

consequently kept her in talk, as she said, with considerable doubt about her own safety, expecting that Mr. Johns, would come home and take her under his own charge, and have her put under her former restraint.

I do not think I ever passed a day in all my life pregnant with events of such a harrowing nature. I scarcely pray Heaven I may never have to pass such another. I sat by the bedside all that night, watching my friend's pale, motionless, expressionless face, and thinking over the startling events I have narrated. I did this till a strange superstitious feeling crept over me; I was certain the glaring face of the galvanised corpse was beaming my head, while an irritable desire, and yet mortal dread, to look round, possessed me; this feeling increased to torture; I could bear it no longer, but rushing from the apartment and out of the house, I walked up and down the street in front, till day, and then re-entered. I ascended to his bedroom: I found Katherine sitting beside his head. She rose up as I came in, and, I assure you, I trembled as I greeted her.

She stood up quiet and calm before me. Her features had acquired a cold, stony-hard look; a Siddons-sort of expression, only real, not acted, that told me the bitterness of grief—of death itself—was already past. I knew that now, were I to thrust a knife into her flesh, she would shed no tear, utter no cry. My eyes sought the floor before her passionless gaze. I felt for her that peculiar feeling of reverence and awe which the old Greek tragedians so well describe as hanging about the presence of Orestes, Edipus, and others, whom the gods had visited with extreme affliction. My clothes felt cold and rough upon my skin as I heard her. She addressed me in the style of ordinary conversation, but slowly, and with effort.

"I see, Mr. —, you know all. He was turned out to be a most atrocious felon whom I regarded as a father. I never knew it till two days ago. My mother told me with her latest breath; she is dead now; she had known it all along. But my brother,—my poor, dear, noble Elias,—thought him a deity. Yes, we have been reared upon the wages of crime! It came upon us like lightning; I ran out of the house as I was, and found my way to London. When I arrived, I was borne away by crowds of people till I came to the place. Yes, Mr. —, with my own eyes I saw the great dark prison, the black beams of the gibbet—I saw HIM! I heard the shouts and execrations that rose, an audible cloud, from the great sea of human beings that rolled hither and thither beneath. I heard him speak—I heard the rumbling crash of the hideous engine, and the one universal groan that burst from the vast multitude at the offering up of the horrible sacrifice! I heard and saw it all; and my God! I did not die!"

Here she bent her head upon her senseless brother's bosom, and continued in that attitude. I paced the room slowly in a state of mental agony, second only to her own.

After a time she arose. Her eyes were quite dry, her features unchanged. She intended to stay and be her brother's nurse, and desired I would not injure my prospects by neglect of my studies on his or her account, or bring disgrace upon myself, or wound my own feelings, by keeping company with such characters as I had found them to be.

I left her for a time, and went and dressed myself for my medical pursuits, endeavored to attend to the usual routine, though

I thought for several days I felt my reason giving way under the trials to which it had been subjected.

I came continually twice or thrice a day to the house, and often sat alone reading by the brother's bedside at night, to let her get a little rest.

He had now lain in the state I have described for many days, when one night I sat beside him copying out some short-hand notes. It was soon after midnight, and I had desisted for a moment from my writing, and was watching his face as it lay cold and motionless in the light of the reading-lamp. A variety of thoughts were rapidly chasing each other through my mind, when suddenly I thought I saw his eyelids quiver. I rose in an instant to my feet, and stood over him, trembling with suspense. Gradually he opened his eyes, and turned his face round to me. His features slowly relaxed into a wan smile.

"Oh," said he, in a difficult whisper, "are you there, George?" He coughed.

"Bless me, how weak I am! Have I been ill? what has been the matter pray?"

"You have been very ill, my dear Johns, very, very ill, indeed," said I, my heart was so full.

"I have, have I? What was it, eh? A fit, I suppose, for I have no recollection of it. How unfortunate! I must be up to X—s Theatre, to-morrow. Has Q— called? Send him here the moment he comes."

"I think," he continued again, "I must have been dreaming lately. Could you guess what it was about?"

I expressed my inability.

"I meant there was a God, George."

I was thunderstruck, and continued silent: he went on—

"I have some singular doubts now about that point. It looks not so impossible to me now as it did. Will you oblige me by going to my laboratory, and bring me a glass of solution of perchlorate of mercury, and another of the volatile alkali?"

I did so.

"Now," said he, "would not one, from the analogy of every other experiment man has made, expect that on pouring these together, the red oxide of mercury would be separated and thrown down, and yet you see, when you come actually to perform the experiment," (I did so), "you find, that in direct contravention of every known chemical law, a white substance is formed, of which no man has yet explained the nature. Now, suppose I believe myself, and teach others, that, according to every known fact in science, there can be no such thing as a Sapient Being,—but, upon coming to the last and only conclusive experiment, death, we find, when too late, that there is a white, unexplainable precipitate, in place of a regular scientific red one—that there is an avenging God, in place of a system of Nature."

I was much struck by this singular and most original sort of argument, so much in accordance with the usual stream of all he thought, said, and did. I knew not rightly what to think. Was this but what is vulgarly styled "a fighting up before death," or was it the first symptom of a return to health and vigor of mind and body?

He lay for a while still and silent.

"I say," said he to me, "there is a breath of cold air blowing upon my left foot, will you just cover it rightly with the clothes?"

"Why, man, your feet are both quite covered and warm."

"Are they?—why then," he shuddered slightly, "it is—it must be—I am going to have another fit—it's the aura George,

the aura." He trembled very much. "How strange! it is moving up my leg—give me your hand, dear George." He clasped it violently. It is on my thigh now, rising over my body, my breast, my neck, my—"

Here a strong convulsion passed over his features, wrenching them into an expression of unendurable agony, presenting a most striking resemblance to his father's corpse on that frightful day in the Anatomical Theatre. The next instant the grasp on my hand was relaxed, and he was gone to his account. The last experiment was made but he could never return to tell its result.

I closed his eyes and composed his features as well as I could, and then went down stairs to the landlady's parlor, where I sat till morning. I was sitting musing by the fire when the bell from the death-chamber rang. I started, though it was broad daylight, and as I ascended the stairs almost expected to find him sitting up and speaking—so different was he in every respect from ordinary men. On entering, I perceived Miss Johns standing by the bed. She looked at me with the same stony gaze, as I stood with the handle of the door in my hand.

"He is changed," said she.

"He is dead, Miss Johns."

"Then God be merciful to him."

"Amen."

"Leave me, Mr. —, leave me." I hastily withdrew, as the poor, bereaved girl seated herself beside her brother's body, with the look of one on whose brow the thunderbolt had descended, to whom fate had done its worst, who had no more to fear or wish for now.

I went to my own rooms.

Next day I received a note stating her wish that I should attend her brother's funeral on a particular day. I flew to the house, but the worthy landlady informed me she had shut herself up along with the body and could see no one. I retired.

The funeral, which was nearly the most humble and private one I was ever concerned in, was hardly over, when I sought her once more. Oh, how I loved that poor distracted girl! How I longed to take her to my heart, and hide all her disgraces and afflictions—her, the fair and spotless child of the robber and murderer—the gem taken from the hilt of the dagger!

That interview shall never pass from my memory. I was deeply affected; she preserved the same cold, soulless manner she had shown from the first. Alas! my heart. How different from the light feminine grace, the gentle simplicity, and innocent warmth

• The Aura Epileptica, vulgarly called "The Warning," a peculiar feeling, which indicates to those afflicted with epilepsy and other nervous disorders, when a fit is about to come on.—Every different patient has one of a different kind; sometimes it appears like an insect creeping along the skin towards the head; sometimes a breath of cold air, as in the tale, sometimes a wave of water; and in such instances, it generally begins from a finger or toe, and moves up limb, rapidly or slowly, as the case may be. When the latter, it is often stopped and the fit actually prevented, by binding a ligature tightly round the limb, so as to catch it as the patients say. But these are not the only forms it puts on. Some have it of a startling, or even terrific description, as a flash of lightning or the appearance of a rock falling on their heads or of an abyss suddenly yawning in the pavement. I knew one gentleman to whom it appeared as a dark, indistinct armed figure, which moved rapidly before his eyes, launching a javelin at him as it passed, when immediately the fit caught.