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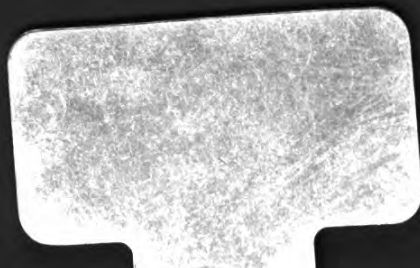


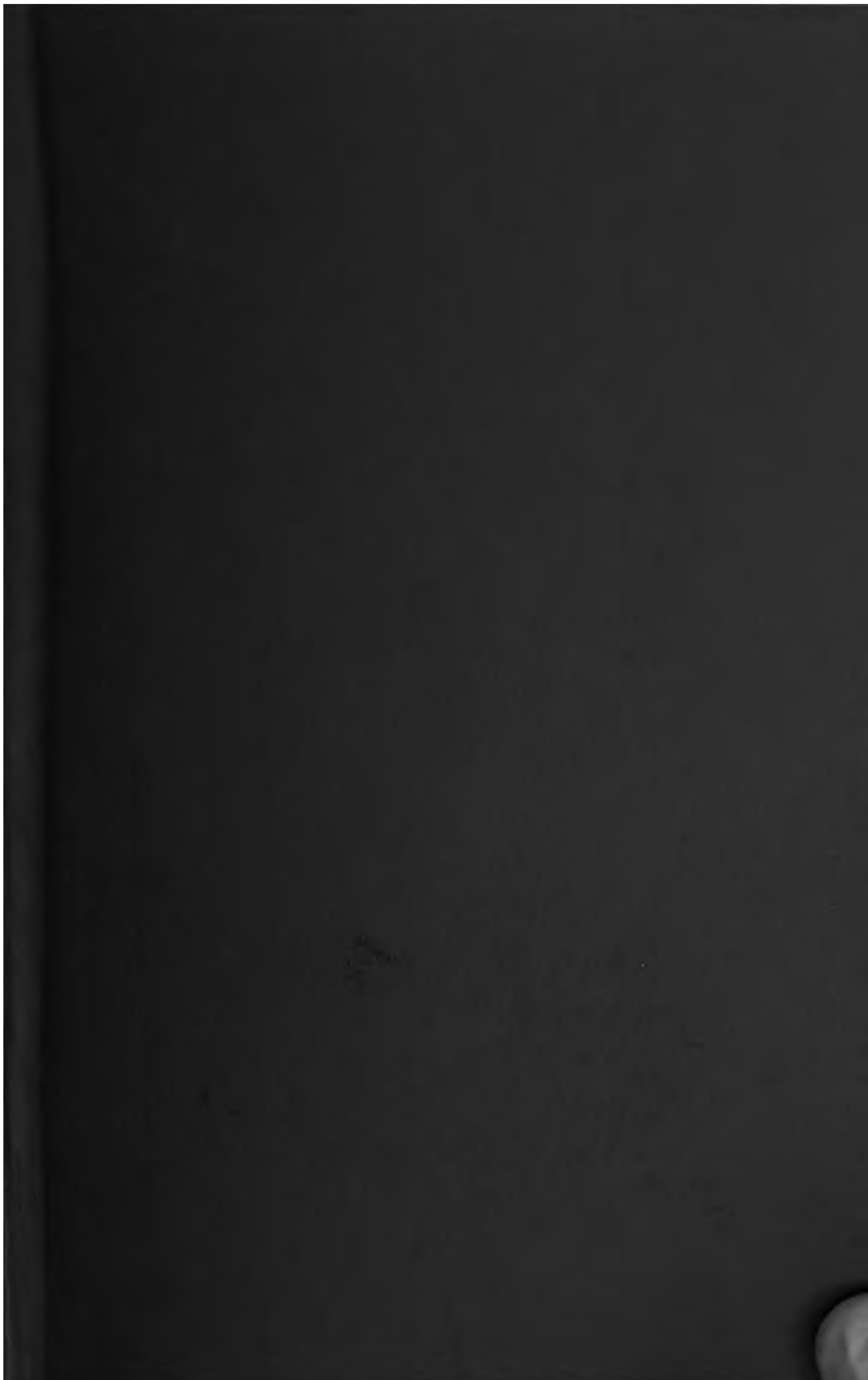
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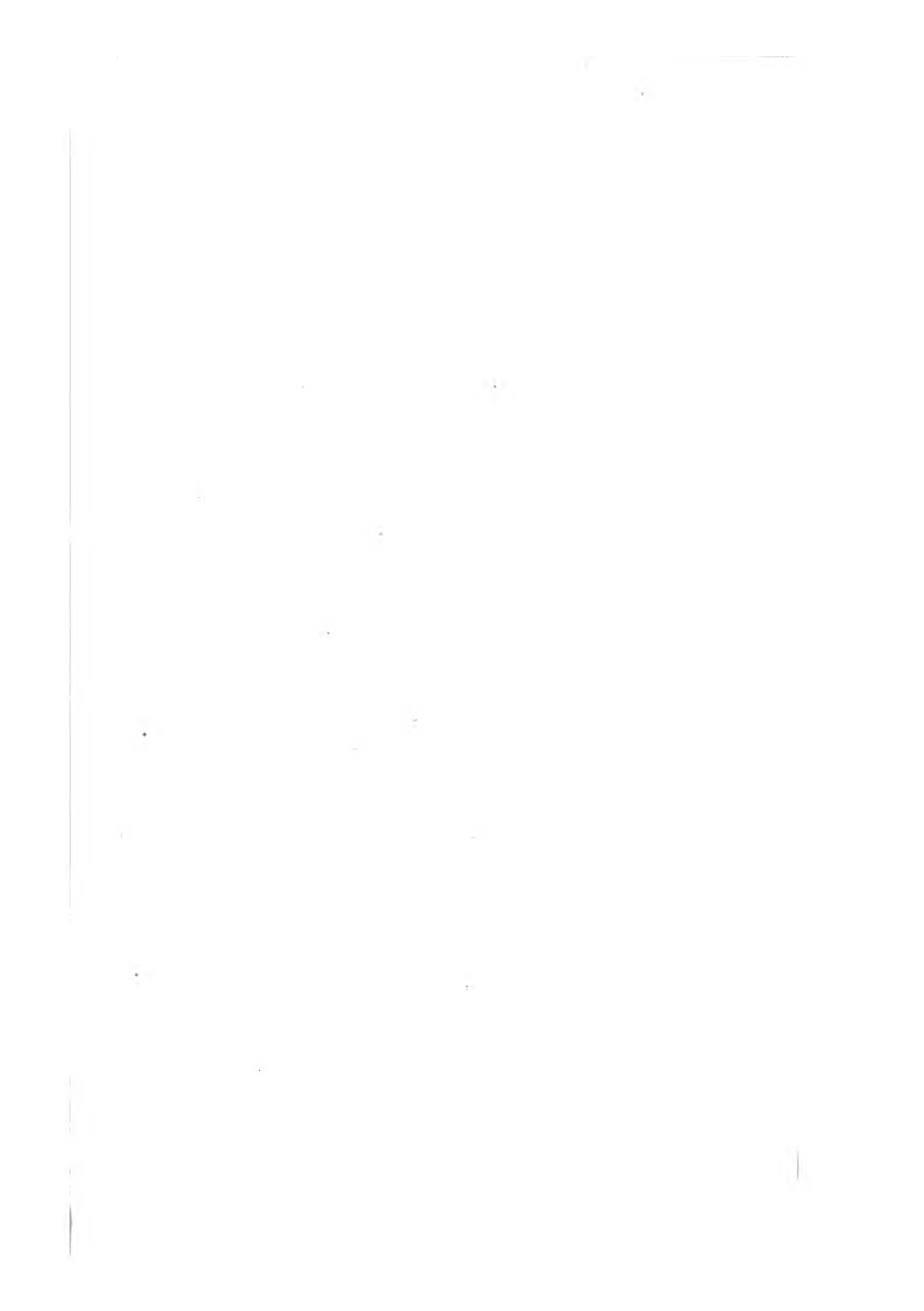
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DOCTOR AUSTIN'S GUESTS

IN TWO VOLUMES

ALEXANDER STRAHAN, PUBLISHER

LONDON . . . . . 56, *Ludgate Hill*  
NEW YORK . . . . . 139, *Grand Street*



# DOCTOR AUSTIN'S GUESTS

BY WILLIAM GILBERT

AUTHOR OF "DE PROFUNDIS," ETC.

VOL. II.

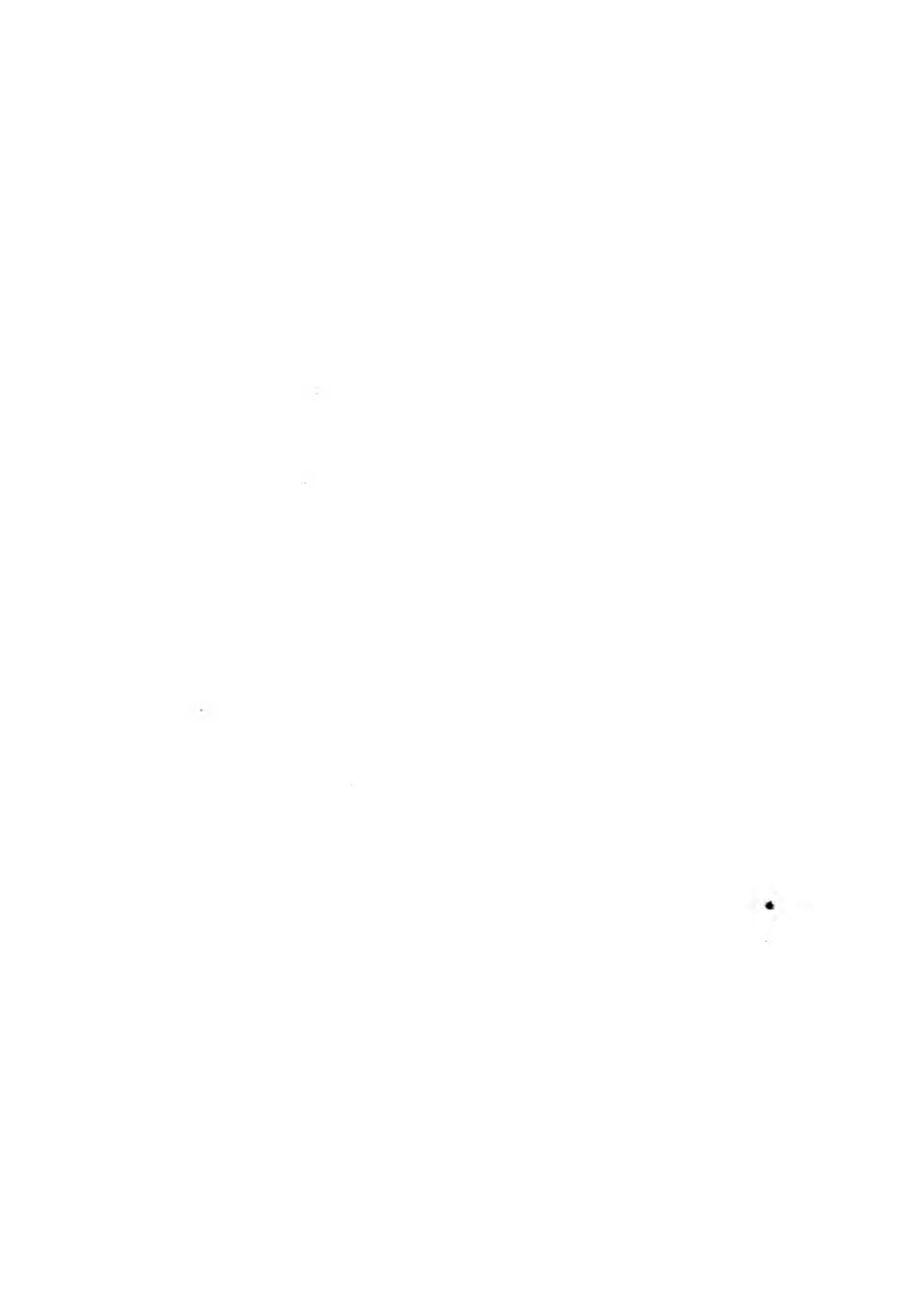


ALEXANDER STRAHAN, PUBLISHER

LONDON AND NEW YORK

1866

*250. f. 285.*



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*I.—A SCIENTIFIC EVENING.*

THE next of Dr. Austin's guests I shall have the honour of introducing to the reader is Mr. Ponsonby. He was tall, thin, and, at the time he joined our circle, had fallen somewhat into the sere and yellow leaf. He was still, however, an active man, and, apart from his infirmity, a most agreeable companion. He had received an excellent education, having graduated at Cambridge, where he greatly distinguished himself. When he quitted the university, trusting to the honourable testimonials he had received, he endeavoured to obtain a government appointment, but as he had neither patrons nor friends, he was of course un-



successful. He then employed himself in preparing young gentlemen for their examinations; and by this means he continued to maintain himself till he was considerably past forty, though with no little difficulty, his emoluments being small, and he being deficient in economy. Indeed, up till this period he sometimes endured considerable privations; but at length, by the death of a distant relative, he inherited a handsome fortune. So unexpected was his good luck, that it had a most prejudicial effect upon his mind, throwing him into a state of nervous irritability from which he never afterwards completely recovered.

On the receipt of his fortune he gave up teaching, and attempted to lead a quiet, sedentary life, amusing himself by plunging deeply into his favourite study of mathematics; but the derangement of his nervous system hardly allowed him the repose necessary for an occupation of the kind. In worldly matters he was as abstracted as one of the philosophers of Laputa, yet the irritability of his system was so great that it would allow him no rest, and not only did his mind become disordered, but he fell off so fearfully in

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bodily health that it was deemed necessary to put him under restraint, lest his malady should become fatal. Fortunately he was reasonable enough to listen to the advice of his friends, and allow himself to be placed under medical care. Dr. Austin was applied to accordingly to receive him. It was arranged that he should be allowed greater liberty than the rest of the patients, and no impediment was put in the way as to spending his money. He had apartments placed at his disposal on the second floor. These consisted of three rooms—a bed-room, a sitting-room, and a study, or, as he called it, laboratory.

Mr. Ponsonby was most amiable and gentlemanly in his manners, and soon became a favourite with us all. For some time, however, after his arrival we saw but little of him; indeed, so little, that had it not been for his great affability when we did meet, it would have given us the impression that he wished to avoid us. He invariably breakfasted in his own room, and we rarely saw him till dinner-time. He would then converse with the guests in so friendly a manner as completely to dispel the idea, either that he was retired in his

habits or too proud to mix with us. After dinner he generally remained with us for an hour or two. He then left, and we saw no more of him till he presented himself at the next day's dinner-table. His manners did not betray the slightest symptom of hallucination; even the nervous irritability he was affected with, when we first made his acquaintance, soon vanished under the judicious care of the doctor, and his bodily health rapidly improved. Still there was a certain amount of mystery about him which I was most anxious to unravel; and this was increased by the arrival at the house of numerous packing-cases, which were immediately taken to his room. What they contained none of us could make out. He never spoke of them, and if I happened to inquire of the servants concerning their contents, I got the invariable answer that they did not know, as Mr. Ponsonby always opened them himself in his laboratory when no one else was present, and that he always kept the door locked. I very much suspect that this was hardly the truth, and that as he had plenty of money, he bribed the servants to silence. With such

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an impression, of course it would have been an act of indiscretion on my part to have attempted to obtain a clue to the enigma, and I determined to wait till some accidental circumstance should enable me to clear up the matter. Fortunately I was soon gratified.

The packing-cases at last ceased to arrive. After this we enjoyed a good deal more of Mr. Ponsonby's society in the evening, although he continued to seclude himself during the day in his own apartment. He continued to be most agreeable with all, but he attached himself principally to Mr. Cochrane and myself. He had found out, it appeared, that we both knew something of mechanics and the collateral sciences; and as his own tastes lay in the same direction, it is not to be wondered at that he associated more with us than the rest. Mr. Cochrane had informed him of his own particular theory of the possible combustion of sea-water, and very probably from the same source he had been roughly and erroneously instructed as to the tremendous secret I held in my own hands. At any rate I had never mentioned it to him, and yet he was evidently aware

of it, from remarks which he from time to time let drop in conversation. Certainly I must admit they were never made in a supercilious manner ; and this circumstance pleased me so much that I determined some day to make him my confidant, at least so far as I could do it without the fear of any ultimate dangerous results. But one thing surprised me much, and greatly raised my respect for his habitual courtesy. He would listen with the most perfect gravity to the absurd theories propounded by Mr. Cochrane. In fact, so much was Mr. Cochrane encouraged by his good nature, that I positively overheard him one evening proposing to Mr. Ponsonby that he should advance him some money on his patent, assuring him of the certainty of the success of his scheme, and promising him a fabulous amount of interest for any advance he might make. I need hardly say that although Mr. Ponsonby listened to him with his accustomed gravity and politeness, he skilfully avoided entering into any speculation whatever, saying that he was simply a student, utterly unacquainted with business matters, and that he had made a resolution never to embark



in any schemes, however tempting they might appear. From that resolution he said he would not swerve, even to profit by the tempting offer then made him, increased as it was by his wish to oblige a friend. Whether Mr. Cochrane ever repeated his request I know not, but if he did, he certainly met with no better success than on his first application.

As my intimacy with Mr. Ponsonby increased he became gradually more communicative. One fine summer afternoon, when walking with him round the grounds, our conversation turned on the different inmates of the establishment, and the peculiarities of their characters.

“I dare say,” he said, after we had passed in review most of the notables among us, “you all consider me a very morose, unsociable sort of person, but I assure you I am naturally nothing of the kind.”

“I, at least,” I replied, “have no reason to come to such a conclusion ; but what can possibly have put such an idea into your head?”

“Simply the little intercourse I have hitherto had with the doctor’s guests in general, and

the secluded manner in which I keep myself the whole of the day in my own apartment."

"I can very easily imagine," I remarked, "that the majority of us offer but little temptation for your friendship. I always respect a man who chooses his associates with caution."

"That, I am afraid," he said, "is hardly my own case, for I am naturally very fond of society; so much so that it has acted, on more than one occasion, most prejudicially on my pecuniary interests. The real truth is, that the seclusion I have hitherto maintained since I came to Dr. Austin's has not in any way been caused by dislike for my companions, although, candidly, you and Mr. Cochrane are the only individuals among them whom I could make my intimate associates. I do not mind telling you that I have been occupied for some years in working out a most difficult and complicated problem, and one which I believe to be perfectly original. I have naturally been exceedingly jealous of allowing strangers to become acquainted with it, lest they should profit by the long and laborious studies I have gone through, appropriating my idea, and bringing

it forward to the world as their own. I am now so far advanced that I may say it is almost perfect, though one or two points require a little more consideration before I publish it. In you and Mr. Cochrane I know I can confide, and shall have much pleasure in explaining it to you, it being of course understood between us that neither of you will ever claim it as your own. Publish it as much as you please to the world, but admit at the same time that I am the discoverer."

"May I inquire," I said, "what is the nature of your discovery?"

"I would rather not tell you at present," he said, "because it would appear to you so impracticable that you might smile at it."

"You do me an injustice if you consider it possible that I could be guilty of an incivility of the kind."

"Oh, I would willingly forgive you if you did. I admit I should be apt to doubt it myself, perhaps, if I had not gone so far into the matter as I have. How I had the courage to entertain the idea at first I know not; I am frequently

surprised at it myself, when I think of it. But at the same time, putting aside all mock modesty, of this I am convinced, that when I explain it at leisure to you, you will come to the same conclusion as myself, that it is one of the most original problems that ever occupied the brain of man, not excepting Euclid himself. Come to my rooms to-morrow evening with Mr. Cochrane, and I will then explain it to you both. There we shall not be interrupted, and I shall have ample time to go thoroughly into the subject."

I accepted his invitation with thanks, and promised him that I would bring Mr. Cochrane with me, and we then parted.

About two hours after dinner next evening Mr. Cochrane and I paid our promised visit. Mr. Ponsonby quitted the table as soon as the meal was over, to make some little necessary arrangements, as he informed us, for the more easily explaining to us his discovery. He received us in a most friendly manner in his sitting-room, and after conversing together for some little time on indifferent subjects, he proposed that we should

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visit his laboratory, and then return to the sitting-room, where he would go into the description and merits of his discovery at length. He then led us through his bed-room, and opening a door, conducted us into his *sanctum sanctorum*. I was struck with surprise, on entering, at the appearance of the room, and it was some moments before I fully recovered myself. It was a large, lofty room, with a skylight. It was square built, but he had run wooden battens round it, riveted neatly together, till it formed a perfect circle. Exactly in the centre, on a thin wooden pedestal, stood a chronometer. Around this, also in a circle, was a common wooden table, covered with files, wheels of clocks, small vices, and the ordinary tools of a clock and watchmaker. Around the room, in four circles, were one hundred common Dutch clocks, twenty-five in each circle. They were equidistant from each other; indeed, it was evident that they had been so placed with scrupulous care. Ten of them only were going, the rest being motionless. I noticed that the former all kept exact time with each other, although the time they marked was not

the hour of the day. Thinking I ought to say something, I remarked this fact to him.

“You are right,” he said, “but it makes no difference in my experiment. You will find, if you look at the chronometer, that the clocks are in exact accord with it.” So saying, he moved the table a little aside to allow us to see the chronometer, and after we had satisfied ourselves on that point, he again carefully replaced the table in its original position. “You would hardly believe,” he continued, “the amount of trouble I have had in making those clocks keep time with the chronometer.”

“I had no idea,” I said, “that you had ever been in any way of business. I understood you were a classical and mathematical teacher.”

“That is the truth,” he replied. “I knew no more of clockmaking than you do before I began my experiments, but finding it was absolutely necessary for my success to understand it fully, I set myself to work to acquire it, and I assure you, it was a heavy addition to my labours. At present, I understand the mechanism of clocks so well that, should everything else fail, I could



enter into that line of business without any difficulty.”

“But why,” said Mr. Cochrane, “are ten clocks only going while the others remain motionless?”

“Simply because I have not yet had sufficient time to regulate the others. For the perfect proof of my discovery it is absolutely necessary that the whole hundred clocks should be going, and all keeping exact time with the chronometer. That, you will readily imagine, is a work of no little labour, but I am convinced that in the end I shall succeed. At present, as I have remarked, ten only are at work, because I have not yet had sufficient leisure to put more in order. To-morrow I shall commence with the eleventh, and so on, till the whole are completed. The great difficulty I have to contend with is the time it takes to regulate each clock. Up to the present time it has averaged not less than a week each, so that you see it will take nearly two years more before the whole are in order. But with patience and perseverance, I trust I shall be able to accomplish it, and then I shall bring my discovery triumphantly before the world. But now you have seen my laboratory we

will, if you please, go back to the sitting-room, and I will there explain all to you."

When we entered the sitting-room, Mr. Ponsoby motioned to us to be seated on one side of a table, and then placing himself in an easy-chair on the other, and assuming much of the air and manner of private teachers when about to address their pupils, he proceeded as follows:—

"The subject to which I intend calling your attention this evening is one that has occupied not only my leisure hours, but I might almost say my whole mind and time, for several years past. Night and day it has been the object of my constant study; the last thing that has occupied my brain before sleep came over me, and the first that presented itself to me on awaking. Yet, long as I have been employed on it, and ceaseless as have been the labours I have bestowed upon it, when I reflect on the magnitude of the work and the progress I have made, I am fairly astonished at the extraordinary result of my labours. Nor is this description at all exaggerated or inflated, as I trust you will acknowledge when I inform you that at last I am able to prove, to



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a mathematical certainty, the perfect possibility of the concentration of eternity.”

Mr. Ponsonby remained silent for some moments to allow our surprise to pass off. This was quite necessary, for both Mr. Cochrane and myself were so astonished at the hugeness of his absurdity that we had some little difficulty in recovering ourselves. Singularly enough, neither had the slightest disposition to smile, for ridiculous as was his proposition, there was an expression of gravity on our countenances which could not have been surpassed had he brought before us a newly discovered fact of the most important interest.

“I feel,” continued Mr. Ponsonby, “greatly flattered at the manner in which you have received my communication. I candidly admit, that before understanding the proof I shall presently offer you of the truth of my statement, I almost feared you might have received it with doubt, if not ridicule, so extraordinary must it appear; but the serious expression of your countenances shows me not only that I did you an injustice, but that the magnitude of the conception renders the idea of treating it lightly quite impossible.

To make you fully understand the force of my arguments, perhaps the better plan for me will be to narrate to you, as briefly as possible, the history of my discovery.

“You may perhaps have heard, that up till within a few years, my life has been one of considerable privation and difficulty. After I left college, and found I had no chance of obtaining a government appointment, I saw before me no better means of earning a livelihood than by preparing young gentlemen for their examinations. The fatigue was great, the occupation monotonous, and the remuneration small. Nevertheless, I struggled on manfully, and I hope contentedly. But good has come out of evil. I little imagined that when going over and over again with my pupils the first book of Euclid, and other elementary branches of mathematics, that at last it would lead to one of the greatest discoveries of modern times. Yes, as the simple application of the fulcrum and lever may be considered as lying at the origin of the vast amount of mechanical science at present practically applied, so have the axioms and aphorisms of Euclid been the origin of my present

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system for the concentration of eternity. To begin then. What is a point? It is that which has position, but neither length nor breadth. What is a straight line? It is the shortest distance from one given point to another. What are parallel lines? Two lines which, extended to an unlimited distance either way, will never meet. Assume then that a single line, drawn either from a given point or from a minute length, say an inch, can be extended indefinitely—a proposition which has never been disputed,—must it not also be admitted that a line of indefinite length may again be contracted to an inch or almost to a point? These are mathematical facts I am sure you will not attempt to dispute. Then what is a circle? A line drawn at equal distance from a given point in its centre. Is there any limit to the extent that a circle may be drawn from a given point? None, the circumference of the earth is simply an extension of a finger ring, and that again may be extended till it would contain the universe. What is time? It is a specified duration. What is eternity? An unlimited extension of time. Eternity, I maintain, bears the same relation to time that an

unlimited circle does to a measured one. I strongly suspect that this unmathematical division of time and eternity in the minds of men is the principal reason that the discovery I am now explaining to you was not made before ; fortunate indeed has the error or omission been for me. Now I maintain, that as a straight line may be extended from any given point to an indefinite and unlimited length, and contracted again not only to a measurable length but to the very point it started from ; and as a circle may be extended from its centre till it shall embrace the universe, and again be contracted to its centre : so can a moment or infinitesimal duration of time be extended till it shall be eternity, and eternity be again contracted till it shall be a moment. Do you understand my argument? If so, tell me what reasoning you can urge against it."

For some moments both Mr. Cochrane and myself were silent, neither knowing what answer to make him. At last, from the mere necessity of saying something, I inquired in what way the number of clocks and the great quantity of apparatus we had noticed in his laboratory were

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applicable to the maintenance of his theory of the concentration of eternity.

“They are to prove physically,” he replied, “what I have already attempted to prove to you by argument alone. The chronometer you observed in the middle of the room is the centre from which I intend to make eternity radiate. As soon as all the clocks,—which, as you perceived, are equidistant from it and from each other,—are in perfect agreement with it, eternity will not only radiate abroad through them from a common centre to the universe at large, but the rays will again be contracted or concentrated by them to their starting-point, the chronometer.”

“But,” I remarked, “you seem to forget that the same space of time, whether moment or hour, that your chronometer may register is felt throughout the universe without all your apparatus.”

“Granted,” he said ; “but what I want to prove is the expansion of that moment ; and I submit, that when all the clocks are in order, my proof will be perfect.”

“Still,” I said, “you have neither enlarged the moment nor can you expand it. More than that, a moment lost can never be regained, and how can you enlarge or centralize that which is irrevocably lost?”

“Pardon me,” he replied, “but I cannot help saying that you annoy me with your want of perception. Tell me, can anything be clearer than the arguments I have submitted to you, even without their collateral mechanical proof?”

“But you have not answered my question,” I said.

“I maintain that as a circle——.”

“Excuse me,” I said, interrupting him, and noticing that he wanted to shirk my question, “let me have an answer before you proceed.”

“Certainly,” he said, evidently getting very confused and angry; “I will give you an answer if you insist upon it.”

He now hesitated, apparently at a loss what answer to make, when Mr. Cochrane broke in clumsily with,—

“And if you succeed in concentrating eternity, what possible use will you be able to make of it?”



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Mr. Ponsonby immediately profited by Mr. Cochrane's blunder.

"What possible use can I make of it!" he said. "What use did Euclid ever make of any of his problems? yet his name has lived, honoured and respected, while those of thousands of pettifogging mechanics and inventors have passed into the obscurity they deserved. Your remark is an admirable proof of the difference between the mind of a philosopher and that of a mere mercenary projector."

"I trust," said Mr. Cochrane, "you do not intend to apply that offensive term to me."

"I shall also be obliged," I said, "by your making an exception in my favour."

"In the case of neither one nor the other," said Mr. Ponsonby, now getting into a passion, "will I make any exception. You," he continued, addressing Mr. Cochrane, "have certainly a scintilla of reason in your invention, although you are yet at an immeasurable distance from its completion. That water contains the elements of combustion I admit, and the salts which the ocean contains may certainly assist in its decomposition ;

but to what end, may I ask, have you pursued your investigations? For the welfare of humanity? Not in any way. You have been instigated by one motive, and that a selfish one—the accumulation of money, without the slightest regard to the possible danger which might accrue to the whole human race had you had but the ability to carry out your designs.”

“On what plea,” said Mr. Cochrane, “can you bring such an infamous accusation against me? From the very commencement of my experiments the powerful motive which has guided me has been the welfare of my fellow-creatures.”

“Admirable indeed!” said Mr. Ponsonby, with a sneer; “admirable indeed! Did it never occur to you that if you possessed the power of making sea-water inflammable, others, acting on your invention, might do the same? If you place the power of burning sea-water before the public, might not some miscreant or madman set fire to the ocean, and what then would be the result? I have not the slightest belief that you will ever succeed; but that you ever took the subject of the danger into your serious consideration for one



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moment, I doubt, as you were totally absorbed in the one idea of making money."

"At any rate," I said, "you cannot lay such a charge to my door. I have always kept within my bosom my own dangerous secret. I have thrown aside the power of accumulating an immensity of wealth rather than run the risk of the terrible mischief that might follow if it were known to the world. Through good report and evil report I have concealed it. I have submitted for years to the imputation of insanity rather than that it should be known, and no tortures could wring it from me."

"Of that I am fully persuaded," said Mr. Ponsoby, with a sneer so offensive that it was impossible to mistake his meaning. My anger at this insult became ungovernable.

"I fully understand your unconcealed sarcasm," I said, "and I treat it with unqualified contempt. Because your limited ability is unequal to compass a thousandth part of the magnitude of my discovery, is that a reason that it does not exist? I, at any rate, can bring forward broad proofs of the sound principles on which my experiments

have been conducted. Judge for yourself, when your mind is sufficiently calm to reason lucidly, whether my invention is purely chimerical. Take an air-gun——”

Here I was interrupted by both Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Cochrane bursting out into a most insulting laugh, which continued so long that I had the greatest difficulty in restraining my rage within moderate bounds, and I totally forgot that I was speaking to two maniacs far more deserving of my sympathy than my anger.

“Laugh,” I said, “as much as you please; the consciousness of the power of my secret, as well as the purely philanthropic motives by which I have hitherto been governed, enable me to treat your rudeness with the contempt it deserves.”

“I compliment you on your dignified behaviour,” said Mr. Ponsonby. “Allow me, out of purely kind feeling, to give you a little sum in arithmetic, and when you have clearly proved it, you may find great assistance in carrying out your future experiments. Show that two added to two make five, that two added to five will make ten, and so on. When you have accom-

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plished that, I will admit there is every probability of your really possessing the power you assert to be in your hands. Till that time, permit me to remain in doubt. And now, gentlemen, without wishing to appear inhospitable, allow me to submit to you the advisability of our being hereafter as completely strangers to each other as is possible from the necessity we are under of living together."

Of course it was impossible to remain longer in his room after this very explicit proposition ; so I left him without even formally wishing him good evening, and Mr. Cochrane immediately followed me.

For some time after our quarrel no conversation took place between us, although we met regularly day by day at dinner ; in fact, we all three avoided each other as much as possible. After all, I am persuaded the force of my arguments had considerable weight with Mr. Ponsonby, although he affected to despise them, for instead of remaining secluded in his laboratory all the morning, as had hitherto been his custom, he now left his apartment after breakfast, and passed his time

in wandering moodily about the grounds. I must also admit that the same line of conduct was followed both by Mr. Cochrane and myself. We kept always as far distant from each other as possible, and whenever we met by chance, we angrily turned abruptly round and walked in a contrary direction. If the weather was so unfavourable as to preclude our leaving the house, we observed, as far as practicable, the same conduct within doors. In the common sitting-room we remained as distant from each other as possible, each attempting to assume an air of being ignorant of the other's presence. At table also we did the same. Formerly our chairs had been placed so that we might be as near each other as possible, but now we separated, Mr. Ponsonby sitting in the centre of the table on one side, while Mr. Cochrane and myself occupied the two extremities on the other. This behaviour continued for at least a fortnight without the slightest attempt at reconciliation on the part of either. At last I began to get tired of this unsociable system, and I resolved to be the first to hold forth the olive branch of peace, although my false pride struggled strenuously for

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some time against the idea. My better feelings at length prevailed, and I succeeded in healing the breach which had taken place among us. One morning, when taking my accustomed walk after breakfast, I accidentally met Mr. Ponsonby. I resolved on the spot to profit by the opportunity, and I unhesitatingly advanced to meet him. When he saw me approach he appeared undecided what course to take, whether to meet me or to walk away. Before he had time to be resolved I accosted him.

“Mr. Ponsonby,” I said, “if I in any way offended you the other evening, pray allow me to apologize. At the moment, I admit, I was exceedingly irritated, and it is very possible I may have expressed myself in somewhat stronger language than I ought to have made use of. If I made any personal remarks, pray allow me to retract them.”

“I should be very sorry,” he said, “to continue on unfriendly terms with any one, especially with you, who have now come forward with so much courtesy to express your regret for the affront you offered me. Still you must admit I had just

cause for my anger. How was it possible I could help being indignant at the supercilious manner in which you treated my important discovery? I, by inviting you to inspect my operations and hear the explanation of my theory, intended to offer you a compliment, and you returned it with insult. You and Mr. Cochrane, with the exception of the doctor, whom I bound over to secrecy, are the only persons to whom I have hitherto confided the important work I am occupied in."

"Might I ask in what estimation the doctor holds it?" I inquired.

"In the highest possible estimation," he replied; "and he, as you will admit, is fully capable of giving an opinion on a point of science. I explained to him no more than I did to you, yet he expressed himself utterly surprised at the results I had already obtained. It is true he acknowledged he did not clearly see from my argument that the proof was certain, but then he said he had but little acquaintance with logic, and with mathematics still less. He admitted that he could not offer the slightest objection to the



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truth of my theory. 'If I do not see clearly the end at present,' he said, 'understand me, I by no means doubt your certainty of success. If any man can discover the concentration of eternity I conscientiously believe you will be able to accomplish it; and when once you have succeeded in centralizing it in the chronometer in your laboratory, I trust I may be the first to congratulate you on the event.' I do not wish to draw an unfavourable comparison, but you must admit, if I had reason to be pleased with his behaviour, I had an equal right to be displeased with yours."

I was greatly annoyed at what at first appeared to me to be gross duplicity on the part of the doctor. With the exception that he did not express a hope that I might ever have an opportunity of putting into practice the tremendous secret I held in my hands, the complimentary remarks he had made to Mr. Ponsonby on what that gentleman was pleased to call his discovery, were almost identical with those he had used to me when I first described my invention to him. After a few moments' consideration, however, I fully comprehended the doctor's policy, and I

now perceived his behaviour to have been most judicious. From my own experience I had found that it was a serious matter to offend Mr. Ponsoby, and I saw that the doctor, without compromising himself, had seemed to give way to the poor fellow's delusion. Having so good an example before me, I determined to follow it, and I addressed myself to making the doctor my model on the occasion.

"I have no doubt," I said, "I was greatly to blame on the occasion, and that the judgment I gave was an erroneous one, and I again express my regret at having offended you. At the same time you must admit you had to a certain degree slighted me, which ought to go somewhat to excuse me. You must admit that the manner in which you treated my invention was not altogether such as it ought to have been."

"I admit I was wrong, certainly," he replied. "I ought to have treated your discovery with greater sympathy. I require no apology or explanation from you, and I have great pleasure in offering you my hand."

I was so annoyed at his tone and manner



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when he spoke of the sympathy he ought to feel for me, that I was almost inclined not to accept the hand he proffered ; but I subdued the feeling, and accepted it.

“And now,” said he, “let me bring under your notice a circumstance which has occurred since our little difference, which adds another proof to the many I have already given of the possibility of concentrating eternity. May I ask if you have noticed it?”

“Frankly, I have not,” I replied.

“You surprise me. Perhaps you have remarked that for some days past I have abstained from visiting my laboratory in the daytime. My reason for it is this : The idea struck me that by the manner you, I, and Mr. Cochrane avoided each other we resembled an expansive and contractive triangle. Occasionally we would walk to the extremity of the grounds, and could we have gone farther we should certainly have done so. It is impossible to say where we should have stopped, so strong was the unreasoning animosity we felt toward each other. I believe we should have gone to the limits of the kingdom,

or beyond it. In bad weather, again, we met in the common sitting-room, still keeping as far distant from each other as possible; and then, at the dinner-table, we observed the same line of conduct. In our persons we formed the three angles of the triangle, while the sides and base were simply imaginary lines. Now if in thought we avoided each other, separating ourselves by an unlimited imaginary space, and again contracting our triangle to the limited space of the dinner-table, why should not the same argument hold good with respect to the expansion of time to eternity, and the contraction again of eternity to time?"

Although I had some difficulty in restraining a laugh, I determined to humour him in his folly.

"Pardon me," I said, "but it appears to me you have one great argument which might be drawn from your simile of the triangle. Assume that we had separated ourselves in different directions, unceasingly going on without resting, should we not, when we had each accomplished the circumference of the globe, have met again in one

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spot, thereby affording proof of the power of unlimited expansion and contraction?"

"You really surprise me," he said, "with the ingenuity of your argument. Had we kept on at an equal rate, keeping as exact time as I hope to make my clocks keep with my chronometer, we should certainly have met again in one spot. I am really obliged to you. I will give the subject my serious consideration. Possibly some difficulties may present themselves which we do not see at present; still the proof, as far as it goes, is an admirable one. Many, many thanks."

He then shook me warmly by the hand, and I left the poor fellow to his delusion.

I need hardly say that Mr. Ponsonby never succeeded in carrying out his work. One difficulty presented itself to him which appeared to be insurmountable—he could never make his clocks either keep time with his chronometer or with each other. He was, however, so indefatigable in his labours that I am fully persuaded, if he be still in existence (for I have lost sight of him for some years), that he is still occupied in developing his absurd idea.

## *II.—THE OLD MAID.*

### PART I.

THE next case I shall bring under the notice of the reader is remarkable, as showing the danger persons of delicate nervous temperaments run in trifling with powerful eccentric actions of the mind. The patient in this instance had not one attribute of insanity about her naturally. The cause of her becoming for some time one of Dr. Austin's guests, arose from her having been the victim of one of those charlatans who call themselves professors of electro-biology or mesmerism.

Her name was Miss Emily Bland. She was a tall, thin, pale-faced woman of about forty years

of age, *colla coda*, as the Italians call it. She had not the slightest pretensions to personal beauty, and indeed, even in her younger days never possessed any. The expression of her face, however, was mild and amiable, which somewhat compensated for her lack of regularity of features. Nor was that expression untruthful, for she was kind and courteous to all, and exceedingly gentle and ladylike in her manners. On the other hand, she was very superstitious, of a highly nervous temperament, and not very intelligent. Thoroughly honest herself, she never doubted the existence of honesty in others ; consequently she had several times been the dupe of the designing, and had, in fact, in this way once lost a good deal of money. A plausible scoundrel had gained her affections, and borrowed the greater portion of the little property she possessed (some two thousand pounds), and then decamped with the money, and was never more heard of. The unprejudiced mind of the reader will doubtless have already concluded that the fellow was a swindler ; but Miss Emily Bland could not bring herself to think so. She never saw him after the

day he received her money ; but that fact, instead of raising her suspicions, was to her a positive proof that he must have been robbed and murdered. So fully was she convinced of this, that she was actually preparing to wear mourning for him. This, however, was peremptorily put a stop to by her brother, a bachelor, for whom she acted as housekeeper. Though he was exceedingly annoyed at the manner in which his sister had lost her money, he had, to a very considerable degree, concealed his feelings out of affection for her. But when he found certain packages of black merino, crape, and bugles, on the chairs in the parlour, he flew into a passion, and ungallantly told his sister it was sufficient that the fact of her having made a fool of herself was known to her own family, and that it was needless for her to put herself to the expense and trouble of publishing it to the world. Miss Bland, though greatly shocked at her brother's coarseness, held him in too much awe to make any reply. She gave up the idea of going into mourning, calming her conscience, in some degree, by the melancholy consolation, that if she wore no outward sign of

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grief, her lover's untoward fate was not the less indelibly engraved on her heart.

Although Mr. Bland, the brother of Miss Emily, was a solicitor, he confined his practice entirely to the legal management of the estates of the Duke of —, for whom he acted as agent. He resided with his sister in a handsome house in the High Street of —. He was a shrewd, intelligent man, about five-and-forty years of age, and much respected, not only by his fellow-townsmen, but also by the tenants on the estates under his management. The Duke entrusted him with great powers, but he used them with exceeding moderation. While indulgent to those of the tenantry who, from any misfortune, were unable to pay their rent, he was inexorable to the idle and dishonest. Fortunately, as he possessed great tact and caution, combined with an acute knowledge of character, he had contrived to select the Duke's tenantry from a most respectable and responsible class, and in consequence the rigour of the law, either for distraint or ejection, had to be very rarely applied. It was true there were two or three defaulters among the tenantry, but



these had been long resident on the estates, and against them Mr. Bland had naturally great reluctance to take extreme measures. Towards one of them he certainly felt some animosity. This unfortunate individual was a certain Mr. Walters, who farmed some two hundred acres. He had been on the Duke's estate for many years, and his father before him had been a tenant on another farm. For some years after he took his lease, Walters had paid his rent with great regularity; but a season of distress set in, and he became a defaulter. Instead of attempting to make up the loss by increased energy and ability, the foolish man took to drinking, and since that time he had been going on from bad to worse, till at last he was more than eighteen months in arrears, and there was no probability of his being able to make up the amount. But in addition to this, Walters, since he had taken to drinking, had also become a great liar. Over and over again he had assured Mr. Bland, that on a certain day the money would infallibly be sent to his office, and on no single occasion had the assurance been fulfilled.



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Mr. Bland, as a solicitor, had a great aversion to a defaulter, and as a man of honour he had a mortal dislike to a liar ; so that it may easily be imagined he had little love for Mr. Walters. But there were circumstances in Walters's case which rendered it particularly painful for Mr. Bland to commence proceedings against him. His wife was not only amiable and industrious, but she had a large family of helpless young children. For this poor woman Mr. Bland had as much good feeling as he had aversion for her husband, and hence the indulgence Walters had hitherto received. Affairs between him and the solicitor had now, however, reached a climax ; and Mr. Bland had resolutely determined to be trifled with no longer.

Mr. Bland was accustomed to leave home for a week or ten days after each quarter day, for the purpose of collecting the rents. He preferred this system of visiting to having a regular audit day, as he had thus the opportunity of obtaining a tolerably correct idea of the state the farms were in. At the time of the opening of my narrative, Mr. Bland had just

started off to collect the Michaelmas rents, leaving Miss Emily in charge of the house and office during his absence, the nature of his duties not necessitating the keeping of a clerk.

The day after Mr. Bland's departure a professor of electro-biology and mesmerism visited the town. Through the local papers he had managed, before his arrival, to excite public curiosity by the enumeration of the wonderful feats he was capable of performing, such as depriving of speech and motion any person who might be present at his *séances*. He could also, the report said, make those who desired to be silent speak or sing as he commanded. At his will he could deprive an individual of the power of raising his walking-stick, or any other light object, from the floor, or of reading from a printed book, no matter how large the type might be,—as well as other performances, equally wonderful.

Like many other nervous ladies at her time of life, Miss Bland had great natural credulity, as well as a considerable amount of superstition, and her curiosity was intensely excited by the

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descriptions of the wonderful powers of the professor. Finding it impossible to conquer the feeling, she resolved to witness one of his performances, of which he had advertised two, one to take place three days after the other. Her impatience and anxiety increased as the time approached. Before the hour for the performance arrived she had worked herself into such a nervous state that her courage began to fail her. Her wish to be present was not in any way weakened, but she dreaded a hysterical fit, or something of the sort, which would draw on her that most terrible infliction to the female mind, but especially to ladies resident in country towns—the ridicule of her neighbours.

Although Miss Bland at last relinquished her intention of witnessing the professor's first performance, she resolved that, if possible, she would attend the second, hoping that she might be able to obtain from some perfectly reliable source a description of the events of the evening, so that she might be, to a certain extent, cognizant of what would take place. With this intent she determined to send Betty, her waiting-maid, to

the first evening's performance, and then to judge from her report whether it would be prudent for herself to attend the second performance.

Now in coming to this conclusion Miss Bland acted with great foresight and judgment, for it would scarcely be possible to conceive a temperament more directly opposite to her own than Betty's. She was a healthy buxom damsel of some four-and-twenty years of age, by no means impressionable, and utterly "ignorant of nerves." So far from participating in her mistress's doubts and fears, she accepted the offer with great glee. When the time arrived for the *séance* she rushed up-stairs, and in a minute descended again, her bonnet and shawl on, ready to leave the house. So impatient was she that she could hardly listen to her mistress's injunctions to keep her eyes open, to remember all she saw, and on no account to allow the professor to perform any of his experiments upon her against her will. The first two of Miss Bland's directions Betty promised faithfully to obey; and as for the last, she said he might make a tool of her, or a fool of her—if he could.

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No sooner had Betty departed than her mistress became anxious for her return. Notwithstanding the support she got from innumerable cups of tea during the girl's absence, never did the hours pass away more slowly. Nine o'clock and ten o'clock struck, and Betty had not returned. Miss Bland now began to accuse herself of want of caution in allowing the girl to go alone, and she continued worrying herself till eleven o'clock, when a ring was heard at the bell, announcing Betty's return.

A singular change had taken place in the expression of the girl's countenance since she left the house. There was no longer the laughing look of arch defiance of the professor, but a serious and half-scared gaze instead. When she came into the room she said nothing, but looked anxiously at her mistress. In a few moments, however, she recovered the use of her tongue, and gave Miss Bland such a description of all she had seen as raised the good lady's curiosity to the very highest pitch. Among other wonders, the professor had promised to one lady to show her the phantom of some dear relative, long since

dead, and her wish was gratified as soon as expressed. True, no one saw the shade save the lady herself, but there could be no doubt of its having been visible to her; her tears proved it. Miss Bland inquired whether it was not possible that the lady might have been in league with the professor. But this suggestion was set aside when she was informed that the person operated upon was an intimate friend of her own, a maiden lady who resided in the town. An elderly gentleman, also known to Miss Bland, had been deprived of the power of speech; and a young woman who was personally known to Betty had become unable to rise from her seat, the moment the professor prohibited her from moving. Many other phenomena equally marvellous Betty had seen with her own eyes, and she concluded her narration by stating, that not for a twelvemonth's wages, beer money included, would she witness another representation of the kind.

So far from the damsel's description of her adventures curing Miss Bland of the wish to attend the second representation, she then and there determined that nothing short of dangerous



illness should keep her from it. That she might be certain of the truth of Betty's statements, Miss Bland next morning called on Miss Sims (the lady who had been permitted to see the phantom of her deceased friend) to inquire whether the report she had heard was correct. At the moment of Miss Bland's call, Miss Sims was in bed. The servant informed the visitor that her mistress was far from well, her nerves having been dreadfully shaken by something which had occurred the night before. She would, however, take up Miss Bland's name, as she thought it probable her mistress might like to see her. In a few minutes the girl descended, and requested Miss Bland to kindly remain till Miss Sims was dressed, as there was something she particularly wished to communicate to her. Miss Bland, of course, readily agreed to wait her friend's leisure, and in about half an hour Miss Sims made her appearance. After the few ordinary phrases of greeting had been exchanged, Miss Bland asked Miss Sims how she had been amused the evening before at the lecture on electro-biology?

"Do not say amused, my dear," said Miss



Sims ; "that is certainly not the expression which ought to be used on so solemn an occasion ; the power possessed by that man is perfectly awful."

"Dear me," said Miss Bland, pretending ignorance of what had taken place, "you quite excite my curiosity. What did he do that was so very wonderful?"

"It would take too long to describe all that took place," was the reply ; "besides, I am so completely absorbed in my own share of it that I have but a very indistinct remembrance of the rest, save that hardly a single experiment performed was not as wonderful as the one I was myself more directly concerned in."

"And what might that have been?" inquired Miss Bland, still feigning ignorance of the matter.

"I am almost afraid to tell you, lest you should not believe me, or at least consider me very silly."

"I know you too well," said Miss Bland, politely, "to fall into either of these errors."

"Well, then, he raised the shade of one I have lost many years, and whom I greatly loved."

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“In what manner did he accomplish it?” inquired Miss Bland.

“He had been performing many experiments on others, and explaining the nature of each, but never addressing one of the audience personally, though his glance, which appeared almost to pierce through one, was frequently cast upon me, making me exceedingly nervous. At last, after having concluded an experiment, he was silent for a few moments. He then turned suddenly to me, and said, with great solemnity of tone and manner, ‘Madam, I feel I have the power, if you desire me to exercise it, of raising before you, so as to be seen by you alone, the shade of any one who in life was particularly dear to you. I do not wish to know the character of the individual, but you would do me a great favour if you would acknowledge afterwards that what I have now stated is the truth.’ My dear, although I naturally wished very much to see Edward’s shade, I was so alarmed that I closed my eyes to prevent it. But the precaution was useless, for although I pressed my hands upon my eyes, there he was before me in the dress in which I last saw him on

his departure for India. On removing my hands and opening my eyes, I still beheld him, though but for a moment, for his form seemed to melt in the light of the room."

"And you are certain there could be no mistake about it?" asked Miss Bland.

"Positively certain. It was impossible I could be deceived."

"And you had not been thinking of your friend during the day?"

"Not for weeks before, I assure you," was the reply.

"Has he appeared to you since?"

"Several times during the night," said Miss Sims. "I can see him now," she continued, closing her eyes, "as perfectly as I saw him yesterday evening. It almost seems to me I have the power of conjuring him up before me when I wish to do so."

"Does his appearance terrify you?"

"Not in the slightest degree. On the contrary, I have much pleasure in summoning him before me."

Now, as I have before stated, Miss Bland had

formerly been attached to a gentleman, whose memory was still dear to her, and whom she persisted in thinking dead, although she had no proof to warrant such a conclusion. The idea struck her that nothing could be more pleasing than to be endowed with the power of calling the shade of her lost Henry before her at her will, and her desire to be present at the next lecture given by the professor became stronger than ever. Without explaining to Miss Sims her particular reason for making the request, she inquired whether she would kindly accompany her to the next evening's performance, as she was somewhat timid about going alone. So far from having any objection, Miss Sims willingly promised to be her companion on the occasion, and after they had arranged the time and place of meeting, the friends separated.

The two days intervening between the performances passed over, and on the next evening Miss Bland called on her friend Miss Sims as agreed, and the two ladies proceeded together to the Town Hall, where the *séance* was to take place. Although they arrived in good time, many

people had already assembled, the fame the professor had acquired by his former performance having greatly stimulated the curiosity of the lovers of the marvellous in the town. As the friends were well known, room was made for them to pass forward, and at last they succeeded in obtaining two of the front seats directly facing the professor, and a short distance from the platform on which his experiments were to be performed. The platform was a simple structure, about two feet above the level of the room, and covered with green baize. In the centre of it was placed an arm-chair for the professor. To the right was another chair, for the individual who was to be operated upon; and immediately to the professor's left stood a harmonium, with a small bar of some metallic substance, of a few inches in length, and a closed book placed upon it. Besides these articles there was no other apparatus whatever.

The room, which was a large one, now filled rapidly with spectators, the majority being women. A singularly serious air marked the place; indeed, it looked more like a meeting for worship

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than for entertainment. Presently the professor made his appearance. The subdued whisper which had been previously indulged in by the audience was immediately hushed, and a perfect silence reigned instead. After bowing politely, the professor seated himself in his chair for a few moments, covering his eyes with his hands as if in deep meditation, if not prayer. He then arose to address his audience, who, with breathless anxiety, waited for him to begin. Altogether, his personal appearance was admirably calculated to rivet the attention of the female portion of the spectators. He was about five-and-thirty years of age, of exceedingly pallid complexion, with dark eyes, and handsome features of peculiar delicacy. His hair was of a glossy jet black, in beautiful order, and so long that it hung down almost to his shoulders. His hands were small, well made, and exceedingly white, and on his fingers he wore several jewelled rings, evidently of considerable value. He was dressed in a fashionable suit of black, with polished leather boots, the sombre appearance of the whole being somewhat relieved by the snowy whiteness of his shirt-front and



wristbands. His style of speaking had also something exceedingly pleasing in it. Although his voice was soft and of a low pitch, it was very sweet, and every word he uttered was distinctly heard, and his language was good and well chosen.

He commenced his lecture by informing his audience that he feared in some respects they might leave the room disappointed, as he admitted that he was incapable of explaining in a satisfactory manner many of the phenomena he should present to them. At the same time they should bear in mind that the sciences of electro-biology and mesmerism were still in their infancy; but nevertheless, in spite of all the discouragements and ridicule thrown in the way of those who studied them, great and wonderful discoveries through their agency had already been made. Surgical operations of the most serious description had been performed on persons thrown by the power of the operator's will into a deep sleep, the patients remaining the while without experiencing the slightest pain, or being aware of what was passing around them. Diseases of the most



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serious character had also been cured by the same means. How this tremendous power, which one human being was capable of exercising over another, was obtained, he was unable to say, as he had before stated. He was fully and honestly persuaded that he possessed this power himself, and he would leave his auditors to judge, from experiments he should have the honour of bringing before them that evening, whether he overstated his capabilities. At the same time, he could assure them that if the study of electro-biology and mesmerism—for he held they were one and the same science—had its charms, it had also its drawbacks. It was, in the first place, prejudicial to the health of the operator. A person having the power to cure another of a malady by mesmerism, generally fell off in his health in proportion as that of the individual operated on was benefited. His own health had suffered considerably from experiments of the kind he had performed on those he felt interested in ; and he had been obliged to relinquish that part of the study. He now confined himself solely to that branch of it which tended to prove how great

was the power one individual might possess over the mind of another. He concluded by again reminding his audience that he was incapable of explaining in a satisfactory manner many of his experiments ; and he modestly assured them, that if any one present could throw light on the subject they would confer on him a great favour.

Considerable applause followed the professor's address, and he then commenced his experiments. They were of the description generally performed on occasions of the kind, and most of them were perfectly successful. It is true, he chose those individuals who seemed to be of apparently nervous temperament ; but this fact was not noticed by the audience. For example, he invited an old gentleman to seat himself on the chair on the platform. In his hand he placed the metallic bar, and requested him to gaze at it earnestly for some minutes, without speaking, or thinking of any other subject than what he was employed on. Suddenly he told the old gentleman that he was deprived of the power of speech, and defied him to utter a single word. The patient seemed perfectly stupefied, and un-

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able to speak, but perhaps more from confusion than any other cause. After him, a young man was deprived of the power of bending his arm, which experiment was followed by others of a similar description.

At last the professor performed a feat so difficult, and so conclusive in its results, that his audience seemed perfectly aghast at his powers. He chose from among the audience a handsome, merry-looking girl of some twenty years of age, and invited her to take a seat on the platform. With some reluctance in her manner, she accepted the invitation, and he placed her in the unoccupied chair near him. After certain cabalistic signs and passes, he desired her to laugh, and she immediately broke out into a hearty fit of laughter, which she seemed incapable of repressing. He then desired her to stop, and she instantly obeyed him. He next told her that she was incapable of rising from her chair, and requested her to move from it if she could ; but after one or two efforts, she relinquished the attempt, and sat as motionless as a statue. He then turned round to the harmonium, and commenced playing a hymn

tune. The young lady, as if simply obeying his wish, commenced singing the words of the hymn in a sweet voice, and with so much expression, that any one sceptical as to the professor's powers might have imagined that she had rehearsed it carefully along with him. With this experiment the greater part of the audience seemed greatly delighted, and loud and long applause was bestowed upon the lecturer. One person, it is true, requested that he would play a polka, that they might see how she could dance ; but the audience evidently considered him as a scoffer, and expressed their disapprobation of his conduct in so marked a manner, that he appeared perfectly abashed, and did not again attempt to disturb the meeting during the remainder of the evening.

But the most extraordinary proof of the lecturer's power over the young lady yet remained to be shown. He took the book (a collection of prayers) from the harmonium, and having opened it, apparently at hazard, he placed it in the hands of one of the audience in the middle of the room. He then occupied himself for some minutes in making a series of "passes" over the young lady,

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who sat perfectly motionless the while, without even the slightest movement of her eyes, which were turned towards the lecturer, without expression, as if she saw him not. Presently, he ceased his passes, and commanded her to recite the prayer on the page at which the book was open, requesting the person in whose possession it was to mark if she repeated it correctly. For some moments she continued silent, then she slowly raised her hands, pressed them together, as if in the act of praying, and commenced to recite the prayer as she had been commanded. At first her words were pronounced as though with great difficulty, and very slowly. As she progressed, however, she obtained more facility, and towards the conclusion she spoke with perfect ease, though solemnly and slowly, as befitted the subject. When she had concluded, the professor inquired of the gentleman who held the book whether she had made any mistakes, and received for answer that she had not omitted or misplaced one word. Great applause followed his statement, and the young lady was then allowed to rise from her chair, and to resume her seat in the body of the

hall, looking much exhausted by the part she had taken in the evening's proceedings. Whether or not she was an associate of the professor, I leave to the reader's own judgment. Suffice it to say, she was a total stranger in the town, and left it the day after the lecture.

The professor now looked round the room for another subject, and his eyes rested on Miss Bland. With great courtesy of manner, he requested her to oblige him by stepping on to the platform. Poor Miss Bland was for the moment puzzled what to do. She was at the time in an intensely nervous state, and for that reason would willingly have declined the request. But curiosity was perhaps the greatest of that amiable lady's weaknesses, and it urged her, in spite of her alarm, to accept the offer. Miss Sims at last turned the balance on which hung her friend's fear and her friend's wishes. She strenuously advised her to summon up sufficient courage for the trial, and in the end Miss Bland consented to be placed in the chair, which had just been vacated by the young lady who had been operated upon with so much success.



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Before commencing his experiments on Miss Bland, the professor shortly addressed the audience. He told them that occasionally he met with persons over whom he felt he had great influence, without being himself aware what particular peculiarity of the mental organization of the individual operated upon, would develop itself. The lady before him, he was assured, was a specimen of the kind. He was fully aware he possessed considerable power over her; but he was totally ignorant as to how it would display itself. The last case was one of a completely different description. There, he felt certain, he had unrestricted power over the young lady's mind. From what he could perceive, however, he was of opinion that this would prove to be a very interesting case, but, as he said before, of its nature he knew nothing. Then, turning to Miss Bland,—who during his short address had been in such a state of nervous excitement that she trembled like an aspen leaf,—he requested she would take off her gloves. She felt that she had not the power to disobey him, even supposing she had possessed the will; but at the same time, from



her agitated state, she had great difficulty in taking off her gloves, and in so doing tore one of them considerably. The professor then placed her hands before her on her lap, and after making a few passes, he drew his chair in front of her, and seating himself upon it, he placed his hands gently on the back of hers. In this manner he remained for some minutes, his dark, lustrous eyes being fixed on hers the whole time. Suddenly he rose from his chair and addressed the audience.

“I find,” he said, “that although my power over this lady is limited in extent, it is very great in intensity. I have, without wishing it, deprived her of the remembrance of everything which yesterday occurred under her notice. Yes, of all that took place yesterday she knows nothing; her memory in that respect is a perfect blank!” Then, quickly turning to Miss Bland, he continued, “Oblige me, madam, by informing the audience, if you can, of any one single circumstance in which you were concerned yesterday.”

Miss Bland turned mechanically towards the audience, and found all eyes fixed on her with intense curiosity. Nervous as she was, she now

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became far more so. The professor allowed her no time to recover her self-possession,—“Oblige me, madam,” he said, “with a description of anything you saw or heard yesterday ;—but I am sure you know that you can remember nothing.” The poor woman tried to speak, but could not utter a word. “You cannot, I perceive,” said the professor to her. “Is it not so?” Still she could neither speak nor collect her thoughts.

After making two or three efforts, she uttered a loud scream, and immediately fell into a fit of hysterics. Miss Sims and two or three other ladies instantly mounted the platform to assist her, and they bore her off with considerable difficulty into the professor’s private room, where they gave her every assistance in their power. The fit, however, continued, and her screams were heard perfectly in the hall, where much confusion prevailed, many of the ladies showing strong symptoms of Miss Bland’s attack becoming contagious.

The professor, now greatly frightened, attempted to quiet the audience, but with little success ; and at last he was obliged to inform them that the

*séance* was ended; and shortly afterwards, with the help of a policeman, the hall was cleared. The professor now entered his private room to assist in calming Miss Bland. His appearance, however, had not the salutary influence he anticipated. On the contrary, when she saw him she screamed the more violently, and the ladies were obliged to request him to leave the place. Bitterly discomposed, the poor man took up his hat, and, with curses not loud but deep, left them to manage as they best could without him. More than an hour elapsed before Miss Bland had sufficiently recovered to allow of her removal to her own house. Even after Miss Sims and another lady had managed to conduct her home, and Betty had assisted her to bed, the hysterical fit threatened to come on again, and it was nearly day-break before her nervous system had recovered sufficiently to allow her to fall asleep.

The next morning Miss Bland found herself too much indisposed to rise from her bed. Miss Sims, whose concern on her friend's account was unfeigned, called on her about the middle of the day, and as her visit had been anticipated, she was at

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once ushered by Betty into her mistress's bedroom. Miss Bland received her friend with great gratitude, for not only was she much distressed in mind, but the serious attack of hysterics had left her in a state of most distressing weakness.

"How kind it is of you to come and see me!" said Miss Bland. "I am sure I cannot imagine how I shall ever be able to repay you for your attention to me yesterday evening. What I should have done without you I do not know."

"Oh, pray do not mention it," replied Miss Sims; "I am more than repaid for anything I may have done by seeing you better this morning, though, to say the truth, you hardly seem to have recovered yourself yet."

"Indeed, my dear, I am very far from it," said the invalid. "I am, besides, exceedingly anxious about my brother, who is to return home to-morrow night. He will be so dreadfully angry when he hears of the affair, that I shall never have the courage to face him."

"Oh, you will be better to-morrow night," said Miss Sims, encouragingly; "besides, we must do all we can to keep it from your brother's ears. It

will soon blow over, and nothing more will be said about it."

"How, with my weak nerves, I could have been such a simpleton as to have allowed that professor to try an experiment on me I cannot imagine. I should never have done so had I not hoped he would have given me the power to conjure up the form of my dear ——" Here she stopped for a moment for a word, and then supplied it with that of—"mother."

Miss Sims made the slightest possible grimace at the moment, but said nothing.

"Tell me, my dear," continued Miss Bland, "did I make myself very ridiculous?"

"Oh dear no," replied Miss Sims, earnestly. "On the contrary, everybody seemed greatly to sympathize with you. But did he really succeed in making you forget everything which had occurred the previous day?"

"Completely so; I assure you I have no more idea of anything that then passed than if the day had never been. I will now try to think no more about it, and possibly in time my memory may return to me."

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The two friends now summoned Betty to take part in the consultation as to the best plan which could be adopted to keep the whole transaction from the knowledge of Mr. Bland, and after all was arranged in a satisfactory way, Miss Sims took her departure.

The next evening, at a late hour, Mr. Bland returned home, and received from Betty the intelligence that her mistress was suffering from a violent headache, but that she hoped she should be well enough to meet him in the morning. Betty also told him that her mistress had desired her to say that during his absence everything had gone on in a most satisfactory manner, and that nothing of the slightest importance had occurred.

*III.—THE OLD MAID.*

PART II.

MISS BLAND wore a timid and somewhat guilty expression of countenance when she met her brother at the breakfast-table the morning after his arrival.

“I was sorry to hear from Betty that you were not very well,” he said; “I trust you are better this morning, although, candidly, I can hardly compliment you on your good looks.”

“Oh, I am much better this morning,” was Miss Bland’s reply, “though I am hardly myself yet. It will go off in the course of the day, I have no doubt.”

“What has been the matter with you?”



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“I have been suffering dreadfully from nervous headache for the last three or four days.”

“You should go out more than you do, and take more exercise,” said Mr. Bland. “To keep in the house so much as you do cannot be otherwise than prejudicial to your health. Everything has gone off quietly during my absence, I understand?”

“Perfectly.”

“How did that fellow, the mesmerist, get on?” inquired Mr. Bland. “I saw many of his bills on the walls before I left home.”

“I do not know, dear,” said his sister, at the moment intently engaged in doing something to the tea-pot.

“You cannot, of course, tell me whether many folks made fools of themselves here. If I had my will, I would give every one of those impostors six months’ imprisonment with hard labour. We very properly punish miserable fortune-tellers who swindle credulous servant girls out of a shilling, and yet we allow these detestable quacks to play their tricks with impunity.”

Miss Bland was as silent as though she had been

on the platform, and the professor had taken from her the power of speech.

“By the by,” continued Mr. Bland, remembering that the newspaper was published that day, “has the paper not been sent in yet? I dare say we shall find a full account of the performances in it.”

“No; I don't think it has come, else Betty would have brought it in,” said Miss Bland, colouring deeply at the untruth, for she had given Betty strict injunctions that her brother should on no account be allowed to see it. Then making a violent effort to change the conversation, she asked him whether his trip had been a successful one.

“Pretty well, for that,” he replied. “At the same time, I have had one or two defaulters. It is a very fortunate thing for that fellow Walters that he paid the money as he did, as I should certainly otherwise have put an execution in his house, sorely as it would have annoyed me to do so.”

“It would have been a sad thing for his wife and helpless family had you proceeded to extremities,” said Miss Bland; “I am very glad he did not give you the occasion.”

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“And so am I; it would have pained me greatly, I assure you; still, I am afraid it must come to that at last. He is getting an inveterate drunkard, and the condition of his farm is rapidly passing from bad to worse. He is still greatly in arrears, and I am fully persuaded he will not be able to pay those off. However, both he and I have got a respite, and the evil day is somewhat delayed; and that is a great comfort.”

“How much does he owe now?” asked Miss Bland, pressing the subject, so as not to allow the conversation to turn on the professor.

“More than six months’ rent. What did he say when he left the money?”

“I do not know, dear,” was the reply.

“Why not?” said Mr. Bland, with a look of surprise.

“Because I have seen nothing of him.”

“Seen nothing of him! You surely do not mean that?”

“I assure you what I say is perfectly true; I have not seen him.”

“That fellow,” said Mr. Bland, now fairly enraged, “is the greatest liar I ever met with. How

ever, he is now at the length of his tether, as I will fully prove to him before the day is over."

So saying, he left the room; his sister thankful that he had said nothing more about the professor.

During the day brother and sister saw nothing of each other. Miss Bland was principally engaged about her household duties, and her brother, after making some memoranda in the back parlour, which he used as an office, left home, and did not return again till six o'clock, their ordinary dinner hour. When seated at table, Miss Bland could easily perceive, from the expression of her brother's countenance, that something had occurred to annoy him very much during the day, and as a guilty conscience proverbially needs no accuser, she naturally feared that he had heard something about her adventure with the professor. She knew her brother's peculiarities well, and carefully avoided irritating him by making any remark on his too evident ill-humour. When out of temper, Mr. Bland was very taciturn, and in that state the fit generally passed off, and little or nothing was said upon the matter. But if anything

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arose to increase his annoyance, it ordinarily acted like a lighted match applied to a barrel of gunpowder, and an explosion was the certain consequence.

Now as a cup of tea had always a most sedative effect on Mr. Bland's temper, his sister that evening had brewed him one which might have softened the heart of an ogre. Nor was it without its influence, for the first cup completely unloosed his tongue.

"I have given that fellow Walters such a lesson to-day as I suspect will make him tell the truth for the rest of his life," began Mr. Bland.

"What have you done, Edward?" inquired Miss Bland.

"I have simply put an execution into his house for the gross amount of rent he owes."

"But will not that be his ruin?" inquired Miss Emily.

"I am afraid it will; but I have no alternative; I must be just as well as humane. It might have appeared more liberal perhaps had I allowed the matter to stand over a little longer; but it would merely have postponed a proceeding

which must have come at last. Nothing can save him ;—besides, I consider him to be unworthy of pity. In my eyes, he has two of the most despicable vices a man can have. He is a great drunkard, and an inveterate liar. I detest a liar, if anything, more than a thief. Some sort of courage is required to steal, but none to tell a lie.”

“ But, Edward, consider what will be the fate of his wife and children ; they will be thrown upon the world without a shilling. A more helpless family it would be difficult to imagine,” remonstrated Miss Bland.

“ Very possibly,” said Mr. Bland, somewhat pettishly ; “ but you should remember, I have no right to indulge my feelings of liberality at my client's expense. True, his Grace is kind enough to allow me great power ; but it is only honest on my part to exercise that licence with discretion. Besides, as I said before, there is not the slightest faith to be placed in that fellow Walters, nor in a word he utters.”

“ Still, it is a hard case for his wife and family,” put in Miss Bland.

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Mr. Bland impatiently shrugged his shoulders, but made no reply, and his sister also remained silent.

But though the brother and sister spoke no more of the Walters family, their minds were fully occupied with the subject. Mr. Bland, naturally kind-hearted, revolted at the idea of the severity he was using ; but he conscientiously considered there was a strong necessity for it, and he was resolved to do his duty by his client. Still it irritated him, and his sister's remarks tended to increase the irritation. Miss Bland, who, with all her little old-maidish follies, was as good-hearted a creature as ever lived, now conjured up before her imagination the poor mother leaving her home, with her little children clinging to her skirts, the wide world before her, and her drunken worthless husband the only being to whom she could look for protection. So affecting was the picture she drew, that at last she could not repress her feelings, but burst into a silent flood of tears.

Although the tears of a woman have usually great power over right-minded men, still there are certain instances in which they not only fail, but produce



a totally opposite effect, and Miss Bland's present sorrow was precisely a case in point. Instead of sympathizing with her feelings, her brother seemed rather to consider that her tears were a reproach to him for his cruelty, and he resented it accordingly.

"Upon my word, Emily," he said, "I think your tears anything but complimentary to me. You would greatly oblige me by keeping them for a more fitting opportunity."

"Really, Edward, I did not mean to offend you, for I am sure you are kindness itself ; but, indeed, I cannot help crying when I think of that poor woman and her children ;" and she burst into tears again.

"Emily, you annoy me," said her brother, sharply ; "either leave off crying, or I will quit the room ; I will have no more of this nonsense."

Miss Bland attempted to control her tears, and for a short time partially succeeded, but only to break out again louder than before. Her brother's temper now fairly gave way under the infliction. He left the table and threw himself in an easy chair beside the fire, where he sat sullenly and silently,

leaving his sister to continue her sobbing at her leisure. At last her sorrow gradually diminished, and the tea-things having been removed, Miss Bland took from her work-basket some curtains she was knitting, and placing the loop over her foot, commenced working most energetically. Not a word for some time passed between the brother and sister. Mr. Bland, finding that her tears had subsided, thrust his hand into the pocket of his coat, and drew from it a newspaper, which he unfolded. Miss Bland cast her eyes furtively over her work to ascertain what her brother was about to occupy himself with, and, to her intense horror, found that he had in his hand the *Courier*, the principal local weekly paper. She said nothing, however, trusting that it might not contain any notice of the professor's lecture. She was doomed to be disappointed, in this for her brother, on casting his eye over the columns, saw in large type the heading,—

EXTRAORDINARY MESMERIC PERFORMANCES  
AT THE TOWN HALL.

He now settled himself to read the report. It

consisted of two parts, one of the first evening's performance, and the other of the second. He read through the first part very slowly and carefully, as if deeply interested in the description. When he had concluded it, he remarked,—

“Your friend Miss Sims seems to have made a great fool of herself the other evening.”

“How so, Edward, dear?” said Miss Emily, in a most amiable tone of voice.

“It says here that the professor conjured up before her the phantom of some one who was very dear to her, at the same time kindly assuring her that no one else could do it.”

“Indeed!” murmured Miss Bland, now getting much alarmed.

“Yes; after all, the quack seems to have had some delicacy in him,” continued Mr. Bland, “not to make her so ridiculous as to allow others to see the charming phantom; for I have no doubt it was that of her old lover.”

“Then, Edward, you believe that she did really see the phantom,” said Miss Emily, hoping that, by keeping the conversation on Miss Sims, he brother might not read farther.

“I believe she saw it!” he replied, indignantly. “How can you consider me so stupid?” and instead of conversing longer with her, he again fell to the paper.

In a few moments he paused, and, placing the newspaper on his knee, looked sternly at his sister. “Pray, Emily,” said he, “are you the Miss Bland who made such an egregious fool of herself at the second representation?”

“Edward,” said Miss Bland, rising from her chair and assuming a courage she was far from feeling, “if you address yourself to me, pray let it be with the respect which is due to me as a lady.”

This made no impression whatever on her brother, who said to her, even more sternly than before,—

“I ask you a simple, straightforward question, and I insist on having an explicit answer. Are you the Miss Bland mentioned in this paper?”

“And what if I am?” said Miss Bland. “Am I not old enough to select my own amusements and occupations?”

“Quite ; and you have been so for many years, to my knowledge.”

“You need not twit me about my age, Edward,” said Miss Bland ; “at any rate, I am eighteen months younger than you are.”

“And as I am fully forty-five,” said Mr. Bland, “I submit that you are quite old enough not to have made such a silly simpleton of yourself as you appear to have done by this report. Besides,” he continued, starting off with renewed vigour, “what right had you to tell me such a falsehood as to say that you knew nothing about the man’s performances? For the future I shall never believe a word you say.”

“Edward, do not speak to me in that manner, for I will not bear it,” said Miss Bland, bursting into tears. “If ever you express yourself to me again in such a way, you will find yourself under the necessity of getting some one else to manage your house for you, for I will not stay here to be insulted.”

“To leave it, Emily, is possibly the best thing you could do, after having made both of us so ridiculous as you have done. Good heavens!

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everybody will be laughing at us. And pray, what may the experiment have been which threw you into the violent fit of hysterics mentioned in the paper? Did the ghost of that amiable swindler, who robbed you so egregiously, appear to you, as Miss Sims's friend did to her?"

"Edward," replied Miss Bland, solemnly, "I am ashamed of you. It is perfectly disgraceful of you to slander the name of a man whose spirit may be near you at this moment."

I will not quote the words Mr. Bland made use of in reply to the remark of his sister. Certainly, if the spirit of the departed swindler had been near him, he should have heard himself spoken of in a most uncomplimentary manner. Suffice it to say that Mr. Bland's expressions on the occasion far more resembled a lengthy extract from the form of excommunication adopted by Ernulphus than anything else I can compare it to. His sister, though generally mild and submissive, now retorted on her brother with great anger in her tone and manner, if in language less expressive than his. The dispute at last ran so high that Miss Bland left the room, assuring her brother



that she would quit his house next morning, and that he should never see her again—a threat Mr. Bland earnestly requested her to put into execution without the slightest hesitation or delay.

The next morning found Miss Bland somewhat cooler. She could not disguise from herself the fact that her brother had ample cause for anger. He was naturally very sensitive of ridicule, and she knew perfectly well he would be joked about his sister having done as she had done. Still the language he had made use of had been unjustifiable as well as ungentlemanly ; and it was a duty she owed to herself, if not to resent it to the extent she had threatened, at least to do so as far as to show him that such conduct would not be allowed to pass on any future occasion. The quarrel, in one respect, did not occur inopportunistically. She had long resolved on visiting some friends who lived in a country town about twenty miles distant, and some others who lived at Great Yarmouth. She now proposed to herself to be absent altogether about a fortnight, one week in each town, and then to return home, being fully convinced that by that time Edward would have



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come to his senses, as well as have found out how necessary her presence was to insure comfort and good management in his domestic establishment. She did not of course mention to her brother her intention of returning at the given time. In fact, she avoided seeing him before her departure, as she considered the lesson he would receive from her behaviour would be a far more impressive one, if he imagined there was no probability of her being reconciled to him again.

After finishing her breakfast in her own room, Miss Bland, with the assistance of Betty, began to make preparations for her journey. When all was packed up and in readiness, it still wanted an hour and a half to the time of the departure of the train. This suited Miss Bland admirably, as she could proceed at once to the station, and there leave her luggage in charge of one of the porters, and occupy the remainder of the time in paying a visit to her friend Miss Sims, and endeavour, if possible, to establish through her agency a plan for receiving reports as to how affairs were passing during her absence. Betty was accordingly sent out for a fly, and Miss Emily succeeded

in leaving the house without meeting her brother, and arrived in safety at the station. After placing her packages under the care of a friendly official, Miss Bland started off for the residence of Miss Sims, whom she fortunately found at home. The meeting was a very cordial one on both sides. After they had complimented each other on the recovery of their good looks, Miss Sims asked her visitor whether she had seen that detestable account in the local papers of the lectures given by the professor.

“I have not, my dear,” was the answer; “but I am sorry to say Edward has, and the result has been a violent quarrel between us. The language he made use of to me was most ungentlemanly; in fact, I should be ashamed to repeat it to you, intimate as we are.”

“Oh, it will soon blow over, my dear,” said Miss Sims. “I will call on your brother, and I flatter myself I have sufficient influence over him to make all right again between you.”

Now this was by no means what Miss Bland wanted. To tell the exact truth, the only cause of discontent she ever had with her friend arose

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from a too great inclination on the part of Miss Sims to take an interest in Mr. Bland's affairs ; and Miss Bland had already on more than one occasion been obliged to remind her that there was nothing her brother more disliked than for a stranger to interfere with his arrangements. But she had now a good opportunity not only of stopping Miss Sims's advances on the present occasion, but also of proving to her that she did not rank so high in her bachelor brother's good graces as she imagined, and she determined to profit by it accordingly.

"Oh, my dear," she said with great candour to Miss Sims, "pray do not go near him in his present temper, for I may as well tell you that he is as angry with you as he is with me, and speaks as much against you."

"Why, good gracious, what can I have done to offend him?" said Miss Sims, with unfeigned regret in her manner ; "what has he said about me?"

"All manner of things, my dear. He says we made such silly fools of ourselves at the lectures that he shall not be at all surprised if he finds us

in league with some 'cheap Jack' at the fair next week, helping him to get off his wares."

"Very polite, indeed," said Miss Sims, bitterly. "I had no idea he could have behaved in so ungentlemanly a manner ; you may rest assured I shall not go near him."

"Now, my dear," said Miss Bland, "I must tell you the object of my visit, for I can only stop a few minutes longer. I have informed Edward that I shall no longer remain with him as his housekeeper, but of course I do not exactly intend to keep my word. I am going on a round of visits for a fortnight, and then I shall return home again. For the first week my address will be uncertain ; in the second it will be at Yarmouth. You would greatly oblige me by sending a letter there, stating how things have gone on at home during my absence, for I shall be most anxious to know. I have left word with Betty that she is to inform you of everything which occurs, so it will only cost you the trouble of writing the letter. Now, will you oblige me?"

Miss Sims promised faithfully to write a full, true, and particular account of all that Betty

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might tell her, and the friends shortly after separated ; and Miss Bland arrived at the station in good time for the train.

Mr. Bland, on his part, was neither surprised nor sorry at his sister's departure. In the first place, he knew perfectly well that she had for some time past proposed paying sundry visits to friends in different parts of the country, and he understood her character sufficiently to be aware that she was merely profiting by the opportunity the quarrel had afforded her to put her project into execution. He even went so far as to smile more than once when he reflected on her threat not to return home again, knowing full well that she was deeply attached to him, and that she was unable to live at her own expense. All this, added to the fact that her absence would have the effect of lessening the ridicule which was certain to be attached to her for her absurd behaviour at the professor's lecture, made him regard his sister's threat of absenting herself with equanimity, and treat her assurance of never returning to the house as a little bit of feminine spite.

During the afternoon of the day after his sister's

departure, Mr. Bland had occasion to go through the market-place, in which was situated the principal inn of the town, an establishment much frequented by the neighbouring farmers on market days. Many persons were collected around its doors, and Mr. Bland, fearing that some of his friends might recognize him, and wishing not to be delayed, left the pathway to cross the square, when he heard some one crying after him, "Hallo, Bland! stop, I say! I want a word or two with you before you go any farther." On turning round, Mr. Bland found the person who had addressed him was no other than Walters, who was now advancing towards him apparently in a great passion, and certainly three parts drunk. Mr. Bland, seeing the state the man was in, attempted to continue his way without noticing him, but Walters, who was surrounded by a crowd of idlers, was determined not to allow him to escape. Running up to Mr. Bland, and seizing him roughly by the arm, he exclaimed, "A pretty fellow you are, to ruin a man and his family after having given him your word that you would allow the debt to stand over!"



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“I have done nothing of the kind,” said Mr. Bland, “and I desire you will let me pass on my way without annoying me.”

“I say it is a lie!” said Walters, now greatly infuriated; “you promised me that if I would pay part of the debt I owe you, you would allow the remainder to stand over. I made the promise that I would pay the money in a week, and I did so. I kept my word, and you like a villain have broken yours. Here,” he continued, addressing the bystanders, “come all of you and see this fellow, and when you meet him again know he is a liar, and don’t trust him.”


Indignant at this behaviour, Mr. Bland attempted to release himself from the drunkard’s grasp, but for some time in vain, Walters being a remarkably powerful man. Finding he could not shake him off, Mr. Bland said, “If you do not leave me alone I will give you in charge of the police. What right have you to assault me in this manner?”

“Because you have robbed me and my family,” said Walters, “and I won’t leave you until I have exposed you to all the town.”



Mr. Bland again attempted to extricate himself, and in doing so accidentally struck his opponent. Walters, now terribly enraged, quitted his hold of Mr. Bland's arm, and with a tremendous blow of his fist knocked him down. The infuriated drunkard would have continued his attack while his opponent was on the ground, had he not been restrained by the bystanders, to whom Mr. Bland was well known. A policeman shortly afterwards came up and took Walters into custody, while Mr. Bland, who had been considerably injured by his fall, with great difficulty contrived to reach home.

From the severity of the treatment he had received, Mr. Bland was unable next day to attend before the magistrates. He sent a letter to them, however, in which he stated that as he was in no danger, and the principal injury he had received was a violent sprain, he hoped that Walters would be released on his own recognizances to appear again on a future day. The letter also contained a certificate from the doctor confirming Mr. Bland's statement, that from the violence of the sprain he had received he was



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unable to leave the house. It was with considerable difficulty that the magistrates were induced to agree to Mr. Bland's request ; but on hearing of the impoverished state of Walters and his family, they agreed to release him on the condition that he should appear before them again on that day week.

On the day appointed Walters made his appearance, and Mr. Bland, who was far from having recovered from the effects of the injuries he had received, was led into court and placed on a seat beside the bench. In his evidence, Mr. Bland plainly attempted to put Walters's behaviour in the most favourable light. He laid great stress on the fact that Walters was certainly drunk at the time, and appeared hardly to be aware what he was about. He also admitted that, in his (Mr. Bland's) attempts to release himself from Walters's grasp, he had accidentally struck him the first blow, which Walters had immediately returned. He concluded his evidence by strongly urging for a very mitigated punishment, as Walters at the time was labouring under great excitement, not merely from

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the drink he had consumed, but also from his domestic troubles and anxieties.

Mr. Bland having concluded his evidence, the mayor inquired of Walters whether he wished to ask Mr. Bland any questions. The prisoner, who was even now half intoxicated, began to question Mr. Bland upon the circumstances connected with the execution which had been put in his house, and whether he had not broken his word to him. The mayor found Walters's questions irrelevant, and told him he must confine himself to the immediate facts of the case, and not go into any subject unconnected with it. Walters made him no answer, but continued sullenly silent. The mayor then asked him what he had to say in his defence. Walters stated, lucidly enough, that he had no doubt been wrong in addressing Mr. Bland in the public streets in the manner he had done ; but said that at the time he was labouring under great excitement. Mr. Bland, he said, had promised him that if a portion of his rent were paid by a certain day, he would give him time for the remainder. He had paid the portion agreed upon, which Mr. Bland had taken, and he had

then immediately put in an execution for the rest. Smarting under a sense of this injury, as well as from having taken a little too much drink, he had been guilty of seizing Mr. Bland by the arm, while he was attempting to avoid him; but that Mr. Bland had struck him the first blow, and that he had merely returned it. Mr. Bland indignantly denied that he had received any money from Walters, and Walters as pertinaciously insisted on the truth of his statement. The mayor at length put an end to the dispute, and fined Walters five shillings for being drunk, stating that the lenient view he had taken upon this occasion was partly in respect of Mr. Bland's wish, and partly from the distress the prisoner's wife and family were in.

Two days after the termination of the case, Mr. Bland met Walters in the town, who again upbraided him for the treatment he had received from him. Mr. Bland attempted to remonstrate with him upon the gross impropriety of the course he was pursuing. He knew perfectly well he had not paid one shilling of the money, and how could he be so wicked as to make the statement he did?

“I swear,” said Walters, “that what I said was perfectly true. The money was paid on the day you appointed.”

“I can merely repeat what I said before,” said Mr. Bland, “that your statement was perfectly untrue. I have never received a shilling of the money. It was not paid to me, and I particularly inquired of my sister, who assures me that during my absence she neither saw nor had any communication from you.”

“And that, again, I say, is untrue,” said Walters. “I did send her the money.”

Mr. Bland merely shrugged his shoulders in disgust.

“I say I did,” roared Walters, getting greatly enraged.

“Do you suppose,” said Mr. Bland to a friend who had now joined him, “that my sister received the money from this man and did not tell me of it? The idea is absurd.”

“If she says she did not, she utters as great a lie as ever was told,” said Walters, “or else she has robbed me. Here, Bill,” he continued, to a man in the dress of a stable-keeper, whom he saw

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in the group that had gathered round, "did I not send you with some money in a letter to Mr. Bland's a week or ten days ago?"

"To be sure you did," was the reply.

"And did you give it?"

"Yes; I am willing to take my oath of it before any judge in the world."

"To whom did you give the letter?" said Mr. Bland, now growing both surprised and alarmed.

"Why, to your sister," said the ostler.

"There must be some great mistake," said Mr. Bland, now almost in a state of terror. "If you gave it at all, you must have given it to the servant. It is not to be supposed for one moment that Miss Bland would have received it and then have denied it."

"In the first place," said the man, angrily, "I said that I gave it to your sister, and I meant it; and my word is as good as yours, lawyer though you be. In the second, I know your sister too well to be mistaken in the matter. She has lived quite long enough in the town for one to be certain about her."

“I will have this thoroughly inquired into,” said Mr. Bland. “What day do you say you sent the money?”

Walters mentioned the date, and Mr. Bland, after making a note of it, left the wondering group, and proceeded homewards. No sooner had he entered the house than he called Betty before him.

“Now,” said Mr. Bland to her, “I want to ask you if you remember anything which took place here last Friday week.”

“Last Friday week, sir?” said Betty, after a moment’s consideration, “last Friday week? No, sir; I do not; for it was my holiday.”

“At what time did you leave home?”

“I left home, sir, before Miss Emily had her breakfast; I should say about eight o’clock, or before it.”

“And what time did you return home?”

“I do not know exactly, sir; but it was about ten o’clock.”

“And who took your place during the day?”

“Mother came, sir, before I left; but she was



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obliged to go home as soon as the breakfast things were washed up."

"And who came in her place?"

"No one, sir; mother tried to find somebody, but could not; and Miss Emily remained at home all day by herself."

Mr. Bland was aghast at the intelligence. He now remembered having asked his sister whether she had received any money from Walters. She replied that she had not seen him nor heard from him. The remembrance of her answer, however, did not altogether ease Mr. Bland's mind. He felt assured that his sister had told him the truth to the best of her belief; at the same time there was another contingency to be taken into consideration. From Walters's statement the money was sent in an envelope, and it was barely possible the messenger did not clearly explain from whom it was sent, and what were its contents. But then, he argued, the letter would have been placed with the others on his desk ready for him to open on his return; yet there was the positive assurance of the man that he had left the letter. Altogether, there was a mystery about the affair which impe-

ratively demanded an investigation, and he determined to sift it to the bottom. The goods and chattels of Walters had been sold, and the sum they had realized was considerably less than the amount owing for rent, even after deducting the sum Walters stated he had paid ; consequently, Mr. Bland was still right in a legal point of view. But what was to him a thousand times worse than an excessive zeal in his client's behalf, or an error in law, stared him in the face—the appearance of having broken a promise he had made. There was but one way open to him to arrive at the truth, and that was to write to his sister Emily at Yarmouth, requesting her to inform him whether she had received any note for him during his absence which she had not given to him, and specially to remember whether she had on the day named received a message on any subject from Walters.

*IV.—THE OLD MAID.*

PART III.

**W**E must now return to Miss Emily Bland. She spent the week after she quitted her brother's house in visiting some friends who lived in a village about twenty miles distant from —. Not having seen them for some years, her arrival occasioned considerable excitement, and warm indeed was the hospitable welcome accorded to her. Each day of her stay brought her many invitations to pay visits. One night, at a little party formed in honour of her arrival, the conversation, in the course of the evening, turned upon mesmerism. One of the gentlemen, who happened to be present at the first lecture the

professor had given in the town in which Miss Bland lived, described minutely all that had taken place, including the episode in which Miss Sims figured, and expressed great wonder and admiration at the whole of the performance. Miss Bland asked him, with some trepidation, if he had been present at the second representation.

“I am sorry to say I was not,” was the reply. “I was obliged to return home the very day after the first one. Have you heard how the second went off? I should much like to hear if the experiments then were as extraordinary as at the first.”

Miss Bland, finding that she had nothing to dread here from speaking out frankly on the subject, told the company that she was present at the second representation, and among other things she described the wonderful manner in which the professor had deprived her of all recollection of the transactions which had taken place on the previous day.

“But do you really mean to say,” said the hostess, “that you could not remember anything that occurred?”

“I assure you it is a fact.”

“But did you try?”

“Over and over again, without the slightest success ; not a single thing could I remember.”

“But perhaps so soon after the occurrence you were nervous and confused. Do you not think that if you were now to try to recall to your memory something that occurred on that day you would be able to do so?”

“I assure you I cannot remember anything whatever.”

“Try,” said a gentleman present ; “begin with the morning, and trace down the ordinary events of the day. You may, perhaps, by that means hit upon something which may help you to recall the rest.”

Miss Bland was silent for some moments, evidently quite absorbed ; but at last she gave up the attempt.

“It is useless,” she said ; “I can remember nothing ; and the more I think, the more difficult does it appear to recall anything.”

“I wonder,” said one lady, “whether the lecturer himself could give you back the power. At any

rate, if I were in your place, I would ask him. It would have a singular effect to remember suddenly all that occurred, which now you have so completely forgotten."

"I have several times," said Miss Bland, "thought of applying to him on the subject; but I do not know where to find him, and though I did, I hardly think it would be proper on my part to address him."

"Why not?"

"Because I should not like him to know that he possesses such power over me."

All the ladies present, of course, admitted the validity of this argument, and, after Miss Bland had been subjected to several more questions respecting the professor's performances, and many requests that she would try to remember something, in which she completely failed, the conversation turned to other matters.

The time had now arrived for Miss Bland's visit to Great Yarmouth. On her arrival she found a letter awaiting her, not from Miss Sims, as she had anticipated, but from her brother Edward. With considerable trepidation she opened it, hoping that

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it contained, if not a request for pardon, at least an offer of reconciliation. She was, however, doomed to disappointment. The letter, though not unkind in its tone, was short and explicit. Her brother informed her that Walters had asserted that he had sent the money he had promised in part-payment of his rent, and that his messenger had given it to her before the day appointed, and insisted that she was perfectly aware of the fact. "As, of course," Mr. Bland continued, "such a statement, were it not disproved, would be most prejudicial to your reputation both for integrity and veracity, I trust you will see the necessity of sending me an explicit denial by return of post; but at the same time, it would be well for you to turn over in your mind whether you did not, on the day named, receive any letter or communication which you forgot to advise me of."

Miss Bland, disappointed and possibly irritated at the purport of her brother's letter, which was so different from what she had fondly expected, immediately sat down to answer it. Adopting her brother's phraseology as nearly as possible, she briefly told him that during his absence in the



country she had neither seen Walters nor heard from him, either by letter or otherwise. All that had then taken place she had already informed him of, and all letters which had arrived she had, as usual, placed on his table for his inspection. She concluded her letter in a very cool tone, not advertng in the slightest manner to their quarrel, nor giving the least hint of her speedy return home. "This, I think, will show him," she said, as she folded up the letter, "that at any rate I am as proud as he is, if not prouder."

The next morning Miss Bland received a long letter from her friend Miss Sims, detailing at great length all that she considered would be interesting of what had taken place during her absence. The subject on which she especially dilated, however, was Walters's dispute with Mr. Bland. It must be admitted that, in her description of the affair, there appeared some little acrimony, and a wish to present Mr. Bland in as unamiable a light as possible, as if in revenge for the uncomplimentary remarks he had made upon her (as related by Miss Bland, when she had proposed visiting him). This again was heightened by the

pathetic description she gave of the miseries the Walters family were suffering owing to the severity with which the law had been put in force against them. Mrs. Walters and her helpless family she (Miss Sims) understood had been driven from their house, and were wandering without a roof to shelter them. They had been obliged, she stated, to spend the first night after their ejection under a cart-shed on the farm itself, and in consequence, one of the children had been so severely attacked with inflammation of the lungs, that there did not appear the slightest hope of the poor little creature's recovery. "It would be wrong, my dear," Miss Sims continued, "to conceal from you that public opinion in the town on this matter is very much divided—some insisting that, from the well-known humane character of your brother, an act of cruelty on his part would be impossible ; others again, from the fact that everything that the Walters possessed had been seized for rent, and that his family were now destitute, inclining to think that too much harshness had been used. This latter opinion is strengthened by the statement, to which Walters inflexibly adheres, that

he paid, and to Miss Bland, the money he had promised to your brother, in order to obtain another six months' delay. I have made," so went on Miss Sims, "every inquiry I could into the matter, of course with the intent of proving your brother to be in the right, and I have also seen the man who says that he gave the money into your hands, my dear, that I might make no mistake on the subject. I asked the man to tell me exactly the day on which this took place, saying that it might aid you in proving the falsehood of Walters's statement, and he says it was on the Thursday before your brother's return home. He remembered the day well, from the fact that he was at the time engaged in delivering, at the different tradesmen's shops, the window-bills advertising the professor's lecture on mesmerism, and that he had just left the last bill before he called at your house."

Here Miss Bland paused in her reading, and the letter fell from her hand. She felt a sudden dizziness, and she sank down, almost senseless, on a sofa. The terrible idea flashed across her mind that she might have received the money, and that

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the remembrance of the transaction, with everything else which had occurred on that day, had been taken from her by the mesmerist. As soon as she had somewhat recovered herself, she made a desperate effort to recall the various transactions in which she had been engaged on the day before the lecture, but without avail ; her inability being all the greater from the state of nervous anxiety in which she was. What to do she knew not. The first course which suggested itself to her mind was to write a letter to her brother, telling him the whole truth, and asking him for forgiveness. But then she reflected, that even if her brother should pardon her, the mischief which she had occasioned would not be remedied by it.

She now began to accuse herself of being the sole author of the terrible misfortune which had fallen on the Walters family. She pictured to herself the agony of the poor mother at the death of her child, and the misery the wretched family were enduring. The disgrace which would inevitably fall on her brother, in the event of the money having been really sent, also came before her, and so strongly as wholly to obliterate from her mind

the ridicule and obloquy which would fall upon herself for her part in the transaction.

She remained for some hours in a state of utter despair, not being able to determine on any plan of action. At length she remembered that the post office would soon close, and that if she was to write to her brother she had no time to lose, else the letter would not go that evening. Arousing herself from her bewildered state, she left the sofa and seated herself at the table. She commenced a long and penitential epistle to her brother, acknowledging that, through the power of the mesmerist, she had lost all remembrance of what had taken place on the day especially referred to in his letter. But she felt sure, she wrote, that if Walters had sent the money in a note, and she had received it, she must certainly have placed it on the desk along with his other letters. It would have been impossible for any person, knowing that it contained money, to have fraudulently abstracted it, as she had made a point of carefully keeping the door locked, putting the key in her own pocket. She had not even allowed Betty to enter the room for the purpose of dusting it,

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without being present to superintend the operation, and see that the girl did not displace any of his papers. She implored her brother to pardon her, and concluded by requesting him, if he believed Walters's statement, to throw all the blame on her. In a postscript she begged him to answer her note by return of post, as she earnestly wished to leave Yarmouth for home, but that she would be afraid to meet him unless she had first received his pardon.

Having concluded her epistle, Miss Bland now commenced one to her friend Miss Sims. In it she thanked her for her letter, though sad indeed was the information it contained. She again begged of her to make further inquiries as to how things were passing at her brother's house, and to send her all the news she could obtain respecting the Walters affair. Perhaps, too, she could help her to get the address of the mesmerist, as she felt much inclined to consult him as to the best means of obtaining the restoration of her memory.

That night poor Miss Bland slept little, and when she did sleep, it brought her but little rest. Her slumbers were short and broken, and dis-



turbed by dreams of the most painful description. She was especially haunted by the figure of a tall, unhappy-looking woman, in deep mourning, to whose skirts two little children were clinging, and weeping bitterly. This phantom, she felt assured, was Mrs. Walters, although, by the way, she had never, to her knowledge, seen her. Dawn at last came to her relief. She rose early, and attempted to calm her mind by taking a walk by the sea-shore, hoping that the cool morning air might tend to clear away the unhappy thoughts with which she was oppressed. During her stroll she attempted over and over again to bring to mind the occurrences of the day on which Walters stated he had paid her the money ; but in vain—all was a perfect blank. At length, feeling fatigued, she returned to her lodgings, and there found her breakfast prepared for her. She tried to eat a few mouthfuls, but had no appetite, and she soon gave over the attempt.

She now rose from the table to throw herself on the sofa, when she perceived on it a newspaper folded up, and still wet from the press. Without any interest or especial purpose, she mechanically



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unfolded it, and glancing at the first page, she perceived it was the local paper. She was on the point of throwing it from her again, when her eye lighted on a long advertisement, headed in large type, "Lecture on Mesmerism and Electro-Biology." Her apathy now fled, and she read it attentively. It stated that on that evening the celebrated professor of mesmerism, Dr. X——, would give a lecture, illustrated by experiments, on that interesting subject, in the great room of the —— Inn in Norwich. To her great satisfaction she perceived that the lecturer was the same person who had operated with such terrible effect upon her; and setting aside all other considerations, she immediately determined to leave Yarmouth to be present at his performance, resolving that, the lecture over, she would ask an audience with him, and explain the sad position she was in, and implore him, if it was possible, to restore her memory to her again.

Finding that it would be possible to return to Yarmouth the same evening, she made no preparations for her journey, but passed the day as tranquilly as she could till the train should start

for Norwich, where she arrived an hour before the time advertised for the commencement of the lecture. In the interim she occupied herself in thinking how she should address the professor so as to place before him in the most delicate way the object of her visit. At last, when she had settled everything satisfactorily, she found that it was just about time for the doors of the lecture-room to be opened, and having paid for her ticket, she seated herself on one of the back benches, in order to prevent the lecturer from recognizing her. On casting her eye around her, she found that the appliances for the evening's performance were exactly similar to those on the occasion at which she had been present. There was the raised platform, and on it the two chairs, one in the centre for the professor, and the other near it, on the right hand side, for the subject to be operated on. There was also the same harmonium at the left side, with a closed book upon it, and beyond these there was no other preparation or apparatus whatever. The performance having been well advertised, and the fame of the lecturer having preceded him, the room filled rapidly with a very

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respectable company. In due time the professor appeared on the platform. Miss Bland at that moment was so agitated that she was obliged to place her hand on her heart to control its throbbing. He was dressed in exactly the same manner as before. On his hand the same rings sparkled, his linen was of the same spotless snowy whiteness, his long glossy hair hung down to his shoulders, and his bright large eyes shone with equal effect in his handsome pallid face. His opening address was almost verbatim the same as that she had previously heard. He mentioned, as before, the difficulties attending the study of mesmerism, and the courage it required for its professors to pursue the science, impeded as they were, not by the difficulties attending it, but by the ridicule and opposition of the majority of the public. He admitted without hesitation that the study of mesmerism was still in its infancy, and that there were many phenomena connected with it for which he was unable to account. He also concluded his address, in the same manner as before, by telling the audience how grateful he should be to them could they explain to him in

what manner one individual could obtain so much power over the mind of another, or throw any light on the study of electro-biology, or magnetism in general. This address was received with the same enthusiastic applause as on the former occasion. But, singularly enough, it did not make the same impression on Miss Bland as did the former address. She had then paid such intense attention to his opening speech, and she remembered it so perfectly, that she could almost have prompted him in it had he so required; and her interest therefore was in consequence greatly diminished. His experiments also seemed to her to have lost a considerable portion of the thrilling interest those she had formerly witnessed had given her, although perfect success attended the whole performance. The very same things that she had seen before were again enacted. One person could not rise from his seat, a lady could not speak when he ordered her to be silent, and another could not raise her pocket-handkerchief from the platform on which it had fallen, when he prohibited her from lifting it, and many other things of the same description.

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At length he commenced his great experiment. He invited a lady who was seated on one of the front benches to mount the platform. With considerable reluctance she obeyed him, and he then requested that she would take off her bonnet, and seat herself in the patients' chair. As soon as she had done so, and her face was turned towards the audience, Miss Bland recognized in her the same person whom she had seen operated upon at the previous performance. The professor now commenced the same series of operations. He first set her a-giggling, which she continued until it ended in violent hysterical laughter, which she could not suppress. Suddenly he made some pantomimic passes. Her merriment immediately ceased, and she assumed a quiet and almost pious expression of countenance. He then turned to the harmonium and played a hymn tune, and she began to sing the same hymn Miss Bland had heard before. He ceased playing, and she was immediately silent. He then took the book from the harmonium, and opening it, apparently at hazard, placed it in the hands of a gentleman, whom he requested to pay great attention to

the page before him. He then ordered the young lady to repeat, word for word, the page at which the book had been opened, which proved to be the same Miss Bland had already heard her repeat. Great applause followed this wonderful exhibition of the professor's talent, who bowed his acknowledgments in the most graceful manner. He then released the young lady from her thralldom, and after some little pantomimic gesticulations, as if endeavouring to regain her self-possession, she left the platform, and once more resumed her seat among the audience.

It would be difficult to describe the surprise and indignation which this last performance created in the mind of Miss Bland. Thoroughly angry at the deception which had been practised upon her, she rose from her seat and threw back her veil, with the intention of addressing the professor. He caught her eye, and evidently quailed beneath her gaze. She noticed his alarm, and perceived that she had been made a dupe. A feeling of shame came over her at the remembrance of what she had done, and she determined not to expose herself to



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the ridicule which might fall upon her if she brought herself under the notice of the public by addressing the professor. Fearing, however, that her indignation might lead her to some indiscretion, she prudently left the room and hurried to the railway station, although it was yet two hours to the time the train she had intended to return by was to start. Fortunately she found another about to leave, and she seated herself in a compartment in which there was no other passenger. Throwing herself back in the carriage, she attempted to collect her thoughts, but found it impossible, and she burst into a violent fit of weeping. As usual with women of delicate nervous temperaments, tears brought her considerable relief, and after the fit was over, she began to think more calmly over the events of the evening. The principal feeling she experienced was an oppressive sense of shame at having been under the power of a charlatan, whose performances she had considered so mysterious and wonderful.

So overwhelming was this feeling, that for some time not a thought of her brother or the



Walters family passed through her mind. She had all along been aware that a certain amount of ridicule attached itself to her for the part she had taken in the professor's performances. This, however, she could support with comparative equanimity, as the weakness she had displayed at the lecture was purely physical ; but now she could easily perceive she had been nothing better than a victim in the hands of a designing quack, and she was obliged to admit that she had richly deserved all the ridicule that had been heaped upon her. She could no longer console herself with the soothing idea that she was in reality an object of pity, much as she might be laughed at, for she now felt that the laughter was fully merited.

Miss Bland now folded her arms across her breast, and remained in a sort of sullen apathy. In this state she continued for some time. At last she remembered the glowing description she had given of the professor's performances when present the week before at the little evening party ; how she had then expatiated on what she considered the wonderful power of the man, and the mys-

terious influence he had exercised over her. She wondered whether Betty, when she had taken her holiday, had similarly made a fool of herself. Even if she had, there might be some excuse for a poor ignorant girl ; but there could be none for her, a lady, and a woman of education. Then her mind, in a vague sort of way, turned to the time when Betty would be entitled to her next month's holiday, and she resolved that on all future occasions, the girl's mother, if she offered to take her daughter's place, should agree to stay all day, or not come at all. Having arrived at this conclusion, she again relapsed into sullen apathy, which continued for some moments.

Suddenly Miss Bland's arms, which she had kept rigidly crossed on her breast, fell by her side, her mental stupor left her, and she sat erect, in a state of intense wonder. She now not only remembered that Betty had taken her holiday the day previous to the lecture, but that the girl had once spoken to her of some trivial circumstance that had taken place on her road homewards, clearly proving that the events of the day had never been really obliterated from her mind. All

that had passed during the girl's absence now rushed into her mind, and especially the fact of a man calling with a note for her brother, telling her that it contained money, and that she was to take great care of it, and that in consequence she had concealed it in the chest of drawers in her own bedroom, instead of placing it with the other letters. Doubtless it was there at the present moment. Her rage at the folly she had been guilty of now became almost overpowering, and when the train arrived at Yarmouth, she leaped from the carriage and hurried to her lodgings almost demented.

After she reached them her agitation continued unabated. She walked up and down her room for hours without growing calmer. At last she resolved to seek her bed, and, if possible, to arrange her thoughts into something like order during the silence of the night. In this she succeeded, resolving to return home the next day, and do all in her power to compensate her brother for the mischief she had done. She rose early, after a sleepless night, and occupied herself till breakfast time in packing up her boxes, and

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making the necessary preparations for leaving by the eleven o'clock train.

When she descended to the breakfast-room, she found on the table two letters which had arrived by that morning's post — one from her brother, and the other from Miss Sims. The latter she opened first, hoping it might give her some idea of the contents of her brother's letter, which she dreaded perusing. Miss Sims stated that she had been unable to obtain the professor's address, although she had made every inquiry in her power on the subject. She mentioned, however, that she had seen Betty, who had informed her that Mr. Bland was in a most distressed and anxious state of mind, as Walters still continued to accuse him of falsehood and cruelty. She concluded her letter by advising her friend to return home immediately.

Miss Bland now opened her brother's letter. There was nothing positively unkind in it ; but she could easily perceive, from its tone and the irregularity of the handwriting, that Miss Sims's statement respecting the condition of his mind was perfectly correct. He said he much regretted that

she had allowed that miserable quack to attain such an ascendancy over her, as, if Walters's assertion were true, the result would be of the most distressing character to both—to him, as showing that he had been guilty of falsehood and cruelty ; and to her, as entailing a vast amount of ridicule, if not also the suspicion of dishonesty. He, like Miss Sims, concluded his letter by begging his sister to return home immediately and assist him to clear up the affair.

Miss Bland had already resolved to return, and the two letters strengthened her in her resolution. After hastily drinking a cup of tea she called for her landlady, and having informed her that she had that morning received letters which necessitated her return home, she paid her account, and shortly after left the house. At a late hour the same evening she arrived at her brother's dwelling.

V.—*THE OLD MAID.*

PART IV.

THE meeting between Miss Bland and her brother was a very sad one. He received her at first somewhat coolly, but certainly not unkindly. He said he was pleased to see her back again, and thanked her for the willingness she had shown to return home. She attempted to answer him, but could not find words, and, instead, burst into tears. The coldness which her brother had shown towards her at the commencement of the evening now melted at the sight of his sister's tears, for he was tenderly attached to her. He embraced her with great affection, and begged that she would calm

herself, as he had no doubt all would end well, although the affair had, at the moment, the appearance of being an unfortunate one. Miss Bland at length became somewhat calmer, and made some inquiries as to what had taken place during her absence ; but her brother, with great kindness, refused to converse on any subject connected with business matters that evening, more especially as she appeared greatly fatigued by her journey. She thanked him for his consideration, and shortly afterwards they parted for the night.

Next morning, before leaving her room, Miss Bland took from the drawer the note which had been forwarded to her by Walters. She had no difficulty in finding it ; her memory was now perfectly clear as to what happened the day before the lecture. In fact, all the circumstances appeared before her with remarkable vividness. Even before she saw the envelope she recalled the rough scrawling hand in which Walters had written,—“To Mr. Bland, to be given to him as soon as he returns.” She also remembered that there was an ink blot on one



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corner of the envelope, as well as a thumb-mark upon it.

Miss Bland, having put the letter into her pocket, descended to the breakfast-room, where she found her brother occupied with his morning paper, awaiting her. He received her very kindly, and they sat down to breakfast. During their meal not a word was said by either about business; in fact, both seemed to avoid it carefully. When breakfast was over, Mr. Bland went into his office, and shortly afterwards Betty entered the sitting-room with a message from him to his sister, requesting that she would go there to him. She immediately obeyed, but with no little anxiety. As soon as she had seated herself on a chair he commenced the conversation.

“Now, Emily, my dear,” he said, “although I have a great repugnance to touch upon a circumstance which may cause you annoyance, at the same time I must take some steps to clear up this unfortunate business of Walters’s. Either that man is a most barefaced liar, or we have done him a terrible injury. It is imperative upon us to clear up the matter if we possibly can, and

for you to endeavour to recollect what took place on the day he says he sent the letter. Now think calmly, if you can, on what then occurred, and let me see if I cannot assist you. I have discovered some circumstances which took place on that day from Betty, and perhaps, if I relate them to you, they will assist you to recall the rest to your memory."

"Stop, Edward dear," said Miss Bland, "there is no necessity for you to relate anything that passed ; I have now (I am almost sorry to say) a vivid remembrance of all that day's transactions, and I tremble to think how great a simpleton I have been, and deeply regret the trouble I have occasioned."

"Do you really mean to say," said Mr. Bland, "that you now remember all that passed on that day?"

"I can."

"Then is there any truth in Walters's statement that he sent the money?"

"I am ashamed to acknowledge that there is," said Miss Bland.

"Have you his letter?" asked her brother.

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“I have,” said Miss Bland, taking it from her pocket, and placing it in his hand.

Mr. Bland opened the letter, and found that it contained a letter from Walters, together with the money he had promised to send. Walters, although he had apparently been partially intoxicated when he wrote the letter, had worded it in a proper and respectful manner. He commenced by stating that although he had experienced considerable difficulty in raising the money, he had at last succeeded. He expressed himself gratified for the indulgence Mr. Bland had shown him, and considered himself fortunate in having fallen into the hands of a gentleman of so much consideration and humanity. Had it been otherwise, he might have been at that moment an outcast and a wanderer on the face of the earth. He concluded by saying that he had no doubt that when the next quarter's rent became due, he should not only be able to meet the demand, but he felt certain he should be in a position to pay off a considerable portion of the arrears.

When Mr. Bland had read the letter, he let it fall from his hands, utterly aghast. After a

moment's silence, during which his sister regarded him with an expression of great anxiety, he exclaimed,—

“This is indeed a most unfortunate affair. What to do I know not.”

“Edward, dear,” said his sister, “throw the whole blame on me, for I richly deserve it; I alone have been culpable in the matter.”

“My dear Emily,” he replied, “even if I did so,—which I should not for a moment dream of doing,—it would not mend matters. Everything the man possessed in the world has been sold. He is now driven from his house, and I am even afraid to inquire what has become of his unfortunate wife and helpless young family. It is a most lamentable business, and how it will terminate I cannot imagine.”

“But, Edward,” said Miss Emily, “the fault has been none of yours, and he cannot do anything against you.”

“Possibly not; but, what is far worse in my eyes, he threatens legal proceedings against you.”

“What for?” said Miss Bland.

“I am almost ashamed to tell you,” said her

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brother: "he threatens to proceed against you for having fraudulently appropriated to yourself the money he sent for the part-payment of his rent."

"He can never have the audacity to do such a thing," remarked Miss Bland, in a tone of great indignation.

"I am sorry to say there is a strong probability of his doing it," said Mr. Bland, "unless we come to some terms with him; and how to contrive that, without bringing you into bad odour, I cannot divine. I know he has already been in communication with a disreputable attorney, who has lately come to reside in the town, and who has promised to act for him if he can raise enough money to pay the preliminary expenses. But for that, I have no doubt I should have arranged with Walters without much difficulty, though at a considerable pecuniary cost. That fellow, however, when he knows you have received the money, will not only put Walters up to making it the means of demanding an exorbitant sum, but, as I have already offended him, he will take good care to place your behaviour as well as

mine before the public in a most unfavourable light."

"But surely he cannot do so if you pay him what he demands?"

"I am afraid, Emily, he will rather make the payment of the money a moral proof of what he will be pleased to call your dishonesty."

"Oh, what shall I do?" said Miss Bland, now almost in a state of despair. "Let me go to Walters, Edward, and explain to him that I alone am to blame. It is a thousand times better that the blame should fall upon me than that the slightest suspicion should attach itself to you. Tell me, dear, where does Walters live?"

"I don't know; and if I did, your going to him would not facilitate matters. Besides, how could you accomplish it?"

"I would candidly explain everything to him, and beg of him to forgive me."

"But he would not believe you," said Mr. Bland. "Your tale would seem too improbable. Besides, he is enraged against you for the misery which has fallen on his family; and with all his faults, the fellow seems to be tenderly attached to them."

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Instead of forgiving you, it is more than probable he would at once give you into custody for the robbery."

"What shall I do?" exclaimed Miss Bland. "Tell me, Edward, is it true that one of his children died from cold and exposure the day after the sale?"

"I have heard so," was the reply; "but I do not know the particulars. Candidly, I was afraid to inquire."

"How dreadful!" said Miss Bland, now bursting into an uncontrollable fit of weeping. "And I have been the cause: I shall never forgive myself for it."

"Come, come, Emily, don't give way so; let us rather reflect what we can do to avert the misfortune and disgrace which appear to be hanging over us. We have not a day nor an hour to lose. I will immediately see if I can find Walters, and effect a compromise with him; he is generally hanging about the — Inn. I would rather spend the half of what I possess in the world than that any disgrace or trouble should fall upon you, silly as you have been. If anybody should call on



you while I am out, you had better not see them."

"I thought, dear," said Miss Bland, "of sending Betty for Miss Sims, as she would be able to tell me what the people in the town are saying about the affair, she has so many acquaintances."

"For Heaven's sake, Emily, leave that chattering fool alone; and if she comes here, do not see her. So many acquaintances, indeed! Yes; that is true, and before two hours had gone every one of those people would know all that had taken place between you. Now do take my advice, and keep quiet until I see you again. I will leave word with Betty, as I go out, to let no one into the house under any pretence whatever."

Miss Bland promised to obey these directions, and her brother left the house. He first bent his steps towards the inn in the market-place, before which, as usual, were gathered a group of idlers. Seeing among them a person he knew something of, he inquired of him whether he had seen Walters, as he particularly wished to speak with him. The man replied that he had seen

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nothing of him, but would inquire of some of the others. No one, however, had seen or heard of Walters. It was more than probable, they said, that he would come there later in the day, as he seldom missed coming in the afternoon if he was not there in the morning. Mr. Bland now determined to wait in the market-place, in the hope of catching Walters as soon as he should arrive. When strolling leisurely before the Town Hall, he suddenly saw Mr. Jones, the attorney to whom Walters had applied for legal advice, leaving the building. On the spur of the moment, Mr. Bland advanced towards him and inquired whether he had seen anything of Mr. Walters that day.

“I have not,” was the reply, “nor do I expect he will be here before to-morrow.”

“Am I rightly informed,” inquired Mr. Bland, “that he intends taking legal proceedings against my sister?”

“Perfectly so,” replied Jones, coolly.

“I think he will be very foolish,” said Mr. Bland. “What possible charge can he make against her?”

"A very serious one," was the answer.

"And may I ask of what nature?" inquired Mr. Bland, now getting terribly alarmed, though preserving a very cool exterior.

"Simply of having fraudulently appropriated to her own use moneys which had been left by my client for the payment of his rent due to the Duke of ——."

"You must have been lamentably misinformed on the subject," said Mr. Bland.

"Unfortunately, I have every reason to believe the contrary. It is not to be supposed that I should be engaged in any proceeding of the kind, especially against the sister of a highly respectable practitioner, had I not good data to proceed upon."

"Well," said Mr. Bland, "only take my advice, and see that your data are good."

"I consider none could be better," said Mr. Jones, "and moreover, I may as well tell you candidly, that I shall make you one of my principal witnesses, painful as it will be for you to be put in the witness-box to give evidence against your own sister."

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“You surely must be under some great mistake,” said Mr. Bland, now getting very frightened. “Neither my sister nor myself have the slightest intention of concealing anything. I admit, without any hesitation, that Walters did pay the money, and that there has been a great mistake. My sister’s memory, I am sorry to say, is exceedingly defective, and it was only to-day that I discovered she had forgotten the whole transaction.”

Mr. Jones looked steadily in Mr. Bland’s face, without answering; but although he said nothing, there was no mistaking the meaning of the expression. It simply meant that Mr. Bland’s excuse was a gross and stupid perversion of the truth.

“I am perfectly willing,” continued Mr. Bland, understanding him, “to acknowledge the improbability of the excuse; still it is a fact. That Walters has received great injury through my sister’s unfortunate forgetfulness, I am also ready to admit; and for that reason I now submit to you, as his solicitor, whether it would not be possible to make him a fair and liberal compensation?”

Mr. Jones immediately put on a look of virtuous astonishment, not unmixed with indignation. "You surely cannot mean what you say, Mr Bland," he said. "You would never ask me, a respectable solicitor, to assist you in compromising a felony."

"A felony!" said Mr. Bland, indignantly; "that is not the term, sir, to use to me regarding my sister. I will hold no further conversation with you on the subject. Our respectability and integrity are too well known to dread any attack that you and your client may think fit to make upon us. I wish you good morning, sir." So saying, Mr. Bland walked indignantly away, and Mr. Jones proceeded homewards.

During the conversation between Mr. Bland and Mr. Jones, an old man, who occupied some subordinate position in the Town Hall, and who was indebted chiefly to Mr. Bland's influence for his appointment, had been carefully watching them. As soon as Mr. Bland had left the market-place, and was proceeding homewards, he hurried after him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said he to Mr. Bland

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in a whisper, "but I think you are hardly aware of what is going on. I should not have taken the liberty of speaking to you, and perhaps I am doing wrong ; but you have been so kind to me, that I feel it would be ungrateful on my part if I did not tell you the truth. That fellow Jones has this morning taken out a summons against your sister, and in all probability it will be served this afternoon. I do not know exactly the circumstances of the case," continued the man, "but I thought it better to inform you of this."

"I am much obliged to you," said Mr. Bland, assuming an indifference which he was far from feeling. "I dare say it is of very little importance ; but thank you all the same ;" and he coolly continued his walk.

As soon, however, as he considered himself out of the man's sight, he hurried homewards, and finding from Betty that his sister was in the drawing-room, he immediately went to her.

"Emily, my dear," he said in a low voice, "do not be alarmed, but go up-stairs and pack up a few things in a box, for you must leave this house immediately. A summons has been taken out

against you by that fellow Jones, and we must, if possible, prevent its being served. Now, do not say one word ; go up-stairs and put your things together,—as few as possible,—and let me know as soon as you are ready.”

“Certainly, dear,” said Miss Bland, going towards the bell to ring it.

“But go at once,” said her brother ; “do not delay a moment.”

“I am only ringing,” she said, “for Betty to help me.”

“I don’t want Betty to know anything about it ; you must manage it yourself,” said Mr. Bland. “Stop, by-the-bye, you had better pack up your things in the little carpet-bag that I travel with, as I do not wish it to be thought that you are about to leave home. When you have packed it up, leave it in the room in some place where Betty will not see it.”

Miss Bland, terrified as she was, had sufficient presence of mind to obey her brother without saying a word more ; she immediately left the room to pack up a few necessaries to take with her.



As the Duke's tenants lived in a district somewhat distant from railway communication, Mr. Bland, when he had occasion to visit them, was in the habit of hiring a trap or chaise. Now, while his sister was packing the carpet-bag, he took the opportunity of running round to the stables to tell the owner to send the chaise he usually had, with a good horse in it, to his door in half an hour's time, and by no means to be later. He also told him that he was unable to say at what time he should be back ; he might be back that evening, or he might be absent for two or three days. The owner having promised attention to the order, Mr. Bland returned home, to find how far his sister had proceeded with her packing. To his great satisfaction he found that she was quite ready, and that she had contrived to keep Betty in the dark as to what she had been doing. Mr. Bland now formed some excuse for sending the servant on an errand, and as soon as she had left the house, he desired his sister to put on her bonnet and shawl, and walk as rapidly as she could down the turnpike road, promising that he would very shortly overtake her with the chaise

and the carpet-bag. He gave no further instructions, save to request that if she met any of her acquaintances she should not inform them she was about to leave home.

As soon as Miss Bland had left the house, her brother sat quietly down to await the arrival of the chaise, and the return of Betty. Both arrived nearly at the same time, and Mr. Bland, carrying the carpet-bag—which he took good care Betty should see was the one he usually travelled with—placed it in the chaise, and after telling the girl that he should probably not return till late at night, he drove off without saying a word about his sister having left the house.

He drove rapidly along for some time without overtaking Miss Emily; indeed, he had gone so far that he began to fear she had mistaken his instructions, and had taken some other road. After driving for more than a couple of miles, his anxiety increasing with the distance, he discovered before him a female figure, which to his great satisfaction he soon found was that of his sister.

As soon as Miss Bland had taken her seat beside him, he explained to her more fully his reason for

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leaving the house. In case she had remained at home, he said, the summons would have been served on her, and she would have been obliged to make her appearance as a prisoner in the police court. Now the prosecutor would be under the necessity of delaying further proceedings for some days, and he had no doubt that, rather than incur the expense they would entail, he would entertain the question of a compromise, which, after all, was the principal object he had in view, in spite of all his assertions to the contrary. All they desired by commencing legal proceedings, was to attach disgrace to her in addition to the pecuniary sacrifice they intended inflicting on her. Mr. Bland then informed his sister that he intended placing her in the house of a small farmer, whom he was acquainted with, though he was not one of the Duke's tenants, and who lived in a retired spot where no one would be likely to search for her. With him and his family she could remain in security until everything was arranged with Walters and his attorney, and as soon as it was safe for her to return home, he would call for her. Miss Bland of course most willingly agreed to this

arrangement; and in less than an hour the brother and sister arrived at the farmer's house, where everything was soon satisfactorily arranged, and in the evening Mr. Bland drove back to the town alone.

As soon as he arrived, he inquired of Betty whether any one had called during his absence. The girl told him that in the afternoon, shortly after his departure, a man had called who wished to see Miss Emily, and that she told him she was from home. He inquired whether she was expected to return soon, as in that case he would wait for her. To this question Betty could, of course, give him no information, as she (Miss Bland) had left the house during her absence on an errand. The man then inquired if she could tell him whither her mistress had gone; but on that point she was also ignorant. He questioned her whether she had left home with her brother, and in answer to this question Betty assured him that she had not.

Mr. Bland then inquired what sort of a man he was, and Betty gave such a minute description of him that her master had no difficulty in concluding

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he was a messenger from the police court, armed, no doubt, with a summons. Betty, however, informed Mr. Bland that the man had not only called several times during the afternoon, but that she had also noticed him watching the house till it was dark.

Satisfied with the success of his manœuvre, Mr. Bland now told Betty that he should require nothing more that night, and that she might go to bed; but the girl informed him with considerable anxiety that, as her mistress had not yet returned home, it would surely be better to sit up and wait for her. But Mr. Bland told her that this was needless, as his sister would not return that night, having gone on a visit to a friend who resided some distance off. The girl looked somewhat surprised—possibly believing that her mistress had taken no luggage with her—but made no further remark.

Next morning during breakfast, Mr. Bland's thoughts were occupied in endeavouring to form some scheme to effect a compromise with Walters and his attorney. With great difficulty he succeeded in framing one, and was on the

point of leaving the house to act upon it, when a ring was heard at the street bell, and the next moment Walters himself entered the room.

"I suppose you think," he commenced, in a bullying tone, "that you have done a very clever trick in getting your sister out of the way; but it will be useless, as I promise you I will follow her to the end of the earth sooner than not have my revenge."

"You may do as you think fit, Walters," said Mr. Bland, calmly, though he was far from feeling so; "but I should have thought you might have hit upon some plan of employing your money and time to better advantage. That my sister has been the innocent cause of this misfortune, I admit."

"Innocent cause!" said Walters. "Innocent cause, indeed! Do you call receiving money from me, and then swearing I never paid it, an innocent transaction? You lawyers seem to have a funny idea of innocence when it suits you."

"My sister," said Mr. Bland, still in a calm tone, "neither intended to inflict any injury on you, nor did she willingly keep from me the know-



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ledge that you had sent me the money. She had placed it away in safety, and afterwards totally forgot about the circumstance. As soon as she remembered having received your note, she placed the letter, unopened, in my hands. I assure you, you can scarcely be more annoyed at her forgetfulness than she is herself, and she is willing to make you all the redress in her power."

"Very kind of her indeed," said Walters, "after she has ruined me and my family."

"Stop," said Mr. Bland, interrupting him; "that is hardly a true statement of the case, Walters. You know perfectly well that you were little better than ruined before you sent the money, and that the sale of your goods has not sufficed to cover even the amount of the rent owing, nor near it. Even had you succeeded in paying the next quarter's rent, it would have been my duty to have taken steps to eject you from your farm for not having cultivated the land in a proper farmer-like manner. I admit an unintentional injustice has been done to you, and my sister is willing to make you all the redress in her power, and she can do no more."



“Then why has she not done so sooner?” said Walters, with far less anger in his tone than he had hitherto displayed.

“Because your attorney will not hear of it,” said Mr. Bland. “I saw him yesterday, and proposed a compromise, but he refused to listen to me.”

“He never told me that,” said Walters, evidently with much surprise. “I cannot think what he means by it. But after all, what compensation does your sister intend offering me for the injury she has done my family?”

“On that subject,” said Mr. Bland, perceiving his advantage, “I cannot at present speak. Your attorney has commenced proceedings at law against my sister, and so long as they are going on I will not allow her either to make you an offer or entertain one from you. It shall not be thought for one moment that I feared on her part any accusation of dishonesty that either you or your attorney could bring against her.”

“Then what am I to do?” said Walters. “I do not want to proceed against your sister ;

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all I want is fair play. She has done me an injury, and if she is willing to redress it, I do not want anything more."

"That's all very well," said Mr. Bland, "but if there is to be any compromise in the matter, it must be settled amicably, and not entertained while legal proceedings are even threatened. If you wish to prosecute her, do so if you please."

"I do not want to prosecute her," said Walters, once more, "but what am I to do?"

"Unfortunately," said Mr. Bland, "you have placed the affair in your solicitor's hands, and it would be a great irregularity on my part to treat with you on the subject; so we had better drop the conversation."

"Well," replied Walters, "but you might tell me what sort of an offer she would make me; that could do no harm at any rate."

"I can do nothing of the kind," said Mr. Bland; "and once more, we had better drop the conversation. Tell your attorney that when all legal proceedings are stopped, and you are willing to write me a letter, admitting that the

injustice my sister did you was accidental on her part, I am ready to enter into correspondence with him relative to a full compensation to be made by my sister. Now you may take any steps in the matter you please."

Walters now rose to depart. Before leaving the room, however, he hesitated for a moment ; and then said to Mr. Bland, with much civility, "Is there any necessity, sir, for me to consult my attorney about it? ain't I capable of transacting the business myself? He will only run me up law expenses."

"That," said Mr. Bland, "you ought to have thought of before you employed him. The affair is now in his hands, and as a brother practitioner I can only correspond with you through him."

Walters left Mr. Bland, saying he would immediately call upon Mr. Jones and tell him of his wish to stay all further legal proceedings, and that he might soon expect him back again. "I am perfectly willing," he said, now completely mollified, "to trust myself in your hands, as I am sure you will act honourably by me.

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Till this unfortunate affair took place I always considered you a man of honour, and I would have trusted you with all I had. I admit I have been deceived, but you must also admit I had some excuse; and I hope that, after all, we shall part good friends."

Walters then left the house, having by his visit relieved Mr. Bland's mind from an immense load of anxiety. He could now think calmly as to what steps he would take in the matter. He felt assured that the offer would terminate amicably; but he had still to prepare himself for the unpleasant haggling which he was certain would take place between him and Walters's attorney. He knew it would have been far better policy on his part to have come to an arrangement with Walters himself, without having anything to do with the attorney; but still, that course, he felt, would have been contrary to professional etiquette, and for this he was a great stickler. He had now to determine the amount he would offer Walters as compensation. He wished to act liberally, but he felt sure that Jones would

advise his client to make an extortionate demand. After considerable reflection Mr. Bland resolved to offer Walters five hundred pounds,—and not a shilling more. Having arrived at this conclusion he sat down in his office, and patiently awaited Walters's return. It was near one o'clock before he called again. He brought with him a politely worded letter from Mr. Jones, requesting that Mr. Bland would call upon him at any hour he chose to appoint that afternoon, as he (Mr. Jones) wished to confer with him on some business of importance. To this Mr. Bland returned another note, equally civil, saying that he would call upon Mr. Jones, without fail, about four o'clock. Mr. Bland noticed that a considerable change had taken place in Walters's demeanour since he had left him in the morning. He was then loquacious and good-natured ; he was now taciturn and reserved ; in fact, so much so, that Mr. Bland easily perceived he was acting under the instructions of his professional adviser. Mr. Bland, judging from this, feared that the meeting would not pass off so smoothly as he could have wished. However, he had now fully made up

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his mind as to the course he intended to pursue, and from which he would not depart ; so he took no notice of Walters's taciturnity, who left the house with the note for his solicitor.

Mr. Bland was punctual to his appointment. He found Mr. Jones in his office, engaged in conversation with Walters, who had evidently profited by the interim to get tipsy,—no very good augury for Mr. Bland, as the fellow was notoriously quarrelsome when in his cups. He, however, behaved very civilly to Mr. Bland when he entered, and even went so far as to place a chair for him. Mr. Jones began the conversation :

“Mr. Walters tells me he called on you this morning. I have informed him that such a course was utterly irregular, as he had placed his interests in my hands ; but as he is not well up in legal etiquette, we must excuse him.”

“Certainly he called on me,” said Mr. Bland ; “but at the same time you must understand that I told him it was somewhat out of order, and that I could not go into the affair with him unless through you.”

“Oh,” said Mr. Jones, politely, “I am perfectly



persuaded that you would be the last person in the world to act unprofessionally. But now let us to business. Walters tells me he wishes to drop all proceedings against your sister, upon the understanding, or rather agreement, that you will fully compensate him for the heavy loss, both in pocket and credit, he has sustained through her neglect. Did he rightly understand you?"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Bland. Then noticing that Walters, too, started angrily, he continued, "I told him that so long as any legal proceedings were being taken against her, I could not entertain the question at all. If they were completely stopped, and he would write me a letter, stating he was convinced she had acted only in error, I would then and then only enter on the question of compensation. I also stated, as I state now, that in that case I should be willing fairly and fully to compensate him for the loss he had sustained; but that all communications should pass through you."

"Still," said Mr. Jones, "I could hardly advise my client to drop proceedings till he is aware of the amount of compensation you will offer him."



“Why not?”

“Because our case is a very strong one, and that ought to be taken into consideration.”

“Mr. Jones,” said Mr. Bland, “after the uncomplimentary remarks you made to me yesterday about compromising a felony, you now perfectly surprise me. As to the strength of your case, I can assure you, from my evidence alone, that you have not a leg to stand on.”

“At any rate,” said Jones, “there cannot possibly be any objection to your giving us an idea of what you intend to offer.”

“Once more, Mr. Jones, I tell you I will do nothing of the kind. Your time no doubt is valuable, and so is mine, and it is useless for us to converse any more on the subject, unless on the written understanding that all legal proceedings will be stopped. If you like to talk over the subject with your client, pray do so, and let me know the result; but I must have your decision to-day without fail, otherwise you may take what steps you please.”

There was a silence now for some moments, which was broken by Walters:—

"I tell you what it is," he said angrily to Mr. Jones, "I am perfectly willing to stand by Mr. Bland's word, so you may as well draw out the letter for me to sign, and I will do it at once."

"My dear sir," said Mr. Jones, in a cajoling manner, "pray remember you are my client, and that you ought to act under my advice. I am not prepared to say that Mr. Bland's terms ought to be accepted."

"But I say they ought," said Walters, now getting into a passion; "and I am the person principally concerned, not you."

"If you talk in that manner," said Mr. Jones, "I will throw up the affair, and you may get on as you best can without me."

"The sooner the better," said Walters. "There are plenty of lawyers in the world beside you, if I want one. You tried to make a hard bargain with me yourself, you know that well enough."

"Stop, stop, my dear sir," said Mr. Jones, now evidently getting alarmed lest his client should say more than he wished Mr. Bland to hear; "pray stop; don't let any angry feelings be shown on the occasion. If you are determined

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to trust yourself to Mr. Bland's liberality without knowing what amount will be offered, I will show no further opposition ; at the same time, you must not feel any animosity against me for watching your interests. As your professional adviser, I was quite justified in the remarks I made, and I am perfectly sure that Mr. Bland himself will admit it."

"Certainly," said Mr. Bland ; "it was only your duty to advise your client, although I took a different view from you."

"Then it is your wish," said Mr. Jones to Walters, "that I drop all further proceedings?"

"It is."

"And you wish me to draw up a letter stating that you are fully persuaded the whole matter arose from a mistake on the part of Miss Bland?"

"I do."

"Then I may as well commence at once," said Mr. Jones, turning round to his desk and taking up a sheet of paper, "that no further time may be lost."

Mr. Jones now rapidly drew up the letter, and when he had completed it, read it over to Mr.

Bland, who considered it perfectly satisfactory, and Walters immediately signed it and gave it to Mr. Bland, who placed it in his pocket-book.

“The sum I am prepared to offer you, Walters,” said Mr. Bland, “as a compensation for the loss you have sustained (and I beg you to understand that I pay it from my own pocket, as my sister has nothing of her own), is five hundred pounds.”

From the expression of Walters's face, he was evidently quite satisfied ; but Jones immediately objected.

“I do not consider the sum sufficient,” he said ; “it ought to have been at least double.”

“Allow me to remark,” said Mr. Bland, “that your duty to your client is now over, Mr. Jones, and I make him the offer personally, and not through you.”

“And I am perfectly satisfied,” said Walters. “When will you pay me the money? for I am dreadfully hard up.”

“I am afraid,” said Mr. Bland, “I shall hardly be able, without great difficulty, to procure the money for some days. At the same time, I

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had better name a day. If you will call on me this day week, I will give you the amount I have promised without fail."

"I am perfectly contented," said Walters ; "this day week, then, I will call at your office ?"

"But surely," said Mr. Jones, "you will pay my client the law-costs he has already been put to?"

"Not one shilling," was the reply. "So, Mr. Jones, we had better say no more on the matter. This day week, then, I shall see you, Walters, and I now wish you good morning." So saying, he took up his hat, and left the office.

On the day appointed, Walters, accompanied by his solicitor,—who seemed determined not to lose sight of his client,—called at Mr. Bland's office, and, after signing a document relinquishing any further claim on Mr. Bland, the money was paid him, and the pair went off together to arrange the accounts existing between them.

We must now return to Miss Emily. For the first two days she rigidly obeyed her brother's instructions, and remained indoors ; but on the third, the weather being fine, she took a walk

with Mrs. Jenkins, the farmer's wife. As they were strolling down the road together, they passed the cottage of a farm labourer, and in the little garden before it they saw a tall, unhappy looking woman, dressed in black, with an infant in her arms and two young children standing by her side. Mrs. Jenkins, as soon as she saw her, made an excuse to Miss Bland for leaving her for a few moments, as she wished to speak with the woman. During her absence, Miss Bland watched the two intently. There was something in the appearance of the woman which interested her very much. She noticed that Mrs. Jenkins spoke to her with much kindness, which the woman seemed to feel deeply. Presently she burst into tears, and Mrs. Jenkins tried to console her. After a few minutes' more conversation, Mrs. Jenkins left her and joined Miss Bland, and they proceeded on their walk.

“As soon as I get home,” said Mrs. Jenkins, “I must send some food to that poor woman, for I am afraid both she and her family are little better than starving.”

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“Who is she?” inquired Miss Bland.

“She is the wife of a farmer, a sad drunken fellow, who has lately had an execution put in his house for rent, and everything was sold off. I believe that neither he nor his wife have a shilling to bless themselves with, and if they had, the husband himself would drink it.”

“For whom is she in mourning?” inquired Miss Bland.

“For her daughter, a young girl who died the day after they left their farm.”

“That is very sad,” said Miss Bland, an uneasy sensation for which she could hardly account creeping all over her.

“It is indeed,” said Mrs. Jenkins; “and it is said they have been very hardly used. The agent for the landlord promised the man that, if he paid a portion of the rent owing by a certain day, time should be given him for the remainder. The money was paid as agreed on, but two days afterwards the agent put in a distress for the full amount owing. But what is the matter with you?” she continued, noticing that



Miss Bland became very pale ; “are you not well ?”

“It is only a little dizziness, which I hope will soon pass off,” said Miss Bland, taking Mrs. Jenkins’s arm for support ; “what is the name of the poor woman ?”

“Mrs. Walters,” replied Mrs. Jenkins.

Miss Bland could proceed no further ; her legs appeared to sink under her, and she staggered to a bank, on which she seated herself. She had frequently heard her brother speak of Mrs. Walters, and in terms of great sympathy, but she had never till that moment seen her. Mrs. Jenkins, of course, was totally ignorant that Miss Bland was in any way acquainted with Mrs. Walters, and naturally attributed her faintness to delicacy of constitution. As soon as Miss Bland had somewhat recovered, Mrs. Jenkins proposed that they should return home, a proposition to which her friend immediately agreed. As they passed the labourer’s cottage they noticed Mrs. Walters still in the garden, and Mrs. Jenkins called out to her as they passed, “I am going home now, and I will send you those things immediately.

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Poor thing," she continued to Miss Bland as they walked on, "she requires them. I am very much afraid the baby will follow the poor girl who has gone, if the mother does not keep up her strength, for the poor little thing falls off daily. Mrs. Walters is also dreadfully cut up about the child she has lost. She says she is continually seeing her before her, and she can hardly persuade herself that she is dead. She was a very sweet girl, I understand, about the age of my Fanny, and very like her. Some people have hard hearts. If I had turned that poor family out of their home I should never have had a moment's happiness afterwards ; I should always be thinking that the ghost of the poor girl was following me."

Again Miss Bland was obliged to seat herself by the road-side that she might not fall down. After a short rest she recovered herself sufficiently to continue her walk homewards. To this exertion she was greatly stimulated by the remembrance of her brother's caution not to be seen abroad, as it was necessary that she should remain concealed in order that the summons might not be served ; and now finding herself

residing so near to Walters's wife and family, she perceived that it was doubly urgent upon her that she should remain unknown. She saw that Mrs. Jenkins was ignorant of the name of the Duke's agent who had put the execution into Walters's house, and that great care ought therefore to be taken that she should still be kept in ignorance on the subject.

As soon as Miss Bland and her hostess had reached home, the latter packed up a large basket of eatables, which she despatched to the labourer's cottage for the use of the Walters family. Miss Bland remained in her own room for the rest of the day, in a state of great nervous anxiety. Many circumstances combined to trouble her. To do her justice—for she was a most kind-hearted creature—the misery which had fallen on the Walters family, and of which she could not conceal from herself that she had been the chief cause, troubled her more than all the rest. Again, there was the fear that if she were recognized, and a summons served upon her, she would then, in all probability, have to make her appearance as a prisoner at the assizes, and even although her

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brother should be able to effect a compromise with Walters, it could only be at a heavy cost. She had nothing of her own, and he was far from being a wealthy man, so the amount he would have to pay would in any case be a serious consideration to him. All this afflicted her very much, and it is more than probable she would have sunk under it, had it not been that the very magnitude of the evils surrounding her stimulated her to greater energy to escape from them.

Day after day passed away, and as she heard nothing from her brother, she feared the worst, and continued in this state of nervous excitement. The day, however, after the settlement with Walters had taken place, Mr. Bland arrived at the farmhouse for the purpose of taking his sister home. As he approached, Miss Bland watched him from the window with intense anxiety, to learn, if possible, from the expression of his countenance, what news he had brought with him ; but the man of law had had too much experience of the world to allow his face to be so clear a mirror of his mind that an obtuse person like his sister

should be able to read it. Miss Bland, however, was shortly afterwards relieved, for her brother, having given the reins of his horse to a labourer who was in attendance, entered the house, and immediately proceeded to his sister's room.

“Well, Emily, my dear,” he said in an affectionate tone, “all is, I am happy to say, satisfactorily arranged, and you have now only to pack up the carpet-bag again, and we will return home.”

Miss Bland attempted to reply to her brother, but she could not find words ; so instead, she flung herself on his neck and burst into tears. This mark of affection he endured for some minutes with exemplary patience ; but as symptoms of an hysterical fit began to show themselves, he broke somewhat hurriedly from her embrace. “Come, Emily, my dear,” he said, “we will have no crying. We are now safe out of our trouble, and we must take better care what we are about for the future. Now dry your tears, for I do not want the Jenkinses to see you have been crying, and get ready to depart. I will go down and keep them engaged in conversation the while, and as soon as you are ready you had better join us (with dry eyes, let it

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be understood), and we can then settle with them for what you owe."

In less than half an hour Miss Bland left her room, after having completed her arrangements ; and everything being in order, and her bill paid, the brother and sister entered their chaise and drove homewards. They conversed fluently on the road, but Mr. Bland would not allow the conversation to turn upon anything connected with the Walters family, evidently considering it a painful subject which had better be avoided.

Miss Emily was now again fully established as mistress of her brother's house, and she entered on her duties with cheerfulness and alacrity. But although a heavy load of anxiety had been taken off her mind, there was a considerable uneasiness in her manner, without the slightest apparent cause. It seemed as if it arose from ill-health rather than immediate mental trouble. The feeling appeared to increase, and she became unceasingly restless, and lost the power of sleeping at nights. Her appetite, which was never one of the best, now totally failed her. These symptoms continued to increase, until at last she was obliged to have



recourse to medical advice. This, however, she put off till the last moment, not wishing to cause her brother any expense, after the heavy cost he had been put to on her account. The doctor, on visiting his patient, found that she was suffering from nervous fever, and he immediately ordered her to keep her bed. In spite of all the skill bestowed upon her, and the unremitting attention she received from Betty, who was sincerely attached to her mistress, the disease continued to increase, till at last considerable fears began to be entertained as to the result. She was frequently delirious, and on these occasions a morbid fancy seemed invariably to turn her thoughts to the Walters family. She imagined she was followed by a tall, unhappy-looking woman in black, with a sickly infant in her arms, and a child clinging to her skirts. Thanks to the skill and attention bestowed upon her, the fever by slow degrees subsided, and as it diminished in intensity, the appearance of the phantom became rarer. Yet her mind by no means recovered in proportion as her malady diminished ; and even after she had left her room dreadfully



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emaciated and weak, illusions of a most painful description continued to annoy her. As the apparition of the woman in black became rarer, another fancy, of an even more harassing description, began to take its place. She imagined she was incessantly in the presence of the spirit of Walters's dead daughter. True, she was invisible; yet her identity was so perfect to the heated imagination of the poor woman, that she could point out the spot in the room on which she believed the spirit of the girl at the moment stood.

For some time Miss Bland's medical attendant hoped that this painful fancy would leave her as her strength increased; but this was far from being the case. The delusion, on the contrary, seemed to become more perfect as her malady decreased. At length he began to fear that the mental portion of her disease would become chronic, and end in monomania, if not insanity. A consultation of medical men was accordingly held, at which it was decided that it would be advisable to place her for some time under the care of some physician

experienced in diseases of the brain. Dr. Austin was written to, inquiring whether he could find room for her among his guests. By return of post Mr. Bland received a letter from the doctor, stating that he had one vacancy, and that he should be happy to receive Miss Bland. A few days afterwards she took up her residence at the doctor's, and was much liked by all of us. Her bodily health increased, and the visits of the phantom became fewer. Still she was far from being cured, and the doctor began to entertain doubts whether her case would terminate altogether favourably, when a circumstance occurred which acted so beneficially upon her mind that she rapidly got better. Walters, who had decided on emigrating with the money he had received, called one day on Mr. Bland to bid him good-bye. In the course of conversation, he spoke of the poor girl he had lost in terms of much affection. "Her death was indeed a sad blow to us," he said; "to my poor wife especially. The news of poor Fanny's death was so unexpected that she fainted when she heard of it."

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“Was your daughter not with her mother then, at the time?” inquired Mr. Bland, greatly surprised.

“No; she had left us to spend some time with a schoolfellow in London; and although my wife heard that she had been very ill, we had no idea there was any danger. The news of her death, reaching my wife as it did at the time we were obliged to leave the farm, nearly killed her.”

On hearing this, Mr. Bland induced Walters to write a letter to Miss Bland, wishing her good-bye, and hoping that they parted friends. In the letter he also gave a description of his daughter's death, to prove that she was not in any way to blame in the matter. This letter had a most beneficial effect on Miss Bland's mind. The delusion no longer troubled her, and she shortly afterwards left us, thoroughly cured, both in mind and body.

*VI.—BANQUO'S GHOST.*

PART I.

**A**LTHOUGH I conscientiously believe that among no body of men can there be found a greater amount of integrity than among the members of the legal profession, yet when a black sheep is found in their midst, he is generally one of the very deepest dye. Of the latter class was the hero of my story, Mr. Marshalsea Luke.

He commenced life in the office of an attorney having an extensive practice in criminal business. As he was a shrewd, intelligent young fellow, it is most probable he there acquired that tact and ingenuity which enabled him afterwards to commit the most dishonest actions without bringing

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himself within the pale of the criminal law, while at the same time he managed, to all but his victims, to maintain an appearance of considerable respectability. To this want of integrity he added another qualification which rendered his malpractices particularly formidable. When he liked he could be most pleasing and attractive in his manner and address. Perhaps it was the knowledge of this power which induced him to quit the office of the practitioner in criminal law to enter that of a solicitor in a large and very poor and populous town parish. This solicitor had, moreover, a considerable private connection among the leading retail tradesmen of the locality. He had risen from very humble origin, through precisely the same qualifications as Mr. Marshalsea Luke possessed. The board of guardians held him in the very highest respect; in fact, he not only advised but completely guided them. He allowed them to consider him as their servant, while they were merely his puppets. In parochial law he was well versed, and was better able to suggest means for what he called keeping down the parish rates

by the judicious application of the law of settlement, than more respectable members of the legal profession would have been. Mr. Hawker (for that was the gentleman's name), in his endeavours for this purpose, frequently kept the promise to the ear while he broke it to the sense. He would readily prohibit an Irish pauper or an extra-parochial from indulging to the value of sixpence in the parish gruel, and at the same time would spend many pounds in law costs in order to find out to what parish the pauper belonged. When these bills for law costs were at first brought in, discontent might occasionally have been seen on the faces of divers of the guardians, and there had even occurred instances of remarks to the effect "that after all it would perhaps have been cheaper to have let the poor fellow stop a month in the 'house' than spend fifty pounds in proving that they had the right to send him to another," or such like sentiments, equally unpalatable to their clerk and solicitor, for he held both appointments.

Mr. Hawker, feeling that no well-regulated house should be divided against itself, took steps

to prevent the recurrence of these disagreeable and rebellious expressions of opinion by those whom he considered ought to be fairly under his control. Although the election of the board of guardians was nominally in the hands of the ratepayers, Mr. Hawker had played his cards so well that the guardians were in fact little other than his nominees, and he resolved for the future that those only should be appointed to that honourable office who were his own private clients. As his own income was ample, he ceased to trouble them with their private bills of costs, letting these accumulate till most of them had become somewhat heavy; and as the guardians were almost all retail tradesmen, as I before stated, and could employ their money to more advantage than in paying lawyers' bills, Mr. Hawker by this means was able to enforce better discipline amongst the members of the board. Having thoroughly arranged this system, affairs progressed most favourably with him, and at the time Mr. Marshalsea Luke entered his office he was in high favour with all those who interested themselves in parochial matters, and with a con-



siderable body of clients, who declined to accept such appointments, as well. In private life Mr. Hawker was not altogether a bad fellow. His wife had died four years after their marriage, leaving one child—a daughter. It is only justice to her father to state that the girl was brought up with the greatest care and kindness, and was also well educated. Mr. Hawker never married again.

Although Mr. Marshalsea Luke, from the very qualifications he possessed, was at first regarded with considerable suspicion by his employer, yet so great was his tact and self-control that he at last succeeded in gaining his somewhat reluctant confidence. He never attempted to thrust himself forward in the office, yet at the same time he cleverly allowed his capabilities to crop out one by one. Mr. Hawker, having some notion of the ambitious tendencies of his new clerk, kept him solely to the parish business, and to that portion of it which was mere routine and drudgery work. To this Mr. Marshalsea Luke submitted with the greatest complacency, performing his duty regularly, and without at any

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time eliciting a complaint either from his employer or the board of guardians, the members of which body, however, he was seldom allowed to meet. But when business hours were over, Mr. Luke nourished his ambitious schemes, which during the day had been lying dormant. Many a younger and less talented member of his profession would have sought to form acquaintance with the families of his employer's clients, especially if he had had the advantages of Mr. Luke, for it should be remembered that his manners were exceedingly plausible and gentlemanly, and such as to put him, though only a lawyer's clerk, on a perfect equality with the class of tradesmen who principally patronized the office. But Mr. Luke, when the cares of the day were over, might usually be seen over some most unsensational-looking volume on municipal law or parochial matters. In general these had some bearing, more or less intimate, on the law of settlement; for Mr. Luke was qualifying himself that, should any accident occur, he might be able to supply the place of his patron.

In this matter Mr. Luke showed a great deal

of judicious foresight. An accident of the kind did occur when he had been about four years in Mr. Hawker's office. That gentleman, while directing in a most able and legal manner the movements of the board, unhappily fell into a habit, common to parochial magnates at that time, of indulging too freely in parish dinners. The result was a strong tendency to gout. With great resolution, however, he managed for a long time to go about his legal and official duties; but at last he had a fit of such severity as utterly to incapacitate him for business. His medical adviser insisted on his residing for some time at the sea-side, but he refused to obey, compromising matters by taking a house for himself and his daughter about a mile and a half out of the town. During the attack, which lasted for about two months, Mr. Luke regularly attended the board of guardians in Mr. Hawker's stead, and at each successive meeting he made himself better liked. Nothing could be more cautious or circumspect than the game he played. He was respectful and modest, and with great tact led the board, while at the same time he

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allowed them to think that he was simply following them. He never addressed any of the members except upon parochial business. As soon as the affairs of the board were over, he begged they would excuse his leaving them, as he had to report to Mr. Hawker what had taken place, and to request his directions as to what notes should be prepared for the next meeting.

Very faithfully and regularly were the reports of these meetings carried to Mr. Hawker, who began now to be quite delighted with his clerk, on whose ability and integrity he found he could place the fullest reliance. In this happy state of mind he continued for some time, till one day his daughter Sophia informed him that Mr. Luke, having paid her great attentions for some time back, had at last proposed to her, and that she had accepted him. Terrible indeed was Mr. Hawker's anger at this intelligence. In a moment his eyes were opened; he saw clearly the cunning game his subordinate had been playing. He could now easily perceive, without the aid of inquiry, that Luke had been

ingratiating himself into the favour of the board of guardians. He was equally well aware of the power a shrewd, cunning, plausible young fellow like Luke would gain over them. No time was to be lost: he must return to business without delay. As to the offer of marriage, he treated it with the greatest contempt, and explained to his daughter clearly and succinctly, that of all *mésalliances* there was none so much to be abhorred as that between the child of a respectable parish solicitor and her father's clerk.

Next day, to Mr. Luke's great surprise, Mr. Hawker presented himself at the office, evidently prepared for business. He requested Mr. Luke, in a tone clearly intended to show him how futile were his hopes and how great was the danger of dismissal he had incurred, to bring him the list of business for the meeting of the board of guardians to be held that day. Mr. Luke respectfully placed it before him, but without the slightest appearance of fear or hesitation. Mr. Hawker examined the paper very carefully, evidently with the hope of discovering something

that he might be able to find fault with. But he was disappointed. Nothing could be more perfect than the document before him. His vexation was also increased by the demeanour of Mr. Luke, which, though respectful, as became a subordinate, manifested an independence which proved that the clerk considered his position a secure one. Mr. Hawker, although he said nothing at the moment, resolved to undeceive him as soon as the board meeting should be over, or at farthest next morning, when he would dismiss him from his office.

He was himself, however, doomed to disappointment in the matter. He attended the meeting of the guardians at the proper hour, and although they received him cordially, he could not disguise from himself that several of them seemed to be annoyed rather than otherwise. Nor could he by any means relish the tone in which they expressed their sincere hope that he had not left the doctor's hands sooner than was safe, and that he might not suffer from his zeal in their behalf. He felt himself very far from well, although he hardly allowed him-



self to think of it. As the business of the day went on he became nervous and confused. He found, besides, that he had left some documents behind which he ought to have brought with him, and a messenger was despatched by the guardians to the office with the request that Mr. Luke should bring them himself. This proceeding gave Mr. Hawker great annoyance. He made no remark, however, but resolved that when his clerk should make his appearance he would behave to him so as to show of how little importance his presence was at the meeting. Consequently, when Mr. Luke presented himself, Mr. Hawker took the papers from him, merely saying, "That will do; go back to the office now, and remain there till I come."

"Wait a moment," said the chairman; "perhaps some gentleman may have a question to ask Mr. Luke, as he has attended so many of our meetings lately."

Instead of one gentleman having a question to ask Mr. Luke, many were put to him by divers members of the board, all of which he answered in a most satisfactory manner; indeed, so much so,

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that the chairman requested Mr. Luke to take a seat at the table, urging that it was evident from Mr. Hawker's appearance he was still suffering from ill-health, and that he would thereby be saved a considerable amount of trouble. Mr. Hawker bowed when this last expression fell from the chairman, and attempted to smile, but with scant success. During the remainder of the meeting he sat grimly by, the whole of the duties being performed by Mr. Luke. When the business was over, Mr. Hawker bade good-bye to the members of the board, who almost with one voice advised him to remain at home till he was perfectly cured, and not to trouble himself till then with parish matters, as they had no doubt they should get on perfectly well with his clerk. Mr. Hawker had too much tact not to express his gratitude at this mark of kindness and consideration on the part of the board, and he quitted the room without saying more, contenting himself with casting a look of intense anger at his subordinate. He then proceeded straight to his house, without calling at the office.

For two days afterwards Mr. Hawker did not

make his appearance at the office ; on the third, Mr. Luke paid him a visit in the evening. While on the way to his employer's house he felt somewhat puzzled as to the reception he would receive, or rather as to the amount of anger which might be directed against him, Mr. Hawker, when thoroughly offended, being little in the habit of restraining his expressions. But great indeed was the surprise of Mr. Luke at finding himself welcomed in the most friendly manner. Mr. Hawker requested him to be seated, and he then listened with the utmost patience and attention to Mr. Luke's report of the office business for the previous two days. This over, he expressed his great satisfaction at all he had heard, and, as the tea-things were upon the table, he requested his clerk to partake of that meal with him and his daughter. The invitation was readily accepted, and they passed a very pleasant evening together. On rising to take his leave, he was honoured with an invitation to dine with his employer on the following Sunday.

Mr. Luke was greatly pleased at the turn affairs were taking. It was gratifying to him in two

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ways. In the first place, he could easily perceive that the anger Mr. Hawker had shown at the idea of his (Mr. Luke's) marrying his daughter was fast vanishing; and in the second, it was a confirmation to him of the power he believed he had acquired with the board of guardians. He was well aware that it was that cause alone, and not Mr. Hawker's becoming more sensible of his valuable qualities, that now induced him to show so much courtesy.

On the following Sunday, Mr. Luke, having taken extra pains with his toilette, presented himself at the house of his employer, who again received him in the most hospitable and friendly manner. After the cloth had been removed, Mr. Hawker begged that Mr. Luke would allow him to indulge one of his little weaknesses, that of taking a nap after dinner, and he would join Sophia and him in the drawing-room as soon as tea was ready. Of the details of the conversation which took place between the young lady and her admirer during that interval there is no record; but from a remarkably well-written letter Mr. Luke sent to his employer's

house next morning, not in any manner connected with legal matters, it was evident that it was of a nature rather encouraging to the success of his suit than otherwise. In the evening an answer was brought him from Mr. Hawker, which informed him that he was the accepted suitor for Miss Sophia's hand.

The marriage took place about two months afterwards. As a dowry with his wife, Mr. Luke received one-half of the profits arising from the parochial business, for which, however, he was to perform the whole of the duty, Mr. Hawker retaining the whole of the private practice for himself. This agreement was willingly accepted by Mr. Luke, he being fully aware that in a short time he would be able to ingratiate himself with the private clients, so as to insure him the reversion of their business, even if he did not manage to obtain it before his father-in-law's death.

Things now went on admirably with Mr. Luke for some time. He continued to be much liked by the board of guardians, who gave him their fullest confidence. Indeed, he well merited it.

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Not only did he considerably reduce the workhouse expenditure, but he cut down, in an extraordinary manner, the out-door relief of the poor, and their medical relief also. These were certainly grand reforms, but the genius of Mr. Luke went far beyond them. From the increasing population of the parish, as well as its greater poverty, the workhouse was found too small for the number of the applicants; and from the peculiarity of its position, it was impossible to enlarge it. A new one had therefore to be built, and Mr. Luke was charged with the duty of finding an eligible site for it. The spot he selected met with the unanimous commendation of the board. It was situated in another parish, at a distance of nearly three miles from the site of the present building, and was thus not only sufficiently distant to discourage the casual poor from applying for shelter in the tramp ward, but it also made certain that, if any of them broke down on the road, the onus of their relief would be thrown upon another parish.

In consequence of Mr. Hawker's fast declining health, Mr. Luke now began to make himself

useful in the business of the private clients, and he was as much liked by them as by the board of guardians. He soon became the confidential adviser of a large proportion of the respectable tradesmen in the neighbourhood ; but, unlike his father-in-law, he by no means abstained from presenting their bills of cost for any legal business he might have transacted for them. These, however, were invariably of such a moderate description as almost to induce his clients to go to law again. It must not be imagined that this moderation on the part of Mr. Luke was in any way indicative of greater integrity than his father-in-law possessed. On the contrary, his schemes, though more plausible, were infinitely more cunning and dangerous. From his economical scale of charges he, by degrees, received commissions to draw out many wills. To the almost certain litigation they would cause he looked forward for the profits which would indemnify him for the slight legal expenses the testators had incurred during their lifetime.

Six years after his marriage, Mr. Luke lost his father-in-law. It would be absurd to say that he

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showed any very great grief on the occasion ; but at the same time, he certainly conducted himself with great decorum. He then increased his expenditure considerably, taking a larger house and furnishing it in an expensive manner. He also enlarged the circle of his acquaintance, frequently giving handsome parties, at which Mrs. Luke played the hostess to perfection. It may here be remarked, that Mr. Luke chose his new friends with an eye to the extension of his office business. There was not one among them but Mr. Luke had a prospect of his becoming a client, directly or indirectly. Nor was this system without its effect, as his practice increased considerably. Meantime he continued to pursue his original plan of endearing his clients to him by his attention to their affairs and the moderation of his charges ; holding in prospective the profits likely to accrue from testamentary litigation and family disputes.

Everything prospered with him for the next ten years, and by that time he began to reap the advantages of the prudent course he had adopted. Nearly every will he had made gave rise, after



the testator's death, to a chancery suit, either amicable, or one in which the legatees disputed among themselves. For the security of the executors, according to Mr. Luke's statement, a will was never allowed to be carried into effect till the twelve months permitted by law for the winding up of the testator's estate had expired, he rightly trusting to the extreme probability of some dispute occurring between the legatees in the interim, which would terminate in the much-desired chancery suit. When once that was commenced, very admirably did Mr. Luke display his knowledge of the law, and his power of almost indefinitely prolonging the litigation. From the trust which had been reposed in him, he had contrived to accumulate a vast number of family documents, which, with admirable prescience, he had stored away with the greatest caution, no matter of how little apparent importance they might have seemed at the time. He knew that they might hereafter be of considerable value in family disputes. With all his innate scoundrelism, he preserved a sort of integrity of his own, invariably taking the side of

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that member of the family who applied to him for advice, and conducting his cause with the greatest energy, while he used without the slightest scruple the documents which had been placed in confidence in his hands.

The amount of misery and ill-feeling he managed by this system to create in the breasts of different members of the same family was incalculable. Still it brought grist to his mill, and he absolved his conscience with the profit he obtained. He now began to be thoroughly disliked, but at the same time greatly feared ; so much so, that those who had placed their affairs in his hands had not the courage to withdraw them. His cunning, however, occasionally over-reached itself, though this happened but rarely. Once, for example, when a wealthy client imagined himself to have received some injury from the parish authorities, he placed certain documents in Mr. Luke's possession, which enabled him to take a strong *locus standi* against the board of guardians, and this coming to the ears of that body he was abruptly dismissed from his appointment. This certainly gave Mr. Luke great annoyance ; but he indem-

nified himself to a considerable extent by conducting the suit of their opponent so vigorously, fortified as he was by the knowledge he had gained of the affairs of the parish, that the profits on the bill of costs amounted to more than his salary for three years as parish solicitor.

It would occupy too much space to go into the details of the different dishonourable, though perfectly legal, transactions in which this gentleman was engaged ; and I shall content myself with merely mentioning that which may be regarded as the immediate cause of the terrible punishment which awaited him.

One of Mr. Luke's earliest patrons among the guardians was a certain Mr. Worley, a respectable retail tradesman in the parish. For many years there was little correspondence between them, beyond the slight occasional legal business which the tradesman was able to put into the lawyer's hands. At last Mr. Worley and his son, an only child, inherited each property consisting of various securities to the value of two thousand pounds. As the son was then of age he took possession of his own property. He

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was a clerk in a merchant's office, with a small salary, and was honest, steady, and regular in his habits ; much esteemed by his employers, but at the same time of a rather unsocial and eccentric turn of mind. On the advice of Mr. Luke, the father invested the whole of his property in an annuity, secured on some freehold houses, worth far more than was advanced. For some few years the annuity was paid with perfect regularity ; but at last the title to the freehold property on which it was secured was disputed. Mr. Luke strongly advised his client to resist the claim, stating that a short suit in equity would set the whole to rights, as he was perfectly certain of the validity of the title, and that the court in a very little time would give a decision in his favour, and establish his right to it beyond doubt. The unfortunate tradesman fell into the trap, and the suit commenced. Year after year it dragged its slow length along, and when at last it terminated, it only proved that the title on which the annuity was based was imperfect, and Mr. Worley lost his cause. This was not all. The heavy bill of costs Mr. Luke brought against him completed his ruin, or at

any rate to such an extent as to oblige him to remove to a very small shop, in which he attempted, but without success, to maintain himself and his wife in their old age, both wishing, if possible, to avoid the necessity of appealing to their son for assistance.

About two years after they took possession of their new house, their son died suddenly, and as he left no will, his father of course became his heir. As soon as the first shock of their grief was over, they set about realizing the securities left by their son. They determined that they would now leave business, and with the proceeds of the sale of their securities purchase an annuity on their joint lives, and retire into some place in the country, where they could live comfortably and economically for the remainder of their days. Such a blissful state of existence, however, was not in store for them. Mr. Luke one morning entered their shop, and inquired of Mr. Worley how he was getting on with his son's affairs. The tradesman, although he had had no quarrel with his lawyer, somewhat dreaded his appearance, and still more the prospect of his

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interference. He therefore answered him shortly that everything was progressing satisfactorily.

"I am very glad to hear it," was the answer; "for I was very much afraid Wilson's claim to the two houses in Wellclose Square might have given you some trouble."

"I never heard a word on the subject," said Mr. Worley. "What do you mean?"

"He claims to have a lien to one-fifth of them through an old deed of settlement, but I suspect after all that there's very little in it. However, if he intends prosecuting his claim, you will have to defend it; that's certain."

"Of that I am not sure," said Mr. Worley, somewhat aghast at the intelligence. "I have had quite enough of law, and if I find his claim at all a valid one, I shall assuredly admit it without hesitation."

"Perhaps you would be right, after all," replied Mr. Luke. "The only difficulty is with regard to the arrears. He has asked me to act as his solicitor on the occasion, but as I have always been your professional adviser, I should be sorry to accept service on his part if you wish me to



defend your interests ; so you had better make up your mind, and let me know as soon as you conveniently can."

"Do you think it will take any time to decide?" asked Mr. Worley, now pale with alarm.

"Oh dear no," said Mr. Luke. "It will require but a very short suit to set matters all right. I have no doubt whatever on the subject myself."

"But surely you don't mean a chancery suit?" said Mr. Worley.

"Well, perhaps a suit is not altogether a proper expression," observed the lawyer. "An application to the Lord Chancellor must be made, certainly, for his reading of the original will. At the same time, I should say two or three months would be ample time to settle the whole affair ; and after all, perhaps it would be by far the most satisfactory and economical way for you to proceed, otherwise you might remain open to the danger of incessant litigation. Besides, if you were inclined to dispose of the property, you might have considerable difficulty, unless you have the point thoroughly cleared up."

"And what do you think the expense would



be ?” inquired Mr. Worley, with breathless anxiety.

“Oh, it’s impossible for me to say ; but I should think two hundred pounds would more than cover the whole expenses.”

“Then,” replied Mr. Worley, “I don’t think I can do better than leave the whole affair in your hands. I trust, however, you will carry it through as speedily as possible, for I will not disguise the fact from you that the possession of the money is at present of great moment to us, and the heavy expenses we were put to in the last suit naturally makes me exceedingly nervous at commencing a new one.”

“I assure you,” said Mr. Luke, “your interests shall be as well looked after as if they were my own. I would certainly advise our immediately taking proceedings, and not waiting till they are commenced against us. In matters of this kind, as well as in a good many others, the first blow is half the battle.”

“Well, as I said before, I leave the affair entirely in your management. I believe you have all the papers in your possession. If you

have not, and I can assist you in finding those that are wanting, let me know, and I will commence the search for them directly. In the meantime, pray conduct the case with energy, and get it over as soon as you can, for both my wife and myself will be in a state of great anxiety until it is ended."

The suit now commenced with great vigour, and the "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick" was soon the lot of the unfortunate tradesman and his wife. Delays followed delays, and their disappointment at each became the greater. The houses, which constituted the greater portion of the property, became untenanted, and consequently fell out of repair; and as Mr. Worley had not the ready money for restoring them, week by week they became more dilapidated. At last the roofs gave way, and the very walls were in a dangerous condition; so much so, in fact, that the district surveyor interfered, and threatened to take proceedings unless they were immediately attended to. There was now no alternative but to apply to the court for permission to take out a portion of the money which had

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been funded, for the purpose of putting the houses again in habitable repair. But the delay which occurred before the permission of the court could be obtained was so great that the houses at last actually began to fall, and had to be rebuilt, which was done at the cost of the whole of the money which had been funded.

By the time the rebuilding was completed, the affairs of Mr. Worley had got into such a state of confusion that he found himself on the verge of insolvency. In his distress he applied to his solicitor for advice. Mr. Luke begged him to be of good cheer, as the suit was now on the point of being definitely settled. His client asked him if a certain time could not be named, so that he might be able to put off his creditors by specifying a fixed date. Mr. Luke, in reply, assured him that within six weeks, at the latest, all proceedings would be ended. This time he was correct ; but when Mr. Worley waited on him for his answer the countenance of the solicitor wore such an expression of assumed grief as too plainly told his client there was still some disappointment in store for him. Nor was he wrong. The

suit, Mr. Luke informed him, had certainly terminated, and the houses, by decree of the court, had been sold ; at the same time he was very sorry to find that the costs exceeded by thirty pounds the whole of the amount in hand.

Mr. Worley was so struck at this intelligence that he nearly fainted, and Mr. Luke, with great kindness and consideration, ordered a glass of cold water to be brought him immediately, which might have been held as typical of all the benefit he had received from his professional adviser.

If Mr. Worley was silent and overwhelmed by the weight of his misfortunes, it was far different with his wife. She perceived as clearly as her husband that nothing but the workhouse was now before them. She resolved, however, before entering it, to inform explicitly the author of their ruin of her opinion as to his conduct. With this intent she presented herself before him in his office. The man of law, if not indifferent, was at least calm in the presence of her husband, when he narrated the unfortunate termination of the suit ; but there was something in the expression

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of the enraged woman which startled him considerably. He recovered himself, however, as well as he could, and requested her to be seated. Without taking the slightest notice of his courtesy she remained standing.

“Have I rightly understood my husband, sir,” she said, “that you have at last completely succeeded in ruining us?”

“My dear madam,” replied Mr. Luke, “pray calm yourself. I assure you, you are taking a totally erroneous view of the affair. I have most conscientiously done everything in my power for your benefit. My costs have been taxed, and my claim for them is admitted to be a perfectly just one. What can you require more?”

“I consider you have behaved in the most shameful manner,” said the infuriated woman. “My husband was one of the first who took you by the hand when you came into this parish, without friends or supporters of any kind, and the return you have made him has been utterly to ruin him.”

“You are a most ungrateful woman,” said Mr. Luke in reply. “On the contrary, I have treated

your husband with the greatest kindness and consideration."

"In what way, might I ask?—in depriving us of every shilling we had in the world?"

"Have not I forgiven him the thirty pounds he owes me?" said Mr. Luke.

"And for what reason," asked Mrs. Worley, with a bitter laugh, "have you been so generous?"

"From a feeling of charity," replied the lawyer.

"Charity!" said the indignant woman, "what right have you to apply such a term to us? Charity, forsooth! it is a falsehood. You know we have not a shilling we can call our own, or you would have sold the very bed from under us, rather than have gone without your money."

Mr. Luke now perceived that his better policy would be to answer Mrs. Worley in her own tone and manner, that thereby he might drive her into a fury; a trap which she readily fell into, and was in consequence ignominiously expelled from the office.

The poor tradesman and his wife were shortly afterwards obliged to enter the workhouse; and although the Board of Guardians, sympathizing



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with the misfortunes of their late brother, treated him with as much civility as the rules of the poor-law would allow, still the old man never again held up his head. To make matters as little unpleasant to him as possible, he was appointed to some small office in the workhouse, with the intent that he might be addressed by the other paupers as Mr. Worley. Although he performed his duties in a perfectly satisfactory manner, and was grateful for the kindness which he was aware was being shown to him, he gradually sank, and died about three months after entering the house. The respect which was shown to his memory afforded some little consolation to the wounded pride, if not to the sorrow, of the widow; the Board of Guardians having subscribed among themselves to relieve him from that terrible indignity to the honest poor—a pauper's funeral,—and a deputation from their body having followed the corpse to the grave. His widow bent under the force of circumstances with greater resignation, and soon settled down into the condition to which her misfortunes had brought her. She was treated with considerable respect by the



other occupants of her ward, partly because they had a kind feeling towards the poor woman herself, and partly because of the civil manner in which she was invariably addressed by the Board of Guardians, when they made their visits of inspection through the house.

About a year after the termination of Mr. Worley's chancery suit Mr. Luke became a widower. Bad as the man really was, he was not altogether destitute of the feelings of humanity, and his sorrow for his wife was far greater than those who knew him would have considered him capable of showing. His home was now desolate indeed. His wife had been childless, and he was without a being in the world who regarded him with any real affection. He became exceedingly morose to his acquaintances, and his practice fell off in proportion. This, however, seemed to give him but little uneasiness, as he had already accumulated a very considerable sum of money, and having no one dependent upon him, he had little stimulus to exertion. His health, also, began to fall off. From being a stout, hale man, he became thin, pale, and dejected. By degrees he began to

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avoid society, and a rumour was spread abroad that he had sold his practice, and intended retiring from the profession. The report proved true; another legal practitioner took possession of the office; another brass plate, with a different name on it, was placed on the door, and Mr. Marshalsea Luke, without saying adieu to any of his acquaintances, suddenly left the town, and never afterwards returned to it.

*VII.—BANQUO'S GHOST.*

PART II.

ONE morning when Dr. Austin was in his study, the servant brought in a card bearing on it the name of Mr. Marshalsea Luke, and said that the gentleman who had given it to her particularly desired an interview with him. The doctor ordered that he should be instantly admitted, and shortly afterwards the owner of the card entered the room. He was a well-dressed man, of gentlemanly appearance, between fifty and sixty years of age. He was of about middle height, and it was evident had formerly been an athletic man, but he was now exceedingly emaciated, with a pallid, unhealthy complexion, and

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a wild, uneasy expression in his eye. He was suffering under great nervous irritability ; his hand shook as though he had been afflicted with the palsy ; and he had in every respect the look of an inveterate dram-drinker—one of those to whom habit has given the power of swallowing any amount of alcohol, without its having any immediate perceptible effects on the brain.

The doctor requested his visitor to be seated, and noticing the excessive state of nervous agitation he was in, he discreetly waited till the stranger had somewhat recovered himself, and left it to him to commence the conversation. It was some time before Mr. Luke was sufficiently composed to speak, and when he did begin, he was clearly endeavouring to conceal something from the doctor, while at the same time he seemed to wish to extract an opinion from him without his own artifice being detected. In this, however, he by no means succeeded. Had Mr. Luke been in conversation with a client, it is more than probable that with his plausible manners he might have attained the object he was aiming at ; but the experienced and wary medical practitioner,

who had for many years made the human mind and its complications his peculiar study, easily saw through the lawyer's artifice. However, although Dr. Austin readily discovered his visitor's intentions, he made no remark on the subject, but let him talk on.

"You have had, sir, I understand," said Mr. Luke, "great experience in diseases of the mind?"

"I certainly have had great experience," replied the doctor; "whether I have much profited by it is a different affair."

"The world has come to a very wrong conclusion on the subject if you have not," said Mr. Luke, politely. "The purpose of my visit is to inquire whether you think you could assist a friend of mine by your professional knowledge."—Here he hesitated for some moments, as if doubting whether he should declare himself as the individual for whom he was seeking advice. The concealment, however, was totally unnecessary, as the doctor had already come to the conclusion that the patient was no other than Mr. Luke himself.

"If I can assist him," said the doctor, pretend-

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ing to fall into the trap, "I shall be most happy. At the same time, I should tell you, I am exceedingly averse to giving any opinion whatever without seeing the patient himself. It is more than probable that if I receive the description from an unprofessional person, some error may lead me to a false conclusion, and then I might be blamed for the wrong opinion I had given, without its really being any fault of my own."

Mr. Luke took no notice of the doctor's observation, but somewhat abruptly broke in with,—

"My friend wishes to know if you could give him any medicine to keep him from sleeping."

"I suppose, then," said the doctor, somewhat surprised, "he is naturally of a lethargic temperament; and if so, he hardly comes within the class of patients I particularly attend to."

"Oh, he is not of a lethargic temperament in any manner," said Mr. Luke. "I never knew a person less so."

"Then why should he require any treatment to keep him from sleeping?" asked the doctor.

"I can hardly tell you," replied Mr. Luke, in a somewhat puzzled manner; "but I know he has a

great aversion to going to sleep. He will keep awake all night long, and try every means in his power to shake off drowsiness when he feels it coming over him ; but of course he cannot always succeed, and he wants to know if there is any medicine which would keep him awake if he wished it."

"But what can possibly be his objection to sleeping?" said the doctor. "Do you mean to say he has the same aversion at all times, whether fatigued or otherwise?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Luke. "No matter how fatigued he may be, he has still the same strong objection to sleep."

"It is very singular," observed the doctor. "Do you know whether it arises from a bodily or a mental cause?"

"I am sure," replied Mr. Luke, "I cannot tell. I thought perhaps that would be a subject you could advise him on."

"As I said before," answered the doctor, "it is a very difficult thing for me to form an opinion without seeing the patient. In what profession or walk of life is he?"



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“In the law,” said Mr. Luke : “he practised as a solicitor.”

“Is he in business now ?” asked the doctor, “and if so, has he a very extended connexion ?”

“No, he has left the profession for some years.”

“What class of practice had he ?” inquired the doctor.

“He not only had many clients,” said Mr. Luke, “but he also had a most laborious practice as parish solicitor and clerk to the Board of Guardians.”

“Did he feel those symptoms you mentioned when in practice ?” asked the doctor.

“No, they came on shortly after he had left the profession,” said Mr. Luke.

“There is nothing of Banquo's ghost in the matter, is there ?” said the doctor, suddenly raising his eyes from the fireplace, and fixing them steadily on Mr. Luke, who visibly quailed under his gaze.

“Banquo's ghost !” he stammered, turning his head from the doctor ; “I don't know what you mean, sir.”

“Come, come,” said the doctor, “there is no use of you attempting to keep up this artifice any longer. I can easily see that you are the individual himself. Now, if you want my advice, tell me explicitly everything. If you decline doing so, you must excuse my informing you that my time is valuable, and that you would oblige me by occupying it no longer ; so pray come to a conclusion on the matter.”

Mr. Luke now perceived that he was detected ; and like many a bullying lawyer, he showed himself an arrant coward as soon as he found he was in the power of his adversary. After a momentary effort to assume an indignant air, he rose from his seat as if to leave the room ; but on attempting to take his hat from the table on which he had placed it, his hand trembled so violently that he was unable to lift it. An expression of vexation passed across his face, which gave way to one of profound dejection, and he again seated himself in his chair.

“I am aware,” he said in his plausible manner to the doctor, “that it is useless my endeavouring to keep up the deception any longer.

Pray excuse me ; I am sure you would do so if you knew all. Nothing, of course, can be more painful to a man who has enjoyed the reputation of foresight and knowledge in his profession than to be obliged to admit a mental infirmity,—for such I would hold it to be in another person, however learned he might be in his particular walk. At the same time let me assure you that you are in error in imagining anything like remorse to be connected with it, as I presume you intended when you spoke of Banquo's ghost ; I am happy to say that I invariably conducted my business in a strictly honourable and just manner, and never in a single instance in the whole course of my career did I overstep the limits of the professional licence the law allowed me."

A slight and almost imperceptible grimace passed over the doctor's countenance, as if he imagined it perfectly easy to be dishonest, and yet to be within the limits of the law. He, however, made no remark on the subject, simply contenting himself with apologizing for any accidental incivility he might have been guilty of, and

then awaited in silence Mr. Luke's explanation of his malady.

"I have very little to complain of," said the lawyer, "beyond a terrible dislike to go to sleep, for which I am utterly unable to account, and I wish to know if it is not in your power to prescribe for me some remedy which might obviate the necessity of rest altogether."

"That, of course, you will see, if you consider for one moment," said the doctor, "is an impossibility. The human frame can no more exist without rest than it can without food or air. If a man is not allowed to eat, he will naturally die of hunger; if a man is not allowed to sleep, he will with equal certainty sink from exhaustion. But now tell me candidly, have you no reason, real or imaginary, for objecting to sleep?"

"None whatever, I assure you," replied Mr. Luke, "beyond a dread I cannot account for."

"No dreams," said the doctor, "of an unpleasant or frightful nature? My reason for asking the question is, that if this were the case, we might possibly be able to trace the malady to some disorder of the digestive functions."

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“Not in any manner,” said Mr. Luke. “So far to the contrary——” Here he stopped so suddenly, and with such an expression of vexation as a man might feel at incautiously betraying himself, that it may easily be imagined it did not pass unobserved by the doctor. He, however, made no remark for some moments, but waited for Mr. Luke to go on. As the latter, however, continued silent, the doctor calmly said,—

“You are not telling me all, I perceive; you had better be explicit.”

After a slight pause, Mr. Luke, with genuine Old Bailey evasion, replied,—

“You asked me if I had any frightful dreams, and I told you the truth when I said that I had not. The dream I have is of a totally different character.”

“The dream,” said the doctor, in a somewhat astonished tone. “Have you but one, then?”

“Only one,” said Mr. Luke, now totally throwing off all reserve, “and it is the singularity of such a recurrence that astonishes me, and, I may tell you frankly, utterly terrifies me.”

“Can you trace any connection between it and

any transaction in which you may have been engaged?"

"Not in any way," replied Mr. Luke.

"Describe it to me, then," said the doctor.

"Whenever I fall asleep," said the lawyer, "I see before me the figure of a beautiful little girl, apparently between five and six years of age. Singularly enough, although I can remember her features with the most perfect exactitude when I awake, not the slightest trace of the manner in which she is dressed ever remains upon my mind. Another point, which also puzzles me exceedingly, is that she always holds something in her right hand, but what it is I cannot make out, even in my dreams."

"And this same figure," said the doctor, "you say appears regularly to you?"

"Exactly so," replied Mr. Luke. "I cannot fall asleep without her phantom being before me."

"But if, as you say," remarked the doctor, "it is simply the form of a beautiful child, what cause have you to dread the apparition?"

"That I cannot in the most remote manner

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account for," said Mr. Luke, "and the very obscurity connected with it terrifies me the more."

"It is a very singular case, certainly," said the doctor, rising from his chair and walking to and fro in the room, evidently absorbed in deep thought. Then, suddenly stopping and turning towards Mr. Luke, he asked, "Did you not say that she always holds something in her right hand, and that you cannot discover what it is?"

"Invariably," was the reply. "I can neither detect it in my dreams, nor form a conclusion of what it is like when I am awake. It is something small, scarcely larger than her hand itself. At first I thought it might be a child's book, but it is not so broad. What it is I cannot imagine."

A conversation now took place between the doctor and his patient respecting the latter's bodily health. At its conclusion, Mr. Luke inquired whether the doctor could not find room for him among his guests.

"I have one vacancy, certainly," said the doctor, "but as I do not like to admit any one without a reference, I trust you will excuse me if I ask you for one."



“Certainly,” said Mr. Luke, giving him the address of a friend, “I think you are perfectly right; we cannot be too cautious in this world. When shall I hear from you on the subject?”

“As soon,” said the doctor, “as I have received your friend’s reply I will write to you.”

Mr. Luke, whose mind seemed considerably relieved after the confession he had made, now rose to depart. On leaving the room he inquired of the doctor,—

“Do you think you will be able to afford me any relief?”

“It is very difficult for me to say,” was Dr. Austin’s reply. “It is certainly a most obscure case; still, with assistance on your own part, and an implicit attention to my instructions when you are here, I by no means despair. At any rate, let me advise you not to attempt to struggle against sleep, for by so doing you merely increase the intensity of the disease.”


Mr. Luke promised to obey him, and left the house.

A short time afterwards the doctor received a most satisfactory letter from his future guest’s

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referee, and a few days later Mr. Luke took up his residence among us. Although he evidently tried to make himself as agreeable as possible, I can hardly say he succeeded. He was certainly courteous to all, but there was a forced politeness about him which clearly showed that he was straining at effect. Perhaps Mrs. Austin was the only person who did not see through him, and she generally spoke of him in terms of high respect. His bodily health, under the doctor's care, improved rapidly, and although the same vision continued to haunt him in his dreams, his dread of it greatly diminished. He still, however, held it in a certain sort of fear, principally arising from the impossibility of remembering when awake what the child held in her hand. He informed the doctor that he could now clearly distinguish it in his dreams, and that now it did not occasion him the slightest uneasiness; the sole cause he had for anxiety being his inability to remember the next morning what it was. In vain did the doctor attempt to connect the apparition with any episode of his patient's life, and long and minute were the inquiries he made on the



subject. At last, finding Mr. Luke's health progressing so favourably, and his dread of the phantom decreasing in proportion, he gave over all further investigation, being fully persuaded that the case would terminate successfully.

The doctor, however, was doomed to be terribly disappointed. So rapid had been his patient's improvement, and so convinced was he of his ultimate cure, that he had in his case removed the usual restriction against his guests leaving the grounds, and had permitted him to do so, under the condition that he should always be accompanied either by Mrs. Austin or some other person attached to the establishment. The reason for this arrangement was, not that he had any fear of Mr. Luke's sanity, but he considered that no slight portion of his malady had arisen from the immoderate use of ardent spirits; and this was merely a prudential impediment against his entering a public-house unobserved; for the doctor knew well the difficulty an inveterate drinker always experiences in resisting a temptation of the kind, if some moral or physical impediment is not placed in his way.

Some weeks after Mr. Luke began to show signs of amendment, he and Mrs. Austin one afternoon walked together to the neighbouring village to execute some trifling commissions. Among others, she had to call at a cutler's shop for a pair of scissors she had left to be repaired. When she arrived she found they were not ready for her; but as the repairs would occupy but a few minutes, she seated herself on a chair to wait till they were finished, conversing the while on indifferent subjects with Mr. Luke. Suddenly she perceived him gazing intently on some object wrapped up in brown paper which was lying on the counter. Surprised at the expression of anxiety on his countenance, she ceased speaking and watched him narrowly. Presently, as if he could no longer resist a powerful temptation, he stretched out his hand, and taking up the object which had so much attracted his attention, he tremblingly unrolled the paper, and disclosed within it a razor. It fell from his hand, and a corpse-like pallor immediately spread itself over his face. He staggered for a moment, and was on the point of falling, when the shopman,

noticing the condition he was in, sprang forward to assist him, and placed him in a chair. The fainting fit, however, was so strong upon Mr. Luke, that the shopman dared not leave him, and could only call loudly for some one to assist him. By dint of sprinkling his face with cold water, and using other means, they succeeded in restoring animation. So weak was he, however, that it was impossible for him to return to the house on foot, and a carriage was sent for from a neighbouring inn. Before it arrived the fit again came on, and as soon as consciousness returned he began to gaze with an expression of intense terror at the razor, which still lay on the counter. On Mrs. Austin's asking him if he felt better, he merely replied, pointing to the razor, "Take it away, take it away! why do you leave it there?" The astonished shopman hardly knew what to do, but Mrs. Austin, better experienced in the peculiarities of her husband's guests, requested the man to conceal it, which he immediately did. "Thank God!" said Mr. Luke as soon as it had disappeared, "I feel better now;" and he sat erect in his chair. Still the expression of terror on his countenance

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remained as perceptible as before. The carriage now drove up to the door, and with some difficulty Mr. Luke was placed in it; and he and Mrs. Austin, accompanied by the shopman, returned home.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the annoyance and alarm felt by the doctor when Mrs. Austin described to him Mr. Luke's behaviour in the cutler's shop. From the improvement which had taken place in his patient's health since he had been under his care, he had fondly hoped that a perfect cure would have been the result—a success which would have entitled him to no little honour among his professional brethren, especially when the obscure nature of the case was taken into consideration. All his hopes now vanished, and in place of restoring Mr. Luke to health, he found that a terrible suicidal mania had gradually been developing itself, and he was fairly at a loss how to combat it. The only means which suggested themselves to his mind were excessive caution in watching the unfortunate man, and in endeavouring, if possible, to prove to him the wickedness and folly of any attempt



on his own life. Even the latter idea he dared not carry out unless he should be able, indirectly, to draw from Mr. Luke a confession on the subject ; otherwise he might only hasten a catastrophe which he devoutly wished to avoid. Nor could he help perceiving that, even though these precautions were carried out with the greatest care, they might after all prove utterly useless. He certainly could give especial instructions against allowing Mr. Luke to become possessed of a razor, and that he should be kept under a stricter surveillance. He might also be able to extract a promise from Mr. Luke that he would not attempt self-destruction. Still, in the latter case, he would merely have the word of a maniac to depend upon ; and, in the former, so many means for suicide, unforeseen by the attendants, might present themselves, that the greatest caution would possibly be but of little use. Again, another and more terrible contingency was apprehended by the doctor. He considered it not improbable, from the continuous appearance of the little girl in Mr. Luke's dreams, that his mania might rather tend towards child-murder than suicide. This danger,



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however, terrible as it seemed at first sight, was somewhat the easier of the two to guard against, as the doctor could issue strict orders that Mr. Luke should on no account be allowed to quit the premises. As there were now no children on the establishment (the gardener who was in the doctor's service when I first came to reside with him had a large family, but he had long since left, and his successor was a single man), there was little to fear on that head.

Mr. Luke was that day too unwell to appear at the dinner-table. The next morning, however, he joined us at breakfast. All eyes were upon him when he entered the room, and a dead silence prevailed among the guests for some minutes afterwards. I could hardly have thought it possible that the face of any man could have changed so much in the short space of twenty-four hours. The day before he wore the aspect of perfect health; there was now the pallor of death on his countenance. He might almost have been mistaken for an animated corpse (if such a phrase does not imply a contradiction), had it not been for the expression of intense horror on his features.

He attempted to eat, but could not swallow a morsel; and he sat among us speechless, and utterly absorbed by some terrible emotion.

The meal over, the doctor told him he wished to speak with him in his study, and Mr. Luke, without a word of answer or showing the slightest hesitation, mechanically followed him. As soon as they were by themselves the doctor said,—

“Luke, you do not seem well to-day. Is there anything the matter with you?”

For some moments Mr. Luke seemed hardly to comprehend the question, but at last replied in a hesitating manner,—

“No—Yes; I do not feel very well this morning.”

“Of what do you complain?” inquired the doctor.

Luke looked at him for a second, as if in doubt whether he should confess the truth, and then said,—

“I had that dream again last night, and I discovered clearly enough what the child held in her hand. It was the razor I saw yesterday in the cutler's shop wrapped up in brown paper.”

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“Nonsense, my dear fellow!” said the doctor, putting on an air of nonchalance which he was far from feeling, “you simply saw in your dream the razor again, that is all; just as any object which came under your notice in the course of the day might have appeared to you. You cannot believe in such an absurdity as to suppose it could have occurred in any other manner. You should combat such an impression instead of giving way to it. I will not hear any more about the matter, so let us talk of something else.”

The doctor then took up a lively subject, and, with great difficulty, somewhat aroused his patient from his despondency, without, however, obtaining any very decided success.

At the dinner-table that day Mr. Luke seemed partially to have recovered his spirits, and he conversed with tolerable freedom upon the topics brought before him. It was easy to perceive, however, that his behaviour was forced, and that his mind was continually reverting to some subject totally different from the one he was speaking on. It was also noticed that he had but little appetite, and that even what he did eat was not accom-

plished without difficulty. After the cloth was removed he continued for some time at the table, talking with any one who would converse with him. In the evening his volubility increased as the hour advanced for going to bed; but at the same time his expression of anxiety became the more marked. At last, when the guests had all retired, he begged in such an imploring manner that he might be allowed to remain out of bed some time longer, that the doctor began to be greatly alarmed. He granted his request, however, and told him that Mrs. Austin would keep him company, urging as an excuse for his leaving him that he had some house arrangements to attend to. The excuse was simply to gain sufficient time to have Mr. Luke's bedroom thoroughly examined, to make sure that by no possibility could he destroy himself during the night. The doctor also ordered an attendant to place himself outside Mr. Luke's chamber door till the next morning, so that he might be able to enter on the slightest cause of suspicion. All being now in order, he joined his wife and Mr. Luke in the drawing-room, and remained with them till considerably past mid-

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night, when he insisted that they should all retire to rest. Even then it was with great difficulty he persuaded his patient to obey him, so anxious was the unhappy man to have some one to converse with.

The night passed off without anything worthy of notice occurring; and the next morning, as usual, Mr. Luke presented himself at the breakfast-table. Great anxiety was depicted on his countenance, but certainly far less than he had shown on the day before, and this the doctor hailed as a favourable omen. During the day his spirits greatly improved, and it was not until the evening that there appeared any danger of a relapse, and that only from his excessive and forced volubility. He remained with the doctor and his wife till it was late, and then, with considerable difficulty, he was induced to retire to his bed, the same precautions being observed as on the previous evening.

Mr. Luke's health and spirits now gradually returned, and with them the doctor's hopes rose in proportion. But there was one subject which annoyed him extremely—he could not get Mr.

Luke to speak on the nature of his dreams. All now went on so favourably, that the restrictions which had been placed on him were gradually relaxed ; and the doctor considered him so much improved that he might again be permitted to leave the house if accompanied, care being taken that he should not be allowed to go near the cutler's shop. One fine morning Mrs. Austin, when at breakfast, invited him to escort her on a visit she had to make in the neighbourhood, and Mr. Luke with great alacrity, and evidently with much pleasure, accepted the invitation. When he left the breakfast-table he hurried to his room to make some little preparations in his toilet, Mrs. Austin waiting for him the while in the garden. At last, finding he did not join her, and becoming impatient at the delay, she sent a maid-servant up to his room to ask if he should be much longer. A few moments afterwards a violent scream was uttered by the girl who had been entrusted with the message, and the doctor, accompanied by several of the guests and servants, rushed up to her assistance. The poor girl had good cause for her alarm. Seated on an easy chair in the centre

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of the room was Mr. Luke, with a fearful gash in his throat. He was quite dead. A clasp-knife, belonging to the gardener, which he had contrived to secrete, was lying open on the floor by his side. A coroner's inquest was held on the body, and the cause of the death rigidly investigated. As every precaution was proved to have been used, the jury returned a verdict that the deceased had destroyed himself in a fit of insanity ; and it was accompanied by the remark that no blame whatever was to be attributed to any official of the establishment.



*VIII.—THE IMPRISONED DEMON.*

PART I.

THE next case I have to bring under the notice of the reader is not only one of the most remarkable, but at the same time one of the most instructive, as showing how close the most terrible danger may be without our being aware of it; and also how frequently the most important events of our lives are governed by circumstances which we may have treated at the time with indifference, if not with ridicule. From the want of necessary prudence on my part I incurred the risk of a fate not only terrible to myself, but threatening to the existence of the whole human race as well. Had I not fortunately

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been able to leave Dr. Austin's hospitable roof, under which I had passed so many happy hours, to find a resting-place where I am not known, but where I am happy to say I am provided with every comfort and consideration, as well as an affectionate protection, how different my lot might have been!

About six months before I left Dr. Austin's, a Dissenting minister, the Rev. Josiah Morgan, joined our circle. It was at the earnest wish of his wife (he had no children) that he took up his abode amongst us, and a happy feeling the poor woman must have experienced when she first found herself relieved from his society. He was a stout, florid man, without anything positively objectionable in his countenance, and he was certainly very neat and cleanly in his habits and dress. His age might have been about forty or forty-five. He was generally courteous in his manners, and remarkably well educated. Ordinarily he was inclined to be taciturn, but when he did converse he was, to do him justice, very fluent, and his language always in good taste and well chosen. His monomania, I may remark by-the-

bye, he mentioned to no one. Perhaps even the doctor himself would not have discovered it had it not been revealed to him by Mrs. Morgan, so careful was he to conceal it. He believed that he had swallowed a devil, but what devil it could have been—so at least I at first thought—that had taken him under its special protection, unless perchance that of gluttony, I was at a loss to determine. In the whole course of my life I never met with so voracious an eater, though I must confess he was as particular about the quality of his viands as the quantity. In fact, well as he could speak on all subjects when he chose, he was most eloquent on matters of gastronomy. He had, moreover, made a science of cookery, and gone pretty deeply into its chemistry; and not a little proud was he of his knowledge in that department. "Liebig on Food" was far more frequently read by him than the Holy Scriptures; indeed, I never remember hearing him make a quotation from the latter, though extracts from the former were of constant occurrence with him.

I had from the beginning no sympathy with

the man. For myself, and I may say it without vanity, I am very moderate in my meals. But as he was very gentlemanly and courteous in his address, and as, for some reason which I could not divine, he had chosen me for his companion more than any of the other guests, I was thrown frequently into his society, although while in it I had neither amusement nor profit. To me the most annoying circumstance connected with the man's presence was, that do what I would I could not help watching him at dinner. He was always out of humour if not first attended to, and invariably left off the last; and often have I seen him, when it was physically impossible for him to eat more, cast glances of regret on the different dishes left unfinished as they were taken from table, as if he sorrowed at his incapacity to swallow more. As soon as the dinner-things were removed, it was his invariable custom to leave the room and retire to his bedroom, where he would throw himself on his bed and sleep off some of the effects of his excessive repletion.

One afternoon on the approach of winter, the dinner being over, he as usual left us, while I

with some others remained chatting together. In the course of conversation some book was mentioned which was in my possession, and which would throw some light on the matter under discussion, and I promised that I would produce it before tea, when we could talk over the subject again. Shortly afterwards I proceeded up-stairs with the intention of finding the work alluded to. It was at the time quite dark, and I was finding my way as I best could, intending to strike a lucifer when I got to my room. On passing through one of the corridors near Morgan's bedroom, I heard a voice from it calling me by name. I immediately opened the door, and without entering, as it was quite dark, I asked him if he wanted me.

"Yes, come in," said a voice, which appeared to be feigned, as it had in it something of Morgan's, but was of rather a higher tone, he generally speaking in a low bass voice; "come in and shut the door. You will find a chair beside the bed."

I felt my way with some difficulty, and when I was seated I again asked him what he wanted me for.

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“Speak lower,” said the voice, “or you may wake Morgan, although he is pretty fast asleep.”

“Who may you be, then?” I inquired, with some surprise, although I felt certain it was Mr. Morgan I was speaking to.

“I am the unfortunate demon inhabiting this detestable wretch,” was the answer. “I have long wanted to speak to you, although I have never before found an opportunity.”

“But why do you consider yourself unfortunate?” I inquired, determined to humour him, and impelled at the same time by some curiosity to know more about his particular delusion.

“Why do I consider myself unfortunate?” he replied, in a tone of much surprise—“why do I consider myself unfortunate? How absurd of you, who know the man so well, to ask such a ridiculous question! Can you imagine any phase of existence more execrable than living with such a brute as he is?”

“But if you find your residence objectionable, why don’t you leave him?” I asked.

“I can’t get out. Do you think I would remain

here a moment longer if I could escape?" he said, pettishly. "You must have strange ideas if you do."

"Why did you take up your abode in him, then?" I inquired.

"Because, in the first place, I was a rash, impetuous fool; and, in the next place, because I was not aware that I could not escape if I so wished."

"I should like very much to hear more of your adventures," I said, with difficulty restraining a laugh.

"I will describe some of them to you with the greatest pleasure if you wish it," he replied. "You are exactly the sort of man I should desire to be on good terms with, and I am sure we shall be very good friends. I dare say you have noticed that Morgan has singled you out from the other residents here for his companion. Well, it was I who prompted him, hoping by that means I should some day have an opportunity of speaking to you as I am now doing."

Although I knew I was conversing with a maniac, I confess that his last remark gave me for



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the moment considerable uneasiness. Upon reflection, however, I judged it best to let it pass off, and I inquired with as much seriousness as I could if he had been long on earth.

“About eight years,” he said; “and with the exception of a few weeks I have dwelt in this wretch the whole of the time.”

“In what manner did you come to earth?” I asked.

“Of that and of my previous history I may tell you nothing, however great may be my wish to oblige you. It is a dark and terrible secret which I may not divulge. All I can say is, that my mission was to inhabit the body of some one who on earth would be a useful physical agent to my master, and to lead and persuade him to do all the evil that I could. I was especially warned to choose with great discretion him whom I was to take under my guidance, so as to avoid by any precipitate choice on my part throwing away my power on an inert or powerless person. I promised obedience, and set forth on my work with all the earnestness and buoyancy of youth. I looked around me, as I thought, cautiously and

with cunning, to select a worthy object for my tool, and at last I imagined I had found one. Never did any one make a more terrible mistake, or suffer more severely from a want of sufficient caution, than I have done."

"How did it happen?" I inquired.

"I went one night to a Fiji missionary meeting. The body of the room was crowded chiefly by women, and on the platform were several gentlemen dressed in black with white cravats, every one of whom was evidently charged to the muzzle with eloquence, and only waiting for his turn to discharge it upon the audience. I listened, and was intensely bored as, one after the other, they addressed the meeting. Nothing could be more commonplace or vapid than their speeches, yet they all seemed to produce a wonderful impression on their hearers, as shown by their silence and the anxious expression of their countenances. Presently the idea struck me that if so great an effect could be produced by so little ability, would it not be worth while to choose one of these reverend gentlemen as my residence? The more I thought over the matter the more reasonable

did the project appear, and I now began narrowly to inspect and criticize the abilities of the different speakers, in order to select the one best adapted to my purpose. But I found greater difficulty in the matter than I had calculated on. In the first place, not one of those who had already spoken could be called a man of ability; and again, I was only at liberty to possess a man whose bad qualities gave assurance of success. Of the speakers I had already heard, I must candidly admit that, in the general acceptance of the term, there was not a really bad man among them.

“At last a speaker of a far different calibre rose to address the meeting. His appearance evidently caused much interest and pleasurable excitement, especially among the women, who immediately began to whisper confidentially to each other. At last I heard one near me say to her neighbour, in a somewhat louder tone than was generally current, ‘Have you heard he has lately been left a handsome fortune by a pious old lady?’ The person addressed instantly communicated the intelligence to a female beside her,

who told it to a third, who again transmitted it to another, till with electrical rapidity the important news was carried through the whole female portion of the audience.

“As soon as the whispering which conveyed the fact of the speaker's good fortune had somewhat subsided, he began his address. He was listened to with great attention, and with reason, for in excellence of style he far exceeded all who had spoken before him. His diction was not only fluent and graceful, but there was really an amount of persuasive eloquence in it such as I have rarely heard equalled. Notwithstanding his pathos and the interest he appeared to take in his subject, I could easily perceive that he was a finished hypocrite. When he lamented the state of barbarism in which the unfortunate natives of those savage islands lived, their total ignorance of the common necessities and decencies of civilized life, their cruelty to each other, and the horrible and degrading idolatry of their religion, if religion he could call it, the tears of the female portion of his auditors flowed abundantly, and the men showed by their breathless silence

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and the anxious expression of their faces how much they were absorbed in his discourse. Yet the feeling of the speaker (if he really had any feeling at the time) was solely one of contempt for the people he was addressing.

“I was so pleased with the fellow that, without further hesitation, I determined to take him under my especial guidance. I remained in the room till the meeting was over, and I then followed the object of my choice, Mr. Morgan, to his home. During the time he was occupied in recruiting himself with an excellent supper after the fatigues of the meeting, I took possession of my new dwelling.

“Never was there a more unfortunate choice. It was not that I was deceived in the character of the man; he was a finished hypocrite. As such, especially taking into consideration his profession as a minister of religion, there was no doubt he might have been made the instrument of much evil and misery. But he had also another vice, which, if it did not neutralize the former, at least acted as a statical power in impeding his action. I had fondly imagined, from noticing the impres-

sion he had made on the women at the meeting, that with them at least he would have been all-powerful ; but although not a spark of conscience ever troubled him in any way, and much as he had in his power, he threw it all aside to indulge in the pleasures of the table. Whenever I contrived to occupy his mind with some thought which might have wrought mischief on others, he would entertain it for a few seconds, and then throw it aside, too lazy to pursue it. I fondly hoped to make him preach some false doctrine, but the money he had inherited having placed him in easy if not wealthy circumstances, he became utterly indifferent to his profession. He gave up his chapel, and even left its locality, lest it might entail upon him some employment ; and it was only in public meetings, where his vanity could be flattered by the applause he was accustomed to receive, that he would at all exert himself, and even then but very rarely.

“ As soon as I had fairly discovered the impracticable animal I had to deal with, I tried to escape ; but I found (whether it was a punishment for my want of judgment and caution



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I know not) I could not leave my prison. For some time I was almost in despair, but at last I determined to submit, with the best grace I could, to circumstances beyond my control. I resolved to do my duty to my master in the best way I could, hoping the while that some lucky accident might occur to deprive my unfortunate choice of life, and then I felt sure that I should again be at liberty."

"Your experience, then," I said, "has not been so great as you could have desired?"

"Certainly not, and even the result of the trials I have made has been by no means encouraging to the cause I am engaged in."

"In what way do you mean?" I inquired.

"Why, in spite of all the exertions the father of lies, as he is politely called, is making to establish his dominion in this world, and the latent perseverance and energy he brings to bear for that object, the spirit of good extant is too strong for him, although occasionally its value is lessened by other influences surrounding it."

"Thanks to the good teachings of the ministers of religion, I suppose," I remarked, utterly for-



getting at the moment that I was talking to a maniac.

“To a considerable extent it certainly is so; but even without it, the good is latent to an enormous extent—in fact, to an extent that none but those whose mission it is to create evil can have the remotest idea of.”

“But without religion and education there can be but little good in this world.”

“That they both are powerful weapons I am perfectly ready to admit; but apart from these, I hold that the good, even in the most ignorant and the most destitute of natural intelligence, is superior to the evil, and that even in those in whom you might imagine evil should be omnipotent, elements of good may still be found. I had a singular proof of this only a short time after my confinement in my present hateful tene-ment.”

“I should much like to hear the proof you have just spoken of. It must be a strong one if you have been convinced by it.”

“It was a strong one. I will relate it to you, and then you can judge for yourself.”

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“As soon as I found that my only chance of escape was the death of the individual I was compelled to reside in, I looked calmly around me to discover in what way I could accelerate it. From the immense care he took of himself few of the ordinary accidents of life were likely to reach him, and it required no little study on my part to hit upon a plan by which I might succeed. At last I met with a friend of his, a glutton hardly less detestable than himself, who had lately returned from Paris. Of course the conversation in a little while turned on the different excellences of the English and French kitchens. Our new acquaintance gave a decided preference to the latter, and described with so much animation and in so graphic a manner, the various dishes he had been regaled with in Paris, that Morgan was seized with a violent desire to visit that city. As I thought he might there indulge to a fatal excess, I stimulated his wish by every means in my power, and with so much success that he resolved to leave England without delay. Before starting, however, he deemed it advisable, as he did not speak French, to write to his friend for

the address of the house in which he had met with so much good fortune. He received in reply the name of an excellent boarding-house, famous for its *cuisine*, which was kept by a highly respectable English lady, and with this letter he received a strong note of introduction to her.

“Nothing now remained to detain us in England, and Morgan, having completed his preparations, took his place in the train for Folkestone. He intended to cross to Boulogne the same day, remain there for perhaps a week, as he wished to visit some persons in that town, and then continue his journey to Paris. In the same compartment with him was a French abbé, resident in Boulogne, who spoke English fluently. An acquaintanceship rapidly sprang up between the two, and they continued in very amicable conversation till they reached the steamboat, where, as the weather was very rough, both were too indisposed for further intercourse.

“The day after our arrival, however, was beautiful and calm, and in the afternoon, possibly for the purpose of obtaining a better appetite for his dinner, Morgan determined to

take a walk on the jetty. He remained there, walking to and fro, till he began to feel fatigued, and he then bent his steps homewards, strolling leisurely along. When he had arrived opposite the custom-house, I noticed, standing by the edge of the quay, two singularly repulsive looking men. They were both tall and very athletic, though one had a malformation of one of his feet, and they were literally clothed in rags. But the most disagreeable thing about them was the expression of their faces. These were distorted, drivelling, ugly, and animalized in the extreme. It was easy to perceive that both of them were utterly idiotic. Their attention had evidently been called to something on a steamboat below them, and I glanced over the side of the quay to ascertain what it was. There was no water in the port at the time, the tide being out, but leaning over the taffrail of the steamboat was a man, apparently an engineer, who watched the mud below him, and bawled the while some north-country ditty. Presently one of the idiots pointed out to the other some paving stones lying near them. A half intelligent grin

illumined the features of the one with the club-foot. He stooped down, and, picking up a heavy stone (it might have weighed nearly half a hundredweight), he carried it to the edge of the quay, and then raising it above his head, he threw it, with all the force he was master of, at the engineer.

“The stone fortunately missed the man, otherwise it must inevitably have killed him. As it was, it went hissing close past his head, and then buried itself in the mud beneath. The engineer looked around for a moment in astonishment, and rightly judging not only that the stone must have been thrown from above, but must also have been purposely aimed at him, he immediately leaped, with the agility of a cat, up the step-ladder, and landing on the quay, looked eagerly around him to discover who was his assailant. The two idiots, perceiving they had not only failed in their intentions, but had aroused the anger of the engineer, ran away from the spot as rapidly as they could. One soon got fairly out of sight, but the lame one in his hurry stumbled; and when he arose from the ground,

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the little intelligence he possessed was for the moment disturbed by the shock, and he looked around him in helpless and bewildered amazement.

“The whole scene, so far as it had gone, had something in it most grateful to my feelings. Here, I thought, are two specimens of humanity without intelligence or education, who show the natural depravity of human nature and the great power my master possesses in this world. Here is a proof that in his original state man is but little removed from the demon. Not the slightest provocation had the engineer given those two idiotic murderers. They had not even envy or jealousy to stimulate them, their brute natures not being even sufficiently organized to allow such feelings. They would have committed a terrible crime, and that from the mere pleasure to be found in its perpetration. But my satisfaction was only of momentary duration, and I found the conclusion I had arrived at was as imperfect and disappointing as it well could be.

“The engineer had but little trouble in discovering his assailant. The terrified look of the



culprit when he saw him would have been a sufficient indication, without any of the willing information offered by the bystanders. His face, which, but a moment before, was inflamed with passion, now changed to that of perfect good-humour, and he could not help laughing at the dazed appearance of the idiot, who was evidently known to him by sight. Still he seemed to consider that he had a great moral duty to perform, and was determined to go manfully through with it. He ran up to the idiot, whose terror had rendered him motionless, and seizing him by the arm, began to drag him to the edge of the quay. But the task to which he had set himself was no easy one. The idiot had become aware of the danger he was in, and struggled violently to escape, while with a grasp like that of a blacksmith's vice, but with bodily strength scarcely greater than that of his opponent, the engineer drew him slowly along. When they had arrived at the edge of the quay, the engineer for a moment released his hold on the idiot's arm, and commenced a piece of explanatory pantomime, which the other regarded with stupefied, if not



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half-intelligent, amazement. The engineer raised a heavy weight from the ground and threw it over the quay. He then rolled his arms over each other for some seconds, and finally pointed with his finger to the mud beneath them. I am afraid I have described this very obscurely, but it was easy to perceive that he intended to tell the idiot that if ever he threw a stone in like manner again, he (the engineer) would throw him head over heels into the mud for his pains.

“Before the engineer had perfectly completed his pantomime a shrill and angry screaming was heard, and on looking round I perceived a shrivelled, ragged, little old woman, followed by the other idiot, running rapidly towards the disputants. She shook her fist at them, and gesticulated violently the while. She was evidently prepared to do battle, and the engineer, perceiving this, made off towards the ladder, for although very possibly he would not have budged a foot for half a dozen men, he dreaded an altercation with an infuriated old woman. However, there was no occasion for him to quit the field. A *douanier*,

seeing the old woman's rage, advanced towards her, and rapidly explained the whole affair.

“The change which came over the engineer's face when he perceived that the idiot had been his assailant was not greater than that on the old woman's face as soon as she understood the rights of the case. Putting on an expression of bland politeness, and advancing towards the engineer, she commenced to make a number of excuses for the idiot's conduct, not one word of which, being in French, did he understand. She informed him, on her honour, that the stone had been thrown *en pure plaisanterie*, and the poor boy was naturally *doux comme un agneau*, and would not willingly hurt a fly, and many other excuses of the same description, all of which the engineer appeared to consider most valid ; and as his modesty seemed to be injured by being made the object of so many observers, he hastily answered, ‘Oh yes, I know ; all right,—now be off!’ and other complimentary speeches of the same description, all of which were accepted as perfectly satisfactory, though utterly unintelligible to the old woman, who, taking the two idiots

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with her, left the place while the engineer descended his ladder.

“As the crowd, which had been drawn together by the affair, began to disperse, Morgan noticed near him the French priest who had been his companion in the train from London. They instantly recognized each other, and exchanged a most friendly greeting. After conversing together for a few minutes on indifferent subjects, Morgan alluded to the scene he had just witnessed.

“‘Ah,’ said the priest, ‘it is a very lamentable thing to see two human beings in point of intellect scarcely removed from the brute creation. That poor old woman, their mother, is much to be pitied. I have known her for many years past, and a more worthy individual, I believe, does not breathe. The unceasing kindness and affection she has shown those two unfortunate creatures has been wonderful indeed.’

“‘Is her husband alive?’ inquired Morgan.

“‘No, he died—or, at least, disappeared—shortly after the birth of the two idiots, who are twins. Her married life was short and exceedingly unhappy. I will give you a sketch of it, if you

please, and we may sit down and rest ourselves on one of these benches the while.'

"Morgan accepted the offer, and as soon as they were seated the priest began:—

“‘Therese Courtois was the only daughter of a fisherman of Boulogne. Till she was sixteen years of age she resided with her parents. They were very industrious, honest people, but, like most others in their line of life, very poor, and, had it not been for the exertions of the mother and daughter in helping to unload fishing-boats in the harbour, gathering mussels from the rocks, and other similar laborious employments, they would have fared badly indeed. When Therese had reached her seventeenth year her mother died, and for a few months she kept house for her father; but before a year had elapsed after the death of his wife he married again. Therese now began to feel painfully the loss of her own mother; for her stepmother was a violent termagant, and she made the girl's home so miserable to her that she left it, and obtained a situation as a servant in a small tradesman's family in the town. She continued to reside with them for two years, giving

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perfect satisfaction to her employers, both by her behaviour and her industry. At the end of that time she formed the acquaintance of the servant of a Parisian lady who had visited Boulogne for the sea-bathing, and the accounts the poor girl heard of the splendour and amusements of Paris so completely occupied her thoughts that she resolved, if she could obtain a situation there, that she would visit it. The mistress of her friend, having seen Therese on more than one occasion, became at last so pleased with her appearance and manners that she proposed taking her into her own service, an offer Therese gladly accepted.

“She remained in Paris in this service till the death of the lady, which took place about three years after they had left Boulogne. Her behaviour during this time was not only unexceptionable, but she had so won the good feeling of her mistress by the kind manner in which she had nursed her through a long and painful illness, that at her death she bequeathed to her a legacy of five hundred francs. Therese then sought for another situation, and with testimonials so honourable as those she was able to produce,

she had but little difficulty in finding one to suit her. Here she made the acquaintance of a handsome, thoughtless young man—a journeyman tailor—which ended in his making her an offer of marriage. In spite of the strong advice of her mistress, she accepted it, and shortly afterwards she was married.

“For some five months after their wedding, things went on smoothly enough with them ; but presently the cloven foot began to show itself in the husband. Therese occupied herself as a needlewoman, and thus contrived to add something to the family exchequer, and her husband worked somewhat steadily at his trade ; but his naturally idle habits again got in the ascendant, and he began to grossly neglect his work, preferring to live on the exertions of his wife rather than by his own labour. For some time Therese patiently put up with his idleness, as he still showed her proper attention ; but by degrees he began to slight her, and to frequently absent himself from home for days together. He also renewed acquaintance with a number of worthless, lazy fellows, whom he had discarded at his marriage



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by the advice of Therese. Although her affection for her husband continued as strong as ever, this behaviour naturally irritated her, and some very violent altercations between them were the result, the language she made use of on these occasions, it must be admitted, by no means tending towards establishing peace between them.

“Therese now found that she was likely to become a mother, and it was necessary to incur certain expenses to provide for the event. As her husband now contributed nothing towards her support, a considerable portion of the trifling residue of her legacy (the greater part had been expended in the purchase of furniture for their room) was drawn upon to make the necessary purchases. She had hitherto concealed the balance from her husband, for although she still entertained for him the warmest affection, she could not disguise from herself his naturally extravagant habits, and she considered it an act of prudence on her part to be provided with a trifle for any contingency which might occur.

“She had hardly completed her purchases, when



her husband, who had been absent for some days, returned home, and finding the modest preparations she had made for her approaching accouchement, he asked her from what source she had obtained the necessary funds? Therese was for some moments embarrassed what answer to make, but in the end she told him the truth. He immediately inquired of her if she had any money left, which she denied, but in so awkward a manner that, partially inebriated though her husband was, he could easily perceive she was not telling him the truth, and he insisted on her producing what she had left. She resolutely refused to obey, however; and, annoyed by her refusal, he instantly began to search the chest of drawers to find it, and at last so nearly succeeded in discovering the trifle she had concealed, that, using all the force she was mistress of, she pushed him aside, and, locking the drawer, placed the key in her own pocket. Her husband, now perfectly infuriated, insisted on her giving him the key, which she refused to do, whereupon he seized one of the articles of baby-linen on the table and threw it into the fire. Therese immedi-

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ately rushed forward to save it, but he clasped her round the waist and held her there till the little dress was entirely consumed ; and then released her.

“No sooner was she at liberty than Therese threw herself on a chair and, bursting into tears, scolded her husband in no measured terms for his cruelty, while he in reply caught up the remnant of the purchases she had made and threw them also into the fire. Thoroughly maddened by this treatment, she now sprung from her chair to save them, when her husband again seized her in his arms, she using every means in her power to release herself, and screaming violently the while. The neighbours, aroused by her cries, rushed into the room and separated the couple, using at the time no very gentle language to the husband for his brutality. Therese, when at liberty, instantly pulled the remains of her baby-linen from the flames, while her husband, who now began to feel somewhat ashamed of his behaviour, contrived to escape from the room.

“As soon as the neighbours had left her, Therese gave full sway to her grief. When it

had somewhat abated she began to occupy herself in ascertaining the extent of the damage the ruffianly conduct of her husband had occasioned, and examined each little article separately to see what had escaped. Her investigation had the effect of bringing on another violent fit of weeping: not a single thing was there which had not been so injured as to be utterly useless.

“The next day she was more calm, and with the few francs she still had left she again made some necessary purchases. But this time they were of a far poorer description than the former, though even then they had been economical enough. Of her husband she saw nothing for some weeks; indeed, she began to think he had deserted her, to her great grief, for her anger against him had already vanished, and her love returned as strongly as ever. To add to her sorrow, a note had been sent to him from a large firm offering him constant employment, which, notwithstanding all her efforts to find him, she could not deliver. At last, when she had almost given up all hope of seeing him again, he returned home one evening in a most deplorable condition. He was ill and

positively in rags. His blouse had a sleeve torn from it, and a large hole was in one of the knees of his trousers. She received him most kindly, and did not even allude to the scene which had taken place before they parted ; while he on his part seemed penitent and subdued. When she placed the note in his hands, he appeared delighted at the chance of constant employment, but in the dilapidated condition of his dress it was impossible for him to call at the house of business. Money he had none, and Therese's own finances were now reduced to so low an ebb that she could not afford to purchase any new clothing for him. The next morning, however, she bought a piece of cotton to put a new sleeve in his blouse, but in spite of all her efforts to match the colour, it was easily to be seen how the repair had been effected, from the faded condition of the original garment. On the knee of his trousers she placed a new patch, and made several other alterations for the better in his dress, and he then left the house in search of the employment offered him, which he was fortunate enough to obtain.

“ ‘ Things now went on smoothly enough for a

few weeks, till the revolution of July, 1830, broke out, when, in spite of Therese's entreaties, her husband insisted in taking part against the Bourbon Government, and left her as soon as the disturbances commenced. For two days she heard nothing of him, but on the morning of the third a person called on her from the Hôtel Dieu, telling her he feared he had bad news for her, for the dead body of a working man in a blouse had been brought there, and from a note found in his pocket, which appeared to have been sent to him, they had discovered his address. He showed Therese the fragment of the note. She immediately recognized it as the one sent to her husband offering him employment. Thunderstruck at the intelligence, yet hoping against hope, she accompanied the messenger to the Hôtel Dieu. When they had arrived there he conducted her to the deadhouse, where several bodies of people that had been slain were stretched out side by side to be identified. The one on which the note had been found was so terribly mutilated, that it was almost impossible for her to recognize it at first as her husband's,

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the face and one of the feet having been shattered by cannon shots which had been discharged from the Louvre on a body of insurgents attacking by the "Pont des Arts." Terrible as was the sight, she felt for a moment certain that it was not her husband who was lying dead before her, but the next instant she perceived the new sleeve she had inserted in his blouse, and also the patch she had put on the knee of his trousers. All doubt on the subject now fled, and she could support herself no longer, but fainted on the spot. When she recovered she found herself on the floor of one of the wards, with the messenger who had brought her the tidings of her husband's death standing by her side. With great kindness he offered her some consolation, which in her deep sorrow she heard not, and when she was somewhat calmer he conducted her home and then left her.

"Therese, now alone, gave full vent to her sorrow. Her husband's death had swept from her memory all the ill-treatment she had received at his hands, and she only retained thoughts of the happy moments she had passed in his society, and her inextinguishable love for him.



“ ‘Night came on, and Therese, without lighting her candle, threw herself on her bed, and in the darkness her memory brought vividly before her, though in irregular succession, the events of her married life. Although she tried to drive from her mind the terrible occurrences of the morning, they were naturally more prominent than any other. She endeavoured in vain to turn her thoughts from the dreadful scene in the deadhouse; the mutilated body was incessantly before her. The more she tried to escape from it, the more terribly clear did it present itself to her, till at last it was as distinctly before her mind as when she really saw it. She continued in imagination to gaze upon it till a violent flood of tears shut it from her sight. She wiped them hurriedly away, but the figure was again before her as plainly as ever. Presently, as she looked at it her tears suddenly stopped, she rose in her bed, and, pressing her hands on her head, remained for a moment as if in deep thought. It had struck her, while looking at the figure her imagination had conjured up, that the shoe on the uninjured foot was not that of her husband. In spite of con-



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centrating rigidly her thoughts on the subject, and bringing the picture of the corpse as distinctly as possible before her, she could come to no conclusion ; for while the ideal figure presented a totally different shoe from that worn by her husband, yet her reasoning made her doubt whether she was not misled by her wishes.

“‘ At last the doubt became insupportable, and she resolved to satisfy herself on the point. She quitted her bed, and found her way in the dark down the long and tortuous staircase, and left the house. Although it was past midnight, the streets were still crowded, the excitement of the three eventful days which had just been completed not having yet subsided. With difficulty she made her way through the groups of noisy or drunken men, and at last she succeeded in reaching the Hôtel Dieu. But here another difficulty arose ; so great was the crowd of applicants, either to identify the dead bodies which had been brought there during the day, or to request permission to visit wounded friends or relatives, that the officials had the greatest difficulty in keeping order, and at the moment Therese arrived, an

instruction had been issued that no others should be admitted till those at present inside the building should have left. Therese mixed with the crowd outside, awaiting her turn. It would have been long indeed before she could have reached the door, weak as she was, but when her peculiarly affecting condition was noticed by those around her, it stood her in greater stead than though she had possessed a giant's physical strength. The rough crowd not only with rude gallantry made way for her to pass through, but those nearest the door implored the porter to let in the "*pauvre petite mère*," a request which was granted almost without hesitation.

“Therese, now inside the building, found her way as she best could into the deadhouse. But here a terrible disappointment awaited her. By the light of a dim oil lamp which hung from the ceiling she cast her eye over the range of corpses, and identified the spot where she had seen the body of her husband ; but she could not now find him. With difficulty she gained the attention of one of the officials, of whom she inquired why her hus-

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band had been removed ; she had seen him there in the morning.

““In the morning,” was the reply ; “it is very probable you did see him then, but all those bodies have been removed for interment. These you see have been brought in during the day.”

““Therese then asked to what place they had been removed, but the man hurriedly left her, and she remained in ignorance, for although she attempted to obtain information all were too busy to answer her.

““She now left the building by another door, and sought her home. She was so exhausted she could hardly drag one foot after the other. When she arrived the first streaks of morn were visible in the streets, but too faint as yet to penetrate into the interior of the houses, and in the darkness she slowly made her way up-stairs, each step becoming more painfully fatiguing than the former had been. At last she reached her room and entered it, when she was struck with the idea that some one was in it. Startled rather than frightened, she listened, and found that her impression was correct. The sound of a person

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breathing in deep sleep was plainly distinguishable as proceeding from the bed. She advanced to her garret window, and drawing back the curtain by the now increasing daylight, she perceived her husband, almost destitute of clothing, stretched upon the bed, fast asleep.

“ ‘At first, Therese could not believe the evidence of her own senses,—the whole adventure had so much of the improbable in it. She seated herself in a chair in a stupefied state. By degrees, as the broad light of day came into the room, she understood the reality of her husband's presence ; but the joy at his safety which she might naturally have been expected to feel was hardly awakened, for the man whose supposed death she had sorrowed over so bitterly the preceding day now lay before her in the heavy stertorous sleep of a drunkard. At last she attempted to arouse him, but only succeeded partially, and the sound he uttered told her too well how inebriated he was. He merely ejaculated a few detached words, abusing some one for robbing him.

“ ‘She now resolved to wait till he should have

somewhat slept off the effects of his debauch ; but she was obliged to break her resolution. She felt that she was on the point of becoming a mother, and implored him to seek assistance for her. A few abusive words was all she could obtain from him, and in her need she aroused a woman who resided on the same floor. She, together with her husband, offered her every assistance in their power, and before half an hour had elapsed, Therese found herself safely in bed in a maternity hospital. Difficult and dangerous was her confinement, which, though she gave birth to twins, terminated favourably as far as life was concerned, but most unfortunately with respect to one of the infants,—it being born with a malformation of the right foot.

“‘ During her residence in the hospital not even once did Therese’s unworthy husband call to see her ; and, on her part, pride deterred her from sending to inform him he was the father of twins. When the time allowed for her residence in the hospital had transpired, she left it to return home. When she arrived in her room she was struck

breathless with astonishment. It was utterly empty, not an article of furniture remained in it. The first idea that suggested itself to her was that the landlord had seized it for rent ; but as she owed only for a fortnight, and as her furniture was of a most substantial description for a person in her position, she naturally considered the distraint to have been excessive, and she was highly indignant at the landlord's rapacity. She knocked at her friend's chamber door to inform her of this cruel treatment, but she heard from her the terrible intelligence that the furniture had been sold by her drunken husband, who had immediately afterwards decamped without even paying the trifling balance of rent owing. This was the last reliable news Therese ever heard of her husband. A report once reached her that he had enlisted in a regiment of cavalry in Algiers, and that he had been killed in a skirmish with some Arab marauders ; but whether this were true or not she had never been able to learn.

“‘It would occupy too much of your time,’ said the priest, ‘to go more minutely into the poor woman's history. She remained in Paris about



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a year after the birth of the twins, supporting herself in part by her own industry, and in part by occasional assistance which she received from the benevolent. The fact of the idiocy of her children fortunately broke upon her by such slow degrees as greatly to dull the edge of the terrible infliction. She continued to hope almost against hope; but the misery which threatened her became apparent so gradually, that when the whole sad truth was fully known to her one-half of the shock had already passed over, and her intense maternal affection almost neutralized the remainder.

“When she returned to Boulogne she did so at the invitation of her father, who was again a widower. She kept his house—or rather, his two rooms—for him till his death, which happened when the children were about four years of age. She had supported herself in the interim (for her father was too poor to offer her more than mere shelter) by needlework, and as she was a skilful seamstress she had but little difficulty in procuring employment, her peculiar misfortune aiding her the while by making her an object of sympathy to many. At the death of her father all she inherited



was a few francs and his furniture, which was of the most trifling value, and with it she removed from the heights to the lower town, where she has ever since remained.

“‘ I must now say a few words on her behaviour as a mother, for it is worthy of all admiration, and is moreover singular in a psychological point of view. As her children grew older, and the utter hopelessness of their recovering from idiocy became apparent, she herself, without education and without the capability on the part of her sons to receive education, yet contrived to develop the slight amount of natural good that was in them. You look surprised at my theory of the existence of elementary good being innate even in the organization of a mindless man's brain, but I maintain it to exist, and submit these two unfortunates as proofs of the correctness of my opinion. The first virtue, and possibly the most difficult she had to elicit from such pupils, was integrity. Stealing food is admitted to be natural to a hungry child without education, but she, by some occult means, has succeeded in making them perfectly honest, although on many occasions the

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whole family have suffered the severest privations. No one can point to a single act of dishonesty in the two idiots, no matter of how trifling a description. Possibly the only pleasure of sense they can enjoy, beyond warmth, is sweet food, and you cannot delight them more than by presenting them with some article of confectionery ; yet I am persuaded that if either saw a basket of the most tempting sweets he would not touch it, although utterly ignorant of the meaning of the word honesty. Cruelty to animals is also natural to many children, and to those of weak minds more frequently than others ; yet neither of them has been known to commit the slightest act of the kind. You may perhaps point to the unprovoked attempt they made to wound, and even murder the engineer, as a proof that natural cruelty is not extinct in them, but I am fully certain they took him for some one else who had annoyed them. It should also be remembered that the extent of the mischief they might have committed by the assault was incomprehensible to their minds. Generally speaking, they are perfectly inoffensive. It is true

they are treated with kindness and consideration by those who know them, but I am sorry to say they are frequently annoyed by strangers. By their mother's uniform fondness and attention she had developed in them both love and gratitude. They are both exceedingly attached to her, and she has, by her conduct, even given them some crude notions of the nature of the Deity by proving to them in her own person the possibility of the existence of a Being whose wisdom, love, and kindness are immeasurable to their intelligence. The family pass together a singular sort of triune existence, she being the thinking power. What they would do without her I know not, and I am sorry to say that I have heard from one of the doctors in the hospital that she is suffering from a malady which will shortly terminate her existence.'

"The priest having finished his narrative we parted, and Morgan continued his way leisurely home. In passing a narrow street, at the back of the port, we heard issuing from a cellar a sharp, shrill, discordant woman's voice, singing some soldier's song about '*Gloire*' and '*Victoire*.'

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Morgan looked down and perceived the old woman seated on a chair with the idiots beside her. They listened with the greatest attention to the song, although probably unable to understand one word of its meaning.

“The concluding sentence of the priest’s narrative was the only one which gave me any pleasure—that the old woman had been stricken by a mortal malady. If she were once gone, I argued, and the idiots without her protection and guidance, the natural evil of their natures would obtain the ascendancy, and overthrow all the priest’s reasonings. But in this as in most other things I was doomed to be disappointed. When we returned from Paris six months afterwards, I found the old woman had died six weeks after we had seen her. The municipal authorities then took charge of her sons, and showed them every attention which humanity could dictate ; but they gradually sunk, without any malady apparent, as if they had been deprived of something essential to their existence, and two months before our return both the idiots were dead.”

IX.—THE IMPRISONED DEMON.

PART II.

“ON our arrival in Paris, Morgan took up his quarters in the boarding-house to which he had been recommended. The description his friend had given of that establishment, though flattering, hardly came up to the truth, especially as regarded the *cuisine*. Morgan was here in his element: his life, in fact, was one round of gratification of his palate, and, although in a less degree, of his vanity. Here the latter, to a certain extent, contributed to his indulgence of the former. The majority of the residents in the boarding-house were ladies, and of these five were what are most uncourteously termed ‘old

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maids,' although there was not one amongst them who did not honestly hold that many years must yet pass before she would be fairly entitled to that designation. But if not old maids they were at least, and had been for a very considerable number of years, unappreciated marriageable young ladies. They also admitted, though tacitly and even in confidence to themselves, that they had reached that time of life when a lady is justified in personally assisting, either by her conversation or attentions, the development of a latent passion in an admirer, which he hardly possesses the courage to acknowledge himself.

“The effect the Rev. Mr. Morgan made upon these single ladies was perfectly marvellous. He was exactly the sort of conquest ladies in their position are always so ambitious to make. In the first place he was in comfortable if not affluent circumstances, and his wife would, of course, have a good home of her own, instead of wandering from one boarding-house to another, till she was known in almost every establishment of the kind in Europe. In the second, he was

in the prime of life, well made, well dressed, and far from bad-looking. Thirdly, and lastly, he was a minister of religion. True, he was a dissenter, and they, with one exception, were churchwomen, but, strongly as they were attached to the tenets of the Church of England, in which they had been educated, they were still open to conviction, should it be clearly proved to them that they had hitherto been in error on doctrinal points.

“With admirable feminine shrewdness they soon found out the weak point in the character of the reverend gentleman, and each in turn showed him every species of attention and respect at table. They kept a keen eye on the servants, and whenever any fresh dish of particularly attractive description made its appearance, Morgan, through their care, was invariably the first person to whom it was offered. And well did he profit by their attention. In those not directly interested in this race for his hand, he created considerable disgust by his excessive greediness. Even the servants noticed it, and communicated their opinions to each other by frequent, and, though hidden from the guests, most intelligent



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grimaces. But his fair besiegers saw nothing save what was attractive in him, and as each in her turn was the means of some fresh dish being offered to his notice, she seemed to consider that she was entitled to stand a step higher in his good opinion than her competing sisters.

“All this was to me not only exceedingly gratifying but hopeful; for I began to think that by indulging his appetite in this manner, a fatal fit of indigestion, if not of apoplexy (for from his short thick neck and plethoric countenance, he had evidently a predisposition to this disease), might carry him off, and by that means I might escape from my detested prison-house. Before arriving in Paris I had certainly calculated on inducing him to enter into the various kinds of dissipation for which that capital is notorious; but he was too indolent, though by no means too virtuous, to be drawn into a trap of the kind, so that now I had no better policy to follow than to encourage him in his favourite vice, in which, as I have said, I was admirably seconded by his fair admirers.

“At last the climax was reached. He was one

night attacked by a fit, which strongly resembled apoplexy. So severe was it that for some time he threatened to succumb to it, to the utter dismay of his female friends, though it raised my hopes and spirits to the highest point. But here again I was doomed to be disappointed, and the worst of it was, that his recovery was in part occasioned by the kindness and solicitude of one of his lady admirers, who, as soon as the first sharp attack somewhat subsided in intensity, had contrived to install herself as his nurse, urging as an excuse for this step, that she had formerly sat under him in his chapel, and was therefore better qualified to wait on him than the others—an argument by no means admitted by the rest, who stigmatized what they termed her forward conduct in as strong terms as the naturally gentle nature of their dispositions would allow.

“Morgan’s convalescence was lingering and fitful, but his kind nurse never for a moment relaxed in her solicitude. To the anxious inquiries the other ladies made as to the progress the reverend gentleman was making, and whether they might

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hope soon to see him at table, she invariably replied, with a serious and mournful expression of countenance, that she was very much afraid the day was still far distant. She also declined, with warmest thanks, the offers they kindly made occasionally to relieve her of her charge, not only, as they said, to assist her in the good work she was performing, but that they might save her from the effects of over-watching, which were beginning to tell on her. She moreover intimated the doctor's opinion, which was, that in the delicate state of the reverend gentleman's health, he should be kept perfectly quiet, as even the excitement which might be produced by the mere presence of a fresh face might, in his precarious condition, produce fatal results. These answers, it must be admitted, were not received with such perfect credence by those to whom they were addressed as the speaker desired; on the contrary, strong, undisguised doubt was seen in the expression of their faces. More than one, indeed, with bitter, though partially concealed sarcasm, told her they feared her intense anxiety for the welfare of the patient

magnified his danger rather than otherwise. Even stronger hints were thrown out, which, as they were meant as a sort of stage 'aside,' she did not think it convenient to hear.

“At length, their unkind remarks and rude behaviour reached such a height as even to go beyond the bounds of good breeding. Still not the slightest appearance of annoyance or anger was perceptible in Miss Mary Wilkinson. She submitted to all with the most perfect resignation, and indeed almost seemed to court the snubs and incivilities she occasionally received from the other maiden-lady boarders. I now also began to notice, that when she left the drawing-room in the evening to seek Morgan's sitting-room, and after having been the butt of most unflattering allusions, which she had taken at the time with perfect meekness, there was a remarkable expression of satisfaction and triumph on her countenance as soon as she was out of their sight. But after all, in spite of the meekness and resignation with which she appeared to bear the attacks of her friends, they did not pass without their full effect. It is not in the nature of woman to

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receive injuries of the kind without sooner or later resenting them; and Miss Mary Wilkinson was no exception to the general rule. She treasured up in her memory all the slights that were offered her, and she determined to take her revenge, not in driblets, as the provocations had been received, but by one strong and irresistible blow.

“One afternoon, when Morgan was convalescent, Miss Mary Wilkinson, on hearing the dinner bell ring, descended to the dining-room with an extra appearance of humility on her countenance. The replies of her four friends to the commonplace phrases which are usual in genteel society, and may be supposed to pass between those resident in the same boarding-house after four-and-twenty hours of separation, were supercilious, but she took them with resignation. At table her expression excited the especial attention of the maiden ladies, as there was something more in it than the quiet amiability she had been accustomed to show. Though the few words she uttered were full of modest humbleness, there was visible, from time to time, an irrepressibly bright and satisfied

glance in her eye, which raised a suspicion in the breasts of the others that the humility she displayed in her deportment was not altogether unfeigned.

“If there had been a doubt left on the subject at dinner, the events of the evening proved that Miss Wilkinson had still as much of the woman as the angel about her. When the ladies retired into the drawing-room, she drew her four friends aside, and confidentially told them, as she did not wish to convey any slight to the rest of the guests, that the Rev. Mr. Morgan now considered his health so far re-established as to allow him to leave the doctor's hands. She went on to say that she had regularly conveyed to him the kind wishes on his behalf she had so frequently heard uttered by those at the table, especially by the ladies to whom she was now speaking (here a slight appearance of dissent was seen on the countenances of those addressed, but they made no remark, nor did she take any notice of the circumstance), and he had requested her to ask the favour of their company that evening in his private sitting-room to partake of a cup of tea, and to

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hear him improve the occasion of his recovery by addressing them on the necessity of submitting with patience to the misfortunes which are thrown upon us in this world, and which it is beyond our power to avoid. She paused a moment for a reply, watching the while with marked curiosity the expression on the faces of her friends. It was some seconds before any of them could utter a word, so completely were they taken by surprise. Each now felt that her chance was gone and that her rival had triumphed, although not a syllable Miss Wilkinson had spoken could lead to any conclusion of the kind. Still they felt perfectly certain that such was the case. At last, in a sorrowful tone, which somewhat belied their words, they expressed the pleasure it would afford them to accept the invitation, and in less than half an hour afterwards they were ushered into Morgan's private sitting-room, where they found the lamp lighted, the tea service on the table, and other preparations for tea. Morgan received his guests with great blandness and courtesy of manner, which seemed to make a good impression on them. I think I said before



that, to do him only justice, his manners, especially to women, were very attractive, and on the present occasion, the pallor which was still on his countenance made him still more interesting. The pleasurable feeling in their minds, however, subsided somewhat when they saw Miss Wilkinson rise from among them, and without any particular request from Morgan, seat herself as a matter of course at the tea-table, and busy herself among the cups and saucers, without taking any immediate part in the conversation which was going on at the time.

“When tea was over, and the servant had removed the tea-things, Mr. Morgan advanced to the table and began a discourse, Miss Wilkinson taking a seat by his side. He brought under the notice of his fair auditors the dangerous illness with which he had been afflicted. He ascribed it to the great goodness of Providence, which had adopted that means to teach him how frail a creature he was. He told them how the lesson had been impressed on his memory, and how necessary it was for all to be prepared against a visitation of the

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kind, as none could say they were safe from a similar blow ; but he utterly forgot, at the time, that the misfortune under which he had just suffered had been caused by indulging his own appetites to a sinful extent. Having continued for some time expatiating on his own sufferings, which he considered a chastening for his sins, and which he hoped would be taken into consideration when he should be called on, as they would all be, to give an account of his actions in this world ; he then turned to the mercies, even the bounties he had received, in escaping as he had done from the dangers which had surrounded him, even from the jaws of the grave, and above all for the infinite kindness which had been shown him in the person of a nurse whose amiable, he might say affectionate attentions had not only mitigated to an enormous extent his sufferings and misery, but had proved to him how inferior he was, although a minister of religion, in that great Christian virtue, charity, to one who, without having the gift of preaching, could yet preach, by the angelic teaching of her actions, to the

preacher himself. He continued for some time longer in the same strain, alluding from time to time to the kindness he had received from Miss Wilkinson, in nursing him both in mind and body. Although he did not in the most remote manner hint at any matrimonial engagement existing between them, it was easy to perceive that the rest of his auditors were fully aware that such an arrangement had been entered into, and the frequent rapid glances of intelligence which passed from one to another proved it, Miss Wilkinson the while keeping her eyes fixed upon the ground, and only raising them for an instant when she was especially alluded to, and then only as if in deprecation of the compliments which were being paid her.

“When Morgan had finished, his guests, with true feminine tact and resignation, now finding that there was not the remotest chance left for them, bowed their heads to their fate and treated Miss Wilkinson in a most affectionate manner during the remainder of the evening. When it became so late, that they could not with any propriety remain longer, they all bade Morgan

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a most friendly adieu, after which Miss Wilkinson conducted them to the staircase, where, cordially wishing each other good night, they parted. One thing, however, I remarked, and this was that the humble, resigned expression which her countenance had worn when she quitted the door, vanished when she re-entered the room, and one of pleasure and triumph supplied its place, for when her friends were descending the staircase she had heard one say to another, in a tone of envy,—

“‘She has played her cards well, at any rate.’

“Next morning, Miss Wilkinson confided to her friends the pleasing intelligence that she was formally engaged to be married to the Rev. Mr. Morgan, and received their congratulations thereon. The little jealousy which had previously existed between them had now vanished, or if any slight portion of it remained, it was absorbed in the important question of the wedding dress and other momentous matters. Each lady gave her opinion on the subject, and in the kindest manner offered to be Miss Wilkinson’s special adviser on the occasion. But although she listened

to them with exemplary patience, she seemed determined to consult her own taste, while pretending to be guided by their advice. The marriage was celebrated in the chapel of the embassy, and immediately afterwards the happy couple, somewhat reversing the established order of things, left Paris to pass the honeymoon in London.

“The extraordinary change which frequently takes place in a woman’s character and disposition after marriage has often been noticed, and it was not wanting in the case of Mrs. Morgan. When she was Miss Wilkinson I had had a considerable amount of esteem for her. I knew perfectly well that the extreme kindness she had shown to Morgan in his illness was elicited by interested motives, and I knew equally well that Morgan had no real love for her. He could not divest himself of the idea that he might be subjected to another attack of the same description as he had lately recovered from, and he had proved that in such a contingency Miss Wilkinson was an excellent and indefatigable nurse. Moreover, she was well educated and sensible, and had some

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little independent income of her own, all of which qualifications had for him great weight, and induced him to make her an offer. I calculated that with two hypocrites together I might be able to work a considerable amount of evil, especially as the wife had far more energy in her disposition than the husband. But in these my anticipations and hopes I was again disappointed. Mrs. Morgan, I candidly believe, had no great affection for her husband before marriage, and when once she was his wife, and had ample opportunity of being better acquainted with his character, it was impossible that it could be increased; still she was in every respect a dutiful, exemplary, and honourable help-mate.

“Had these qualifications been all she possessed, I could have forgiven her, demon as I am, the annoyance which she occasioned me; but unfortunately she had a most active mind, which was now especially bent on charitable efforts. Not content with indulging in her own person her taste for good works, she endeavoured (and to a certain extent succeeded, although greatly against his



nature) to impel her husband to a similar line of conduct, thereby neutralizing to a considerable extent all my persuasions to the contrary. She not only visited the poor, the sick, and the degraded in their own dwellings, but she also insisted on her husband's accompanying her. He, to do him and myself but common justice, for some time held out against this tyranny, but although he sometimes met with partial success, what man can continue to wage war with a wife determined to have her own way, even though he has a resident demon to help and advise him? Morgan at last fairly gave way to her quiet though unceasing attacks, and played (and I use that word advisedly) the good minister to perfection.

“You can hardly form an idea what horrible torture this despotism on the part of Morgan's wife caused me. Over him, as I said before, I had but little power, and of course over her I had none whatever. Wherever she took him, no matter how poor, low, or degraded the locality might be, there I invariably found the element of good—though possibly disguised, bruised, or disfigured—in excess of the evil. Indeed my life before



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the fellow's marriage was one of perfect repose compared to what I have since endured."

The voice now ceased for a moment, and I venture to remark that if Morgan had visited localities of the kind just mentioned, especially in London, the amount of evil he must have met with must have given the demon great satisfaction, or the class of inhabitants could hardly have been the worst of the poor.

"You are in error," he replied. "We visited not only the poorest, but the most depraved; and I was disappointed even with regard to the worst. While among the better class of the poor, even of the most indigent, the amount of good I could discover would sometimes drive me almost to desperation. The extent to which charity was carried among them was wonderful; and beyond that, it was frequently given with such delicacy and fine feeling as it would perhaps be impossible to find among the richest and noblest of the land. I will give you a short specimen out of many hundreds I could quote. Morgan once complained to his wife that his morning slumbers were habitually interrupted by some street cries. The principal culprit

(a woman) used to pass his house about eight o'clock daily, crying at the top of her shrill voice that she had watercresses for sale. Mrs. Morgan rose one morning earlier than ordinarily, and at eight o'clock, as usual, the harsh voice of the vendor of watercresses was heard in the street. As it neared her house, Mrs. Morgan walked to the window to ascertain what sort of a person the disturber of her husband's morning doze might be. The day was dark and chilly, with the November rain pouring down in torrents ; and Mrs. Morgan, as she stood at the dining-room window, waiting till the woman should come in sight, drew tightly round her the shawl she had thrown over her shoulders to protect her from the cold. Presently the woman appeared. She was tall, thin, miserably dressed, and rather aged ; and as she had neither umbrella nor cloak, her garments were thoroughly saturated with the rain. On her arm she held a basket, in which were her watercresses. From the quantity the basket contained, and from the frequent anxious glances she cast at the windows of the houses as she passed along, it was easy to judge that the profits of her morning's

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transactions must have been small indeed. She had just passed Mrs. Morgan's door when she suddenly stopped, and stooped down to pick up something she saw at the bottom of a deep puddle. Presently she drew from it, one by one, some half dozen pieces of coal, each about the size of a walnut, and placing them under the watercresses in her basket, she continued her road.

“All that day Mrs. Morgan was silent and thoughtful. The behaviour of the old woman had interested her exceedingly. She was well acquainted with the habits and manners of the London poor, and she knew how difficult it was occasionally to distinguish between the really deserving and the lazy and undeserving. With this woman she rightly argued there could be no mistake. She traced rapidly in her mind the poor creature's attendance, at two or three o'clock in the morning, at Farringdon Market, to purchase her watercresses; with her three miles' walk there in the cold dark night, and the walk home again; afterwards her hurriedly taking a crust of bread before quitting her room to try to sell her watercresses; her disappointment at the want of pur-

chasers, which seemed so great as to make her insensible to the heavy rain which was pouring down on her ; and the eager manner she pounced on the pieces of coal when she saw them. All this went to prove that the poor woman was a real object of sympathy, and she resolved that the next morning she would stop her as she passed, and interrogate her as to her circumstances. She put her resolution into practice, and discovered at first little to interest her in the woman's history, beyond her determination to keep, by her own industry, out of the workhouse if she could. She, however, asked her her name and address, and found she was an Irishwoman, the widow of a labourer, and a Roman Catholic ; that she lived in a back room in Jennings' Court, which she rented along with another old woman, who was a crossing-sweeper, and as poor as herself. She was, however, most particular in impressing on Mrs. Morgan that both she and her friend were teetotallers,—a statement of the truth of which there could be no doubt, as in their circumstances the expenses of one drunken fit would have consigned them both to the workhouse.

“When Morgan descended to breakfast, his wife

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gave him a description of her interview with the old woman. He listened to her uneasily, thinking it probable that she would insist upon his accompanying her on some mission of charity ; but his brow cleared when he heard that the watercress seller was a Roman Catholic.

“‘My dear,’ said he, ‘I must leave this case entirely in your hands. As a Protestant minister I refuse to interfere with it.’

“‘Why so?’ replied his wife. ‘We may see plainly enough from the Scriptures that we are not to refuse assistance to those in misfortune because they may not be of the same religious persuasion as ourselves.’

“‘Granted : but the locality in which this poor woman lives is crowded with low Irish Roman Catholics, and they would wrongly imagine that I made my appearance among them for the purpose of converting them under the plea of giving them charitable assistance.’

“‘But you do not consider that a reason,’ said Mrs. Morgan, ‘for your not personally helping the poor woman?’

“‘It is certainly in this instance a reason, and

a good one too ; for I do not by my absence deprive her of the alms she is in need of, as I am certain you will assist her willingly. Again, apart from that reason I have another, and no argument will induce me to change my resolution based on it. If you visit the woman alone, you will experience the same courtesy the poorest and even the most demoralized show to a lady bent on a mission of mercy ; but if I, known as I am to be a Protestant minister, accompanied you, it might subject you to insult, if not injury. To such a thing, you may rest perfectly certain, no persuasion shall induce me to contribute.'

"Mrs. Morgan was a shrewd, intelligent woman, but she was a woman, and as such was not proof against the concealed flattery contained in her husband's arguments. So she gave up the point, much to Morgan's satisfaction, and resolved on visiting the watercress seller alone. She narrated to Morgan a few days afterwards the result of her inquiries. She found the old Irish woman living, as she had stated, in a little, miserable back room in Jennings' Court, one of those neglected dens



which are so common in the metropolis. The room itself, considering the habitual reputation of the Irish poor in London for untidiness, was tolerably clean. But, extraordinary to relate, poor, abjectly poor, as the two old women were, they were still able to indulge in the greatest of all luxuries—the luxury of charity. On the second floor over their chamber, in a half room, half closet, covered only by a tiled roof in many parts not waterproof, there resided a woman more than eighty years of age. All she possessed was a few sticks of the commonest furniture, and some crockery, and her total income amounted to half-a-crown a week, which she received from some charitable institution. One shilling of it she paid for rent, the remaining eighteenpence supplying her with food, clothing, and firing. True, she might have obtained some out-door relief from the parish, but in spite of the frequent advice offered her to make application for it, she resolutely refused so to do, urging as an excuse that she had always lived respectably, and was determined to die so. She was very religious, and perfectly contented with her lot,



with only one exception—and that was the danger of a parish funeral, which perpetually stared her in the face, and from which she earnestly prayed the Almighty might save her. Her lot in life, apparently sad enough, was not without its pleasures. On each Sunday her two more fortunate fellow-lodgers, the watercress seller and the crossing-sweeper, pitying her forlorn condition, invited her into their room and gave her a cup of tea. But the most remarkable feature in the affair was the extreme delicacy they showed in this exercise of their benevolence. They had positively persuaded the old woman, who had been all her life a respectable domestic servant, that she was under no obligation to them for the hospitality she received and was unable to return, as the various anecdotes she related to them of the genteel families with whom she had lived, was to them ample recompence for any expense she might put them to. The old woman, in a spirit of perfect good faith, used to narrate for their edification and amusement the same episodes of her life over and over again, *usque ad nauseam et longius*, though they listened to her the while

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with the appearance of the utmost pleasure and attention.

“I could relate hundreds of cases, scarcely less beautiful than the above, which I met with among the respectable poor ; but it was not among them that I incurred my greatest disappointments. With them good might naturally be expected to be found. It was among the more depraved and debased, where the power of my master is held by most to be omnipotent, that I discovered an almost equal amount of latent good. I have known a young thief sell his shoes from his feet in order to hire a police-court attorney to defend a wretched street-walker accused of some misdemeanour, his sole reason for doing it being that when he was sick she had been kind to him. I have known a drunken charwoman plead guilty to a theft she had never committed, to save her son, who was the real culprit, from the disgrace of the punishment he merited. I have known a rascally, dishonest prize-fighter and burglar, who was convicted of robbing a church, go on his knees and pray that his young daughter, whose life was in danger from fever, might be spared, though by his pals he was held

to have no more religion than a horse. I have known a publican who kept a house of the worst description prosecute his barman for a theft, and then advance a couple of guineas to provide him at his trial with a legal adviser, because the rascal, as he said, had a wife and family. I remember once a scripture reader and ragged school teacher being garotted by two ruffians in a back street in Southwark. After taking his watch and money, they kicked him over the ancles till he could not move, so that he might not follow them. A week afterwards, when the poor man was confined to his room from the maltreatment he had received, a coarse-looking, powerful fellow called on him and told him he had come to beg his pardon. He was one of the men who had robbed him; he had brought back the watch, he said, but his companion had 'sloped' with the money. He did not know, he continued, that the gentleman was the ragged school teacher, or he wouldn't have done it. I have known four or five utterly degraded women of the lowest order subscribe together to purchase some modest, decent clothing, that one of their order might enter a hospital without her

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profession being known, and on taking leave of her they would promise not to visit her, that it might not be thought she was otherwise than respectable. These, I assure you, are by no means uncommon specimens of the annoyances to which I have from time to time been subjected, during my incarceration in this detested prison of mine. I merely offer them as specimens of many more I could bring forward."

"You have not told me," I said, "by what chance Morgan became an inmate of this house?"

"Why, the fact is," was the reply, "that between his wife urging him to do good, and me tempting him to do evil, we managed to drive him out of his mind."

"But in this place," I remarked, sarcastically, "you cannot certainly be without some consolation. The sight of so many unfortunates must have considerable attractions for you."

"You are mistaken," he replied. "With one exception, all the inmates of this house are unfortunate creatures, far more deserving of sympathy than anything else. An insane person is not accountable for his actions; and vices or crimes in

any one else, when committed by him, are done without reason, and therefore are not registered as sins."

"And pray, who may be the exception you allude to?"

"Yourself, of course," was the answer. "Possibly you may be surprised, but I know you well, and respect you. You are the only sane man in this establishment,—of that I am certain, or I should not have intrusted you with my history."

Although during our conversation I had several times felt somewhat uneasy, I now began to be really frightened. I had hitherto believed I was conversing with Morgan while he was labouring under his peculiar monomania, but the knowledge he now showed with regard to myself fairly startled me. Could it indeed be possible, after all, that I had been conversing with a demon? If so, there was but little doubt he was aware of my secret, and the security I considered I had hitherto enjoyed under the doctor's care was not only unreal, but I had very probably been exposed, during Morgan's residence among us, to the most alarming danger. When I had somewhat re-

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covered my self-possession, I inquired from what circumstance he had become aware of my sanity.

“By the power I possess,” he replied, “of reading the human character. I know you perfectly well. I can tell you, if you please, the course of study you have pursued, and the perfection you have arrived at, and I assure you I estimate you at your high and just value. Now I have told you so much, let us be friends. I wish you to assist me in a project I have formed, and in return, if we succeed, I will aid you in every way in my power.”

“And what is it you require of me?” I asked.

“To assist me in escaping from my abhorred prison-house ; and you can help me if you please.”

“In what way ?” I inquired.

“You know Morgan’s failing perfectly well. All I want of you is to encourage him in his gluttony. Cease the looks of disgust you so frequently cast on him when at table, and on the contrary, tempt him to eat whenever you can.”

“For what purpose ?”

“I have already told you,” he said, “that he has had one fit of apoplexy ; another would in all proba-



bility carry him off. Do oblige me by your assistance. He requires but little encouragement to commit involuntary suicide in that way, I can assure you; and when he is dead I shall be again at liberty."

"I do not know," I observed, wishing to detect whether he intended practising on me if he got released, "if I should be doing right in assisting you to regain your liberty, and thus give you the power to roam about the world tempting people to do evil."

"Believe me, I have no such intention," he replied; "I am too well acquainted with one near me with whom I could act, and by whose agency and co-operation I could produce greater results than all the powers of darkness, with the prince at their head, have been able to accomplish since the creation of the universe."

I made no answer, so great was my alarm. I immediately saw the terrible danger, and I felt my utter helplessness to avoid it. Were that fiend once released from his present prison to tempt me, I knew I could not resist the blasphemous desire which, in spite of my better reason, had inces-

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santly prompted me to make war on the Omnipotent, and destroy the wondrous works of His hands. I felt assured that if I were once possessed by the fiend now imprisoned in Morgan, my own will would be powerless; and, with my means of combining forces till they reached the infinite, the destruction of the universe would assuredly be the result. Presently he again addressed me, and recalled me from my abstraction. I perceived my most prudent course would be to avoid all further argument with him, and retreat to my room, where, by deep thought and prayer, I might arrange some plan by which this horrible danger might be avoided. Immediate action followed my thought, and I hurriedly quitted him without another word, and sought the solitude of my own chamber.

Never did I pass a more dreadful night. I attempted to pray, but could not. In spite of all my endeavours, the means by which the catastrophe I so wished to avoid could be brought about incessantly presented themselves to my mind, and the prayers I offered up were mixed with abstruse calculations as to how I

could aid the demon in his work. I got no sleep that night. When daylight broke upon me, I accidentally glanced at the mirror in my room, and was perfectly horrified at the expression of my countenance. It was pale and haggard, and I thought I could distinguish in it a wild, half-demoniacal expression, as if the fiend had already taken possession of me. The fearful idea then presented itself to my mind, that perhaps Morgan had died suddenly during the night; and I was on the point of leaving my room to ascertain whether it was so, but on reaching the door I reflected that if he were still alive, and knew I was near him, the demon might again attempt to enter into conversation with me. I justly concluded that all intercourse with him would be attended with danger, and I prudently resolved not to expose myself to the temptation. I now seated myself on my bed, and waited till I should hear one of the servants pass through the corridor, whom I could send to inquire if Morgan were alive. Presently I heard the footsteps of one of the women-servants, and I opened my door. The housemaid, who was there,

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looked at me with terror. The idea occurred to me that it was the demoniacal expression in my face that had such an effect, and if so, that Morgan must be dead. Again prudence came to my aid, and suggested that if I sent the girl on such an errand, I might naturally be suspected as his murderer, else how should I have been aware of the possibility of the fact? I re-entered my room without speaking to the girl, and having closed the door I sat down to think over my awful position. The thought then struck me, that if he were dead, would it not be better for me to avow myself as his murderer? as death by the hands of the hangman, infamous as it might be, would be preferable to the terrible sin of destroying the universe, which I felt certain would otherwise be the case.

I remained thus undecided for more than two hours, when I heard the bell ring for breakfast, and my thoughts then took a more definite form. If Morgan made his appearance, my fears for the moment would be at rest; should he, on the contrary, be dead, others would make the discovery without my seeming to be specially

interested in the matter. As I expected, no one was in the room when I entered ; but by degrees they dropped in, till their number wanted only one of being complete, and that one was Morgan. My terror now rose to a frightful height, so much so that I had great difficulty in maintaining command of my countenance, so that it should express no anxiety. I felt, however, a cold perspiration gathering on my brow the while, when, to my great delight, the door opened and Morgan walked into the room. My pleasure at his appearing was so great that I actually rose from my chair, and was on the point of advancing to greet him, when the imprudence of the act flashed upon my mind. It was my policy now to take every means of avoiding him, and had I met him in an eager, friendly manner, it would have seemed like inviting him to be on more intimate terms than we had hitherto been.

I again seated myself on my chair at the table, but I could eat nothing. The events of the previous night had so excited me that my nerves were in a state of feverish agitation, and all appetite had vanished. I took one cup of tea, and then

remained moody and silent, only answering by monosyllables the remarks which were made to me. After breakfast, the weather being fine, I took a stroll in the garden. I had been there but a short time when I saw Morgan at the extremity of the walk, advancing to meet me with the most marked satisfaction on his face. Without taking any notice of him, I turned abruptly on my heel, and, seeking my chamber, I locked myself in, and remained there till dinner-time.

At table I was seated opposite Morgan, so that I was able to notice the quantity he ate. As he went on with his dinner, the food he consumed fairly frightened me. I fancied I could perceive his face get redder and his eyes more prominent, and I began to fear the attack of apoplexy by which some day he would, to all appearance, be seized. Still I said nothing, though my anxiety began to be almost too great for me to control. At last the sweets were placed on the table, and he attacked them as voraciously as if he had hitherto eaten nothing. After he had partaken of a quantity of apple pie, equal to that consumed by any three persons at the table, the

servant attempted to remove his plate, but he snatched it from him with both hands, and in an almost suffocated voice angrily said,—

“ More pie !”

I could put up with his behaviour no longer, and, utterly disregarding all rules of good breeding, I rose from my chair, and leaning over the table, I seized his plate, exclaiming at the same time, in the solemn tone of voice necessary to give weight to my remark,—

“ Madman ! have you forgotten there is another world, and that you are now standing on the verge of the grave ?”

Morgan seemed for the moment, and I must admit naturally enough, extremely surprised at my behaviour. His face instantaneously changed from its usual florid colour to deadly paleness, and he made use of such infamous phraseology in expressing his disapprobation, as to prove without a doubt that the fiend within him had complete ascendancy over him for the moment, and was dictating the language he made use of.

The doctor, as well as the other guests, now interfered between us, and I regret to say all



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seemed to lay the blame on my shoulders. I immediately left the room in a state of high indignation.

The next morning I again met Morgan at the breakfast table. He made no allusion to my behaviour at dinner the evening before, nor did he utter a word to me personally. Occasionally he looked at me, and although to the casual observer there might have seemed nothing remarkable in his glance, to me it was a source of the utmost terror. I could easily perceive in his eye the malevolent expression of the demon, watching me as a tiger would watch his prey before making his leap. I felt that he must now hold me in the utmost hatred, and should he by any chance make me his victim, the fate of the universe was sealed. I could eat nothing, but sat speechless, fixed to my seat, under a horrible fascination. At last it became insupportable, and profiting by the act of his turning his head from me to speak to some one at the other end of the table, I rose from my chair, and rushed from the room into the garden. I there wandered about the different walks for some time in a most distressed state of mind. At



last I noticed the doctor approaching me. He addressed me coldly and sternly.

"Of all my guests," he said, "I have hitherto looked upon you as the only one really responsible for his actions. I should even now be sorry to change my opinion of you, but your behaviour at table yesterday evening gives me great cause to alter my mind. Your conduct to Mr. Morgan was perfectly unjustifiable."

"But," I remarked, "you did not notice the quantity he ate. I acted as I did solely to prevent his having an attack of apoplexy."

"You are in error in imagining I had not my eye on Mr. Morgan as well as on my other patients," said the doctor; "and as to the danger of his having an attack of apoplexy, allow me to remark that it is rather a subject for my consideration than yours."

"Pardon me," I said, "but I maintain I am far more interested in the matter than you are. Should he kill himself in one of his gluttonous fits, the demon who possesses him will be immediately at liberty to commit elsewhere what mischief he pleases."

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The doctor looked at me with great surprise on his countenance.

“Is it possible,” he said, “that a man of your strong sound sense can really believe that Morgan is possessed with a devil?”

“I not only believe it,” I replied, “but I am positively certain of the fact; and more than that, the demon has given me to understand that he is perfectly aware of my secret for accumulating force till it shall arrive at the infinite, and as soon as he is released from Morgan he will take me under his guidance. You know as well as I do what will be the result.”

“If you hold that absurd opinion,” said the doctor, “it is of no use my arguing with you on the subject, for you must be as mad as he is. But let us understand each other. You must not repeat your ungentlemanly conduct of yesterday, or I shall be under the unpleasant necessity of ordering you to take your meals in your own room.”

So saying, he left me and returned to the house.

There was something so insulting in the tone

and manner of his last remark,—so different from his usual behaviour to me,—that I then and there determined I would not allow its repetition, but would openly rebel against his authority. I further resolved that I would, on every occasion on which I saw Morgan indulge to any excess, interfere to prevent him; and I still maintain that I was perfectly justified in my resolution, on the ground of self-preservation. Morgan did not fail to give me ample opportunity. On each repetition of his fault I severely rebuked him, till at last the doctor put his threat in force, and ordered my meals to be served in my own room. This I would not submit to. I preferred death rather than allow myself to be treated with so much indignity, and for nearly two days I ate nothing. The doctor now began to fear for the result, and released me, begging me at the same time to cease my insulting conduct towards Morgan. I made him, however, no promise, but every time I saw Morgan eating more than I thought was good for him, I rebuked him, setting at nought the fierce glances which the demon within him cast on me.

At last the doctor, finding he could no longer control me, wrote to my wife on the subject. She came to the house, and it was determined that I should leave Dr. Austin's and reside with her and my son, who was then practising as a physician in a sea-coast town in the south of England. So I took up my abode with them, and received from them every kindness and attention. I do not specify my address for prudential reasons. I am now happy and contented, and my only anxiety in this world is as to the manner in which these "memoirs" of a (falsely styled) monomaniac will be accepted by the public.

THE END.

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