

MY FRIEND, THE ARTIST.

THE daylight had failed, the sitting was over. My friend, the artist, handed palette and brushes to his factotum: Then we smoked. Lounging on a pile of cushions in the window-seat, I watched the end of his cigarette glow where he lay in the dusk. All about him the creations of his busy brain peered from out the canvases at he who was fashioning them. Some, only rubbed in, looked deathly; some were smiling and young; some old and severe—all were life-like in the gloom.

I moved, to light another cigarette, and in doing so my elbow knocked something off the window-sill, and tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, sounded little pieces of metal upon the polished floor.

"Ha! ha!! ha!!!" laughed my friend, the artist.

"Ha! ha!! ha!!!" echoed through the big, dark studio. I started; it was as if those canvases had chorused his mirth.

"Never mind, old chap," he said. "it's only my box of hairpins."

"Hairpins?" I queried.

"Yes, models. You will notice that they are all different shapes, sizes and materials. Every model with a new hairpin, I used to bag it. All gone, every one of them—some elsewhere, some to the better, some to the worse, some dead. Ha! ha!! ha!!!"

"Ha! ha!! ha!!!" Again the ghostly echo of a laugh came back from that group of half-created beings—each one seeming to gain fresh life with the gathering night.

Again the mocking voice spoke from the gloom.