

gaunt bare boughs, raindrops trickling from the branches in dark slimy drops.

Thus, from the beginning, my house and its surroundings had, unaccountably, a depressing effect upon me.

I was an utter stranger in the suburb, and I felt powerless to make new friends. The only dwellers in my house besides myself were my ancient housekeeper and cook, Mrs. Chilcomb, and a housemaid—the boy who attended the surgery bell and went errands for me did not sleep on the premises.

It will be readily believed that with such a temperament as mine, my business—if I may employ such an unprofessional term—did not prosper. When I bought the practice from Doctor Stoker, an old friend of my father, it was worth about £1,000 a year. It was not worth half that sum when I had been a couple years in Doctor Stoker's house. Children seemed to like me, and I know I liked them; but fathers and mothers evidently thought I was crotchety; and so things went gradually from bad to worse, so far as my professional prospects were concerned. I did not murmur at this: I knew I alone was to blame. Were it not for my success in the treatment of children's ailments, my practice, I have little doubt, would have dwindled away altogether.

The room in my new home which I most affected was the study, a square-shaped apartment at the back of the house, with one large window overlooking a spacious park. The park was inclosed by a wooden paling, and was of unusual