Drawing back, I let Dr. Farnham take the lend, which he did in his own brusque way. And then I saw what the dim light had not revealed before, a young man's form standing by the newel-post of the wide staircase that rose at our left. He at once came forward, and as the light from the lamp above us fell fully upon him, I saw his face, and started.

Why? I could not tell. Not because his handsome features struck me pleasantly, for they did not. There was something in their expression which I did not like, and yet as I looked at them a sudden sensation swept

'Ah, I see you have brought the nurse," were the words with which he greeted Dr. Farnham. And the voice was as thrilling in Sits tone as the face was in its expression. "But," he suddenly exclaimed, as his eyes met mine, "this is not Mrs. Gannon." And the elder advanced, and without seeing an excuse for his action, sat down close by my side. The fan at once dropped; I had no he asked, in tones which, however lowered, I could easily distinguish. "Did n't you know there were reasons why we especially wanted an elderly person?"

"No," I heard the doctor say, and then, his back being towards me, I lost the rest of his speech till the words, "She is no gossip," came to salute me and make me ask myself

his speech till the words, "She is no gossip," came to salute me and make me ask myself if there was a secret skeleton in this house, that they feared so much the eyes of a stranger.

"But," the young man went hurriedly on "she is not at all the kind of person to have over my mother. How could we-" and there his voice fell so as to become uninteljigible.
But the docter's sudden exclamation help-

ed me out. "What!" he wonderingly cried, "do you intend to sit up too ?"

"I or my brother," was the calm response,

He did not finish his words, but it seemed as if he were going to say: "And a stranger may, after all, be preferable to a neighbor."

But I cannot be a seemed in this house," I inwardly commented, and made a determination on the area that and made a determination on the area that are the same than the same that are the same that are the same than the same that are the same than may, after all, be preferable to a neighbor."

But I cannot be sure of this, for he was not a might experience from the mysteries surrounding me, this master of reserve should find there was one who could keep her thought I might experience from the mysteries surrounding me, this master of reserve should find there was one who could keep her thoughts to herself, even, perhaps, to his where, somehow, in the breast of certain where, somehow, in the breast of certain speech, and caused me a curious sensation.

But I cannot be sure of this, for he was not might experience from the mysteries surrounding me, this master of reserve should find there was one who could keep her relations as was supposed, and that somewhere, somehow, in the breast of certain where, somehow, in the breast of certain speech, and caused me a curious sensation.

But I conquered it with a laugh, and cheering thoughts to herself, even, perhaps, to his where, somehow, in the breast of certain speech, and caused me a curious sensation. as he left me at the door :

"Come out in five minutes, and my brother will introduce you to your duties." So far I had seen no woman in the house and I was beginning to wonder if Mrs. Polpard had preferred to surround herself with males, when the door was suddenly opened remarked, his eyes flashing from his mother's and a rosy-cheeked girl stepped in.

of I thought it was the nurse as was here in spite of myself at her look of indignant ago. It needed but the slightest shock to she will doubtless wish to see her mother at ago. It needed but the slightest shock to surprise. "Do you want any thing of me?" I hastened to ask, for her eyes were like you. That shock this very girl supplied by saucers and her head was tossing airily.

came to see if you wanted any thing?" I shook my head with what good nature I blame us? This is our mother." could, for I did not wish to make an enemy in this house, even of a chambermaid.

"And you are really the nurse?" she askfull glare of the gas.

"Yes," I assured her, really and truely the nurse.

"Well, I don't understand it !" she cried. "I was always Mrs. Pollard's favorite maid, and I was with her when she was took, and would be with her now, but they won't let me set a foot inside the door. And when I asked why they keep me out, who was always young. And here you be younger than I A sudden impulse seized me. and a stranger too. I don't like it," she cried, tossing her head again and again. "I have n't deserved it, and I think it is mighty

I saw the girl was really hurt, so I hastened to explain that I was not the nurse they expected, and was succeeding, I think, in mollifying her, when a step was heard in the hall, and she gave a frightened start, and hurried

towards the door.

ns

pany

etion

"So you are sure you don't want anything?" she cried, and was out of my sight before I could answer. There was nothing to detain me, and I

hastened to follow. As I crossed the sill I almost started too, at sight of the tall, slim, truly sinister figure that awaited me, leaning against the opposite wall. He was younger than his brother, and had similar features, but there was no charm here to make you forget that the eye was darkly glittering, and the lip formidable in its subtlety and power. He advanced with much of the easy nonchalance that had so characterized the other.

"Miss Sterling, I believe," said he; and with no further word, turned and led me down the hall to the sick-room. I noticed even then that he paused and listened before he pushed open the door, and that with our dest step inside he cast a look of inquiry that had something besides a son s loving anxiety 'n it. And I hated the man as I would a serpent, though he bowed as he set me a chair, and was careful to move a light he thought shone a little too directly in my

The other brother was not present, and I could give my undivided attention to my charge. I found her what report had proplained her to be, a handsome woman of the sternly imposing type. Even with her age against her and the shadow of death lying on her brow and cheek, there was something strangely attractive in the features and the stately contour of her form. But it was atpraction that was confined to the eye, and could by no means allure the heart, for the same seal of mysterious reserve was upon

or that characterized her sons, and in her, in the younger one of these, it inspired a strust which I could imagine no smile as dissipating. She lay in a state of coma, and her heavy breathing was the only sound that broke the silence of the great room. "God 'lelp me!" thought I; but had no wish to . Instead of that, I felt a fearful plea-in the prospect before me-such effect

had a single look had upon me from eyes I

rembled to meet again or read.

I did not know how long I sat there gazing in the one direction for that faint sign of life for which the doctor had bid me watch. That he who inspired me with dread was behind me, I knew; but I would not turn my head towards him. I was determined At daybreak the doctor came in. Taking to resist the power of this man, even if I advantage of the occasion, I slipped away must succumb a trifle to that of the other. to my own room, anxious for any change

was that entered. At the same moment the sented my poor Ada's will. Opening it with young man at my side arose, and with what all the reverent love which I felt for her I felt to be a last sharp look in my direction hastened to where his brother stood, and entered into a whispered conversation with him. Then I heard the door close agains and almost at the same instant Mr. Pollard the elder advanced, and without seeing an ing before me.

excuse for his action, sat down close by my My agitation may be conceived when I

stinctively bade me beware. I, however, had nothing. Ah, yes, I had a friend ! subdued my apprehensions, thinking, with a certain haughty pride which I fear will memorial from the innocent dead distracted never be eliminated from my nature, of the dangers I had already met with and overcome in my brief but troubled life; and meeting his look with a smile which 1

I expected.

The doctor made no answer, and the young man, taking a step sidewise, threw me a glance full of anxiety and trouble.

"I don't like it," he murmured; "but there must be a woman of some kind in the content in the most of the series of the se

saying, the sudden news of Mr. Barrows' death ?" "That was told me." I answered : for this was a direct question, put, too, with an effort I could not help but feel, notwithstanding the evident wish on his part to reserve an

appearance of calmness.

Then some explanation is needed," he face to mine with equal force and intentness. "Ah, excuse me," she said, with a stare, "My mother"—his words were low, but it was impossible not to hear them-"has not "And it is the nurse," I returned, smiling been well since my father died, two months produce the result you unhappily see before once, you had better wait a few moments the inconsiderate relation of Mr. Barrows' "No," she said, almost with spite. "I fearful fate. We have taken a prejudice

> could any one, under the circumstances? Why then did a sudden vision of Ada's face. and looking at me in the as she gave me that last look, rise up before faith in this man and his plausible explana. tery about her.

back to his mother.

happened only a few short hours ago."

His eyes flashed to mine, and a very vivid cheek till it looked blue in the dim light. "What do you mean?" he gasped; and I saw the doctor had refrained from telling him of Ada's pitiful doom.

"I mean," said I, with a secret compuncas her lever.

gering under the shock of his emotions. not know he had any betrothed. I thought she had filted him---"

"It is another woman," I broke in, jealfinish the sentence. My own agitation was beginning to master me.

it was, he forced his lips into a steadier spect, at least, he was the truer man and doubtful in its character, as if she hesitated curve, and quietly said : "After what has more considerate brother?

for life.

CHAPTER V. DOUBTS AND QUERIES.

And that well might Advise him to a caution, to hold what

I was, therefore, surprised when a hand was thrust over my shoulder, and a fan dropped into my lap.

"It is warm here," was the comment which accompanied the action.

I thanked him, but felt that his sole tened to throw wide the blinds and lean out my windows looked toward the east, I has-I thanked him, but felt that his sole object had been to cover his change of position. For, when he sat down again, it was where he could see my face. I therefore felt justified in plying the fan he had offered me, in such a way as to shut off his somewhat basilisk gaze. And so a dreary hour went by.

It was now well on towards morning, and I was beginning to suffer from the language operators and renewed mover rewarded me.

memorial from the innocent, dead distracted me for a few moments from further consideration of present difficulties, but soon the very nature of the bequest recalled them to and meeting his look with a smile which I knew to contain a spice of audacity, I calmly waited for the words I felt to be hovering which more than anything else lay at the bottom of the dilemma in which I found upon his lips. They were scarcely the ones myself. For, humiliating as it is to confess, "Would you expect us to leave her alone with to speak,"

"And she has told you her story of my became fearful realities; while on the other hand my promise to Ada seemed to con-

> "If the general verdict in regard to Mr. "If the general verdict in regard to Mr.
>
> Barrows' death should be one of suicide,"
> Then suddenly, "Do you live here?"
> "No," I replied, "I am only staying here. which otherwise must imprint an inefface-

able stain upon his memory?" My heart and brain were still busy with this question when the sound of Mr. Pollard's footsteps passing my door recalled me to a sense of my present duty. Rising, I hurried across the hall to the sick-chamber, and was just upon the point of entering, when the doctor appeared before me, and

seeing me, motioned me back, saving : "Mrs. Harrington has just arrived. As till the first agitation is over."

Glad of any respite, and particularly glad to escape an introduction to Mrs. Harringagainst the girl in consequence. Do you ton at this time, I slipped hastily away, but had not succeeded in reaching my room be-What could I feel or say but No? What fore the two brothers and their sister appear. ed at the top of the stairs. I had thus a fullepportunity of observing them, and being naturally quick to gather impressions, took me, bidding me remember the cause to in with a glance the one member of the Polwhich I was pledged, and not put too much lard family who was likely to have no mys-

I found her pretty; prettier, perhaps, "I only hope death will not follow the than any woman it had ever been my lot to frightful occurrence," he concluded; and do meet before, but with a doll's prettiness what he would, his features became drawn, that bespoke but little dignity or force of and his face white, as his looks wandered mind. Dressed with faultless taste and with an attention to detail that at a moment like the present struck one with a sense of "Another death, you mean," said I; "one | painful incongruity, she advanced, a breathalready has marked the event, though it ing image of fashion and perhaps folly her rustling robes, and fresh, if troubled face, offering a most striking contrast to the and real horror blanched his already palid gloom and reserve of the two sombre figures

that walked at her side. Knowing as by instinct that nothing but humiliation would follow any obtrusion of myself upon this petted darling of fortune, I withdrew as much as possible into the sha. tion I strove in vain to subdue, "that Mr. dow, receiving for my reward a short look Barrows' betrothed could not survive his from both the brothers; the one politely deterrible fate-that she died a few hours precating in its saturnine courtesy, the since, and will be buried in the same grave other full of a bitter demand for what I in my selfish egotism was fain to consider "His betrothed?" "Young Mr. Pollard sympathy. The last look did not tend to had risen to his feet, and was actually stag- calm my already disturbed thoughts, and, anxious to efface its impression, I impulsively descended the stairs and strolled out on the lawn, asking myself what was meant was nothing more nor less than what by the difference in manner which I had disous for my poor dead Ada's fame. "The cerned in these two brothers towards their woman he was formally engaged to never sister. For while the whole bearing of the loved him; but this one "I could not younger had expressed interest in this pretty eye, as if some words had passed in regard careless butterfly of a woman thus brought to me that made her anxious to know what face to face with a grave trouble, the elder sort of a woman I was. He looked at me, horrified, and I could had only averted looks to offer, and an arm have sworn the hair rose on his forehead. that seemed to shrink at her touch as if the "What was her name?" he asked. "Is weight of her light hand on his was almost imagined this, especially as she did not look it-is it any one I know?" Then, as if sud- more than he could bear. Could it be that at me again till she had finished her breakdenly conscious that he was betraying too affection and generosity were on the side of fast and rose to quit the room. Then, in keen an emotion for the occasion, pitiful as the younger after all, and that in this re- deed, she threw me a hurried glance, half

happened here, I am naturally overcome by I could find no more satisfactory answer gether. Instantly a wild thrill passed a circumstance so coincident with our own for this question than for the many others that had suggested themselves since I had blushing. But the momentary emotion. "Naturally," I asserted with a bow, and been in this house; and being determined again felt that secret distrust warring with not to allow myself to fall into a reverie the deeper feeling which ensued when Mrs. a new feeling that was not unlike compas- which at this moment might be dangerous, I gave up consideration of all kinds, and with a forced lightness: "Her name is Ada Reynolds," I continu- yielded myself wholly to the pleasure of my ed, remembering his last question. **She ramble. And it was a pleasure! For how ever solemn and austere might be the inter-"I know," he interrupted; and without for of the Pollard mansion, without here on another word walked away, and for a long the lawn all was cheeriness, bloom, and time stood silent at the other end of the verdure; the grim row of cedars encircling room. Then he came back and sat down, the house seeming to act as a barrier be and when I summoned up courage to glance youd which its gloom and secrecy could not at his face, I saw that a change had passed pass. At all events such was the impresover it, that in all probability was a change sion given to my excited fancy at the time, and, filled with the sense of freedom which And my heart sank-sank till I almost en- this momentary escape from the house and vied that unconscious form before which we its influences had caused, I hastened to ensat, and from which alone now came the one joy the beauties of walk and parterre, sound which disturbed the ghostly silence of stopping only when some fairer blossom than ordinary lured me from my path to inspect its loveliness or inhale its per

The grounds were not large, though, situated as they were in the midst of a thickly populated district, they appeared so. It did not, therefore, take me long to exhaust their attractions, and I was about

to return upon my course, when I espied a ittle summer-house before me, thickly shrouded in vines. Thinking what a charmug retreat it offered, I stepped forward to observe it more closely, when to my great surprise I saw it was already occupied, and by a person whose attitude and appearance were such as to at once arouse my strongest curiosity. This person was a boy, slight of build, and fantastic in his dress, with a face like sculptured marble, and an eye which, f a little contracted, had a strange glitter in it that made you look and look again. He was kneeling on the floor of the summernouse, and his face, seen by me in profile, was turned with the fixedness of an extreme bsorption towards a small opening in the vines, through which he was intently peering. What he saw or wished to see I could not imagine, for nothing but the blank end of the house lay before him, and there could be very little which was interesting in that, or not one of its windows were open, except the solitary one in my room. His expression, however, showed that he was engaged in watching something, and by the corrugation in his white brow and the pecuiar compression of his fresh, red lip that omething showed itself to be of great importance to him; a fact striking enough in tself if you consider the earliness of the our and the apparent immaturity of his

ourteen.
Resolved to solve this simple mystery, I ave an admonitory cough, and stepped into he summer-house. He at once started to is feet, and faced me with a look I am ondering upon yet, there was so much in that was wrathful, curious, dismayed, and lefiant. The next moment a veil seemed to fall over his vision, the rich red lip relaxed from its expressive curve, and from being ne of the most startling visions I ever saw, e became-what? It would be hard to ell, only not a fully responsible being, I am ure, however near he had just strayed to he border land of judgment and good

ge, which did not appear to be more than

Relieved. I scarcely knew why, and remembering almost at the same instant some assing gossip I had once heard about the retty imbecile boy that ran the streets of -, I gave him a cheerful smile, and vas about to bestow some encouraging word pon him, when he suddenly broke into a augh, and looking at me with a meaning. less stare, asked :

Who are you?"

Ewas willing enough to answer, so I returned: "I am Constance Sterling;" and almost immediately added: "And who are

"I am the cat that mews in the well."

rteous as if I had been the one of all others own secret disappointment and chagrin.

own secret disappointment and chagrin. "As I only came last night, it would

hard to say "-and was going to say more, when the curious being broke out: "She only came last night !" and, repeatng the phrase again and again, suddenly larted from my side on the lawn, where h stood for an instant, murmuring and laughing to himself before speeding away through the shrubbery that led to the gate.

This incident, trivial as it seemed, made a vivid impression upon me, and it was with ion that I re-entered the house and took up my watch in the sick-room. I found ever ning as I had left it an hour or so before with the exception of my companion; the ounger Mr. Pollard having taken the place the absence of the elder son, who wa doubtless engaged in doing the honors of the My own call to breakfast came sooner than

anticipated: soon enough, indeed, for me in o expect to find Mr. Pollard and his siste till at the table. It therefore took son urage for me to respond to the summon ecially as I had to go alone, my companion n, of course, refusing to leave his mothe But a glance in the hall-mirror, as I wen oy, encouraged me, for it was no wea. voman's face I encountered, and if Mrs. Han ington was as beautiful as she was haughty nd as haughty as she was beautiful, Contance Sterling at least asked no favors and howed no embarrassment. Indeed, I had never felt more myself than when I lifted he portiere from before the dining-room loor and stepped in under the gaze of these wo contradictory beings, either of which exerted an influence calculated to overawe etermination made the ordeal easy. Mr. Pollard, who is certainly a man ttract any woman's eye, rose gravely as pproached, and presented me, with wha wruck me as a somewhat emphasize espect, to his sister. Her greeting I expected—that is, indifferently civil,though I thought I detected a little glimmer of curiosity in the corner of he But my faculty for observation was very

wide awake this morning, and I may have whether she ought to leave us alone to through me, and I came perilously near

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that supply and control the stomach.

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f his brother. Mrs. Harrington was now-where to be seen, but as breakfast had been unnounced I did not wonder at this, nor at

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emotion it could be called, was soon lost in the deeper feeling which ensued when Mrs. Harrington, pausing at the door, observed with a forced lightness:

To be continued.

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