

the truth; the fact was, the world had *determined* he was crazy, and so crazy he *must* be.

But now Crawford could well have borne all this, but for its effects in a particular quarter—that is, on the young lady herself, who, by her fascinations, had given to plain, unsophisticated Thomas Crawford his new character. We have already said, if we remember right, that Crawford's mental organization was rather peculiar and individual. He was a fellow of splendid capabilities, but a perfect child in his knowledge of the world. His *intellect* had also been more developed than had his *feelings*; in truth, he had never before known what it was to indulge any other feeling towards a female, than a distant sort of admiration—that sort of feeling that always made him run across the street to avoid one. The new passion, therefore, which had now taken possession of him, made him apparently a new being. His feelings took the lead; dragging his intellect after them, and conquering it, he presented the spectacle of a man entirely absorbed in his own delightful, yet most selfish meditations. He saw not what was going on around him, he cared not; it was sufficient for him that a most radiant vision had suddenly dawned on his soul, and that he had discovered far down in the depths of his heart, a wonderful fountain, which sent up to his lips the sweetest waters in the world.

But his new character gave him a new name; that is, having become a lover, the world had called him mad; and now this rather undesirable reputation must of course, in time, reach the young lady, who had been the innocent cause of the trouble, and here of course would new troubles be naturally expected to start into view.

It happened as we would suppose. No sooner had the report of Crawford's madness become generally current, than it reached the ears of his relations, and of course without any statement or specification of the supposed cause or causes; and now his favorite uncle, with whom Crawford had spent the preceding season, began to look over the family records, and to his perfect dismay it was discovered that an ancestor, some six centuries back, had, in his early youth, on being run over by a horse, given for a *short time* the most unequivocal evidences of lunacy. This was enough to establish the report, and change it into an absolute fact. Crawford was therefore, in his uncle's opinion, a confirmed bedlamite.

And where now was the lovely Mary? She had not yet returned to the city, and—we pardon her, for young ladies have the greatest horror, as well they should, of being wedded to a madman—the lovely Mary began to re-consider her letters from her lover, and—oh, horrible!—there, yes *there*, did she discover symptoms of lunacy too. Here had he called her an *angel*, there a *Circé*, now a *syren*, and now again a *witch* and a *Venus*, until the whole vocabulary of classical appellatives had been exhausted; and then he told her how he seemed walking on *the very air*, how he thought he was in *Elysium*, in *Heaven*, everywhere and anywhere, and subscribed himself her “dying

cousin.” Oh, these were horrible proofs,—worse than the “damned spots” of Lady Macbeth's dreams, telling of the murdered Duncan,—and, we grieve to say it, Crawford, even with the lovely Mary, was a madman.

And what were her reflections? We dare not surmise. Could it be, that, like other fond and trusting ones, the poor lady sat down and broke her heart upon it? No; she had not yet come to that. The idea of her escape from what was worse than ten thousand deaths—the thoughts of her escape filled her mind, and she had not time to break her heart.

But now the trial was approaching for them all. The uncle must behold his lunatic nephew—Mary her bedlamite lover—and the servants their crazy young master,—for Crawford had written he was coming home. The note, it was true, gave no evidence of madness; it ran thus:—

DEAR UNCLE.—You perhaps would be glad to see your good-for-nothing nephew for a few days at your pleasant home; my health has suffered a little from severe study, and I think a week with you would recruit me. Taking it upon myself to declare I shall be welcome, you shall see me by the mail of to-morrow.

Yours ever,

THOMAS CRAWFORD.

M.——— College, March 1, 18—.

But though there was no lunacy here, the fact had already been determined on; and, as is always the case with our queer world, a crotchet they had got into their heads, and it would not get out. The word “health,” in the note, grinned, changed, and magnified, until it finally assumed the shape, and stood up before them a full grown portrait, of—*madness!*!

CHAPTER III.

There never was a sadder circle presented to human eyes, than the one in the drawing-room of Crawford's uncle, at his seat in the country, on the evening which was to add Thomas to their number. They had all worked themselves into a perfect fever of expectation. And it had not stopped with the parlor; the servants had got wind of it; and the whole house was (to make a comparison) like a bottle of well-fermented beer—on the very eve of bursting.

Very soon, the sound of wheels was heard to come up the lane and stop at the gate-way; and in a few moments more, a thundering sound was heard at the door, and Thomas was in the hall.

“Gracious heavens!” were the first words heard by the trembling family seated in the parlor, not one of whom dared to move, “shall I not be freed from this cursed rumour *here!*!”

“O Lor, massa!—O Lor, massa!—I—I—”

“What do you stare at, you African fool? Did you never see me before?—here, take my baggage, or—”

“O Lor, massa—massa Bedlamite,—O Lor, massa, O—”

“Fool!” thundered Crawford, and applying his foot *a posteriori*, maddened to find the foolish rumours of the city had preceded him even here, he sent the *darkie* rolling heels over head against the door, which, flying open, revealed to his astonished gaze the whole family, awaiting him with the most absolute terror written on every feature.