, strange appearances present themselves to me,

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

as in a vision. In my childhood these were chiefly landscapes of wonderful beauty. I could but faintly describe them then; I could not attempt to describe them now, for they are almost gone from my memory. My dear mother chid me for telling her what I saw, so I did not impress it on my mind by repeating it. As I grew up this kind of vision — if I may so call it — became much less frequent or much less distinct; I still saw the soft veil fall, the pale cloud form and open, but often what may then have appeared was entirely forgotten when I recovered myself, waking as from a sleep. Sometimes, however, the recollection would be vivid and complete: sometimes I saw the face of my lost father; sometimes I heard his very voice, as I had seen and heard him in my early childhood, when he would let me rest for hours beside him as he mused or studied, happy to be so quietly near him — for I loved him, oh, so dearly! and I remember him so distinctly, though I was only in my sixth year when he died. Much more recently, indeed, within the last few months — the images of things to come are reflected on the space that I gaze into as clearly as in a glass. Thus, for weeks before I came hither, or knew that such a place existed, I saw distinctly the old House, yon trees, this sward, this moss-grown Gothic fount, and, with the sight, an impression was conveyed to me that in the scene before me my old childlike life would pass into some solemn change. So that when I came here, and recognized the picture in my vision, I took an affection for the spot; an affection not without awe; a powerful, perplexing interest, as one who feels under the influence of a fate of which a prophetic glimpse has been vouchsafed. And in that evening when you first saw me, seated here — "

"Yes, Lilian, on that evening — ?"

"I saw you also, but in my vision — yonder, far in the deeps of space — and — and my heart was stirred as it had never been before; and near where your image grew out from the cloud I saw my father's face, and I heard his voice, not in my ear, but as in my heart whispering — "

"Yes, Lilian, whispering — what?"

"These words — only these — 'Ye will need one another.' But then, suddenly, between my upward eyes and the two forms they had beheld, there rose from the earth, obscuring the skies, a vague dusky vapor, undulous, and coiling like a vast serpent, nothing, indeed, of its shape and figure definite, but of its face one abrupt glare — a flash from two dread luminous eyes, and a young head, like the Medusa's, changing more rapidly than I could have drawn breath into a grinning skull. Then my terror made me bow my head, and when I raised it again all that I had seen was vanished. But the terror still remained, even when I felt my mother's arm round me and heard her voice. And then, when I entered the

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

House and sat down again alone, the recollection of what I had seen — those eyes — that face — that skull — grew on me stronger and stronger till I fainted, and remember no more until my eyes, opening, saw you by my side, and in my wonder there was not terror; no, a sense of joy, protection, hope, yet still shadowed by a kind of fear or awe, in recognizing the countenance which had gleamed on me from the skies before the dark vapor had risen, and while my father's voice had murmured, 'Ye will need one another.' And now — and now — will you love me less that you know a secret in my being which I have told to no other — cannot construe to myself? — only — only, at least, do not mock me — do not disbelieve me. Nay, turn from me no longer now: now I ask to meet your eyes. Now, before our hands can join again, tell me that you do not despise me as untruthful, do not pity me as insane."

"Hush — hush!" I said, drawing her to my breast. "Of all you tell me we will talk hereafter. The scales of our science have no weights fine enough for the gossamer threads of a maiden's pure fancies. Enough for me — for us both — if out from all such illusions start one truth told to you, lovely child, from the heavens; told to me, ruder man, on the earth — repeated by each pulse of this heart that woos you to hear and to trust; now and henceforth, through life unto death — 'Each has need of the other' — I of you — I of you! my Lilian — my Lilian!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

In spite of the previous assurance of Mrs. Poyntz, it was not without an uneasy apprehension that I approached the cedar-tree, under which Mrs. Ashleigh still sat, her friend beside her. I looked on the fair creature whose arm was linked in mine. So young, so singularly lovely, and with all the gifts of birth and fortune which bend avarice and ambition the more submissively to youth and beauty, I felt as if I had wronged what a parent might justly deem her natural lot.

"Oh, if your mother should disapprove," said I, falteringly.

Lilian leaned on my arm less lightly. "If I had thought so," she said, with her soft blush, "should I be thus by your side?"

So we passed under the boughs of the dark tree, and Lilian left me, and kissed Mrs. Ashleigh's cheek, then seating herself on the turf, laid her head quietly on her mother's lap. I looked on the Queen of the Hill, whose keen eye shot over me. I thought there was a momentary expres-

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

sion of pain or displeasure on her countenance; but it passed. Still there seemed to me something of irony, as well as of triumph or congratulation, in the half smile with which she quitted her seat, and in the tone with which she whispered, as she glided by me to the open sward, "So, then, it is settled."

She walked lightly and quickly down the lawn. When she was out of sight, I breathed more freely. I took the seat which she had quitted, by Mrs. Ashleigh's side, and said, "A little while ago, I spoke of myself as a man without kindred, without home, and now I come to you and ask for both."

Mrs. Ashleigh looked at me benignly, then raised her daughter's face from her lap, and whispered, "Lilian," and Lilian's lips moved, but I did not hear her answer. Her mother did. She took Lilian's hand, simply placed it in mine, and said, "As she chooses, I choose; whom she loves, I love."

CHAPTER XIX.

From that evening till the day Mrs. Ashleigh and Lilian went on the dreaded visit, I was always at their house when my avocations allowed me to steal to it; and during those few days, the happiest I had ever known, it seemed to me that years could not have more deepened my intimacy with Lilian's exquisite nature, made me more reverential of its purity, or more enamoured of its sweetness. I could detect in her but one fault, and I rebuked myself for believing that it was a fault. We see many who neglect the minor duties of life, who lack watchful forethought and considerate care for others, and we recognize the cause of this failing in levity or egotism. Certainly neither of those tendencies of character could be ascribed to Lilian. Yet still in daily trifles there was something of that neglect, some lack of that care and forethought. She loved her mother with fondness and devotion, yet it never occurred to her to aid in those petty household cares in which her mother centred so much of habitual interest. She was full of tenderness and pity to all want and suffering, yet many a young lady on the Hill was more actively beneficent — visiting the poor in their sickness, or instructing their children in the Infant Schools. I was persuaded that her love for me was deep and truthful; it was clearly void of all ambition; doubtless she would have borne unflinching and contented whatever the world considers to be sacrifice and

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

privation — yet I should never have expected her to take her share in the troubles of ordinary life. I could never have applied to her the homely but significant name of helpmate. I reproach myself while I write for noticing such defect — if defect it were — in what may be called the practical routine of our positive, trivial, human existence. No doubt it was this that had caused Mrs. Poyntz's harsh judgment against the wisdom of my choice. But such chiller shade upon her charming nature was reflected from no inert unamiable self-love. It was but the consequence of that self-absorption which the habit of reverie had fostered. I cautiously abstained from all allusion to those visionary deceptions, which she had confided to me, as the truthful impressions of spirit if not of sense. To me any approach to what I termed superstition was displeasing; any indulgence of phantasies not within the measured and beaten tracks of healthful imagination, more than displeased me in her — it alarmed. I would not by a word encourage her in persuasions which I felt it would be at present premature to reason against, and cruel indeed to ridicule. I was convinced that of themselves these mists round her native intelligence, engendered by a solitary and musing childhood, would subside in the fuller daylight of wedded life. She seemed pained when she saw how resolutely I shunned a subject dear to her thoughts. She made one or two timid attempts to renew it, but my grave look sufficed to check her. Once or twice, indeed, on such occasions she would turn away and leave me, but she soon came back — that gentle heart could not bear one unkindlier shade between that and what it loved. It was agreed that our engagement should be for the present confided only to Mrs. Poyntz. When Mrs. Ashleigh and Lilian returned, which would be in a few weeks at furthest, it should be proclaimed; and our marriage could take place in the autumn, when I should be most free for one brief holiday from professional toils.

So we parted — as lovers part. I felt none of those jealous fears which, before we were affianced, had made me tremble at the thought of separation, and had conjured up irresistible rivals. But it was with a settled heavy gloom that I saw her depart. From earth was gone a glory; from life a blessing.

CHAPTER XX.

During the busy years of my professional career I had snatched leisure for some professional treatises, which had made more or less sensation, and

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

one of them, entitled "The Vital Principle, its Waste and Supply," had gained a wide circulation among the general public. This last treatise contained the results of certain experiments, then new in chemistry, which were adduced in support of a theory I entertained as to the reinvigoration of the human system by principles similar to those which Liebig has applied to the replenishment of an exhausted soil, namely, the giving back to the frame those essentials to its nutrition which it has lost by the action or accident of time; or supplying that special pabulum or energy in which the individual organism is constitutionally deficient; and neutralizing or counterbalancing that in which it superabounds — a theory upon which some eminent physicians have more recently improved with signal success. But on these essays, slight and suggestive, rather than dogmatic, I set no value. I had been for the last two years engaged on a work of much wider range, endeared to me by a far bolder ambition — a work upon which I fondly hoped to found an enduring reputation as a severe and original physiologist. It was an "Inquiry into Organic Life," similar in comprehensiveness of survey to that by which the illustrious Müller, of Berlin, has enriched the science of our age; however inferior, alas, to that august combination of thought and learning, in the judgment which checks presumption, and the genius which adorns speculation. But at that day I was carried away by the ardor of composition, and I admired my performance because I loved my labor. This work had been entirely laid aside for the last agitated month. Now that Lilian was gone, I resumed it earnestly, as the sole occupation that had power and charm enough to rouse me from the aching sense of void and loss.

The very night of the day she went I reopened my MS. I had left off at the commencement of a chapter "Upon Knowledge as derived from our Senses." As my convictions on this head were founded on the well-known arguments of Locke and Condillac against innate ideas, and on the reasonings by which Hume had resolved the combination of sensations into a general idea, to an impulse arising merely out of habit, so I set myself to oppose, as a dangerous concession to the sentimentalities or mysticism of a pseudo-philosophy, the doctrine favored by most of our recent physiologists, and of which some of the most eminent of German metaphysicians have accepted the substance, though refining into a subtlety its positive form — I mean the doctrine which Müller himself has expressed in these words:

"That innate ideas may exist, cannot in the slightest degree be denied; it is, indeed, a fact. All the ideas of animals, which are induced by instinct, are innate and immediate. Something presented to the mind, a desire to attain which is at the same time given. The new-born lamb

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY