

would certainly ruin the eyes to attempt to read them."

"I have seen many such," observed the Idiot, suavely. "Even our friend the Bibliomaniac at times has seemed to me to be very absent-minded. And that reminds me, Doctor," he continued, addressing himself to the medical boarder. "What is the cause of absent-mindedness?"

"That," returned the Doctor, ponderously, "is a very large question. Absent-mindedness, generally speaking, is the result of the projection of the intellect into surroundings other than those which for want of a better term I might call the corporeally immediate."

"So I have understood," said the Idiot, approvingly. "And is absent-mindedness acquired or inherent?"

Here the Idiot appropriated the roll of his neighbor.

"That depends largely upon the case," replied the Doctor, nervously. "Some are born absent-minded, some achieve absent-mindedness, and some have absent-mindedness thrust upon them."

"As illustrations of which we might take,