

III

"**W**ITH that fellow to help me," said Mr Burgoyne, enthusiastically, "I could work double tides."

Young John Stone had been an immediate success. He was a medical student, who had just obtained his diploma from the R.C.P. of London—the most brilliant pupil that Reece had seen in his classes during fifteen years: an all-round man who already, at twenty-two, seemed assured of a big career. When there came that breakdown in health which too often is sequential upon premature development, Reece wrote to Burgoyne and told him all about the young man. He wanted change, and, if not rest, a relaxation of the old strain, fresh work in lieu of the old work; but he was poor, and it was not easy to know what one could do for him. Now if, by chance, Burgoyne was in need of a competent assistant in almost any field of research, Reece's invalid would be just the man.

Burgoyne, as it happened, needed such a man. Mr Edmundson had recently gone away to get married: young Mr Stone came to the Lodge on a sort of holiday engagement. He was silent, modest, cheerful, unobtrusive: in a day all the little household felt at home with him.

"Ah," said Mr Stone to Mrs Burgoyne, with a grave smile, as she showed him the big work-room. "So this is where the Spirit sits brooding over Chaos. I have seen this place in dreams."

Mrs Burgoyne told her husband that she thought it was one of the nicest things she had ever heard said about him.

"Too nice," said Mr Burgoyne. "I hope the young fellow isn't a flatterer."

"Too wise to be that," said Mrs Burgoyne. "But he looks dreadfully ill."