

mometer that with a lot of other gear lay on the table. "It's nearly 105. It can't last like this. It won't. I've been through it with him before, but not quite so bad."

"I didn't think anyone could have influenza twice, so soon," Edwin murmured.

"Neither did I," said she. "Still, he must have been sickening for it before he came down here." There was a pause. She wiped the boy's forehead. "This change has come on quite suddenly," she said, in a different voice. "Two hours ago—less than two hours ago—there was scarcely a sign of that rash."

"What is it?"

"Charlie says it's nothing particular."

"What's Charlie gone for?"

"I don't know." She shook her head; then smiled. "Isn't it a good thing I brought him?"

Indubitably it was. Her caprice, characterized as preposterous by males, had been justified. Thus chance often justifies women, setting at naught the high priests of reason.

III

Looking at the unconscious and yet tormented child, Edwin was aware of a melting protective pity for him, of an immense desire to watch over his rearing with all insight, sympathy, and help, so that in George's case none of the mistakes and cruelties and misapprehensions should occur which had occurred in his own. This feeling was intense to the point of being painful.

"I don't know whether you know or not," he said, "but we're great pals, the infant and I."

Hilda smiled, and in the very instant of seeing the smile its effect upon him was such that he humiliated himself before her in secret for ever having wildly suspected that she was jealous of the attachment. "Do you think I don't know all about that?" she murmured. "He wouldn't be here now if it hadn't been for that." After a silence she added: "You're the only person that he ever has really cared for, and I can tell you he likes you better than he likes me."

"How do you know that?"