

and endeavored to move away; but the other, who was now thoroughly roused, perceived this movement; he fiercely held his opponent down, and, peering into his face, cried: "Now will you promise!" And at a muttered negative reply, he forcibly pushed his brother headlong over the precipice, he himself escaping a like fate only by the merest chance. The man uttered a cry as he fell, and made futile efforts to grasp the jagged points of rock against which his body heavily struck. The other arose and watched him until he was swallowed up in the darkness, and then listened until, even amid the howling of the storm, he heard an unwonted splash in the seething surge below.

Just then came the gentle sound of a bell, faint and muffled, but distinct—of the warning bell on the shoal beyond—one,—two,—three,—in slow, deliberate succession; and then the wind veered round.

As the weird sounds reached his ear, one after another, the man stared out over the wild sea—at nothing. He put his hands to his head, and muttered a cry—looked quickly and fearfully down and about him—and turned and fled into the darkness.

II.

Many years after, a man was sitting before a desk in a dimly-lighted library, gazing out into the night. The sky was overcast with dark, heavy clouds, and the air was filled with a substance that was neither rain nor snow, and which the wind drove furiously where it willed. The chilling cold penetrated even into the room. The condition of the weather always had a profound effect on this man's mind, but to-night it was only one cause of his deep dejection.

His business affairs, which had steadily been going from bad to worse, had come to a crisis. He had been informed, but a few moments before, that the ventures in which he had rashly risked the greater part of what remained of his fortune, had been complete failures. He sat trying to realize his loss, but his mind was in a chaos. He felt in need of some stimulant, and arose and unlocked a small cupboard from which he took a bottle and a glass. He poured no small portion of the contents of the bottle into the glass, and swallowed the liquor with a gulp. Drinking was one of the habits he had retained from his younger days, and of late his visits to the cupboard had been becoming more and more frequent.

He felt better after his drink, however, and began, in an indefinite way, to review the affairs of his life. He went farther and farther back into his past until he came to a period about a year before his marriage. Farther back than that he dared not go. He had come to a vague understanding with himself, the reason for which he never put plainly before him, that the cover of the past was not to be lifted from his earlier career. When the debts acquired in his wild days had been paid, he had entered commercial life. Soon after, he had married a woman of some social standing. He knew now that his marriage had been one of convenience, with advantages for both parties. Real love had never existed between himself and his wife. She was an ambitious woman, socially, and so long as she had had the means of gratifying her own wishes in this connection, she had not troubled her husband much. He wondered how his wife and his daughter, who was much like her mother in character, would take his loss; for some change would have to be made in their household arrangements. He saw he could look to them

for little sympathy, and he felt bitter against all the world. He perceived now what a forlorn wretch he really was. How chilly it was, too! He gave a convulsive shudder, and made another application to the bottle in the cupboard.

As he was about to reseal himself, he heard the distant bell of the new Court-house striking the hour of nine. He did not like the sound of that new bell. It resembled too closely other sounds, which frequently came to haunt him out of his past, bringing with them feverish visions. But he felt he must be calm this night. And so, after pacing up and down the room for a time, he finally decided to busy himself with his papers and find out the exact state of his affairs. He settled himself down to his long, tedious task, and examined and wrote and figured for hours, scarcely noting the flight of time. It was distracting work, though, especially to one in his condition of mind, and it required effort on his part to persevere in it. He brought the bottle and glass from the cupboard to his desk, and to these he had frequent recourse during his operations. On and on into the night he worked. His wife and daughter came home, but he was too much taken up with finishing his task to bestow on them more than a passing thought. They, in their turn, he was vaguely conscious, did not seem to trouble themselves in the least about him. As he neared the completion of his work, he began to make application directly to the bottle without the mediation of the glass. He noted with indifference that he was half-intoxicated. But at last his work was finished. It was as he had feared; he would be left penniless.

For a long time he sat brooding. He was ruined and friendless. He felt what that meant. Of what use was his life, anyway? He did not know; but he felt some peculiar compunction about killing himself in a deliberate manner. His mind, however, was too upset to think clearly, and he took a drink from the bottle. He looked out of the window at the storm, and shivered involuntarily at what he saw there. It only added to his desolation. When had he seen a night like that before? Just then the wind bore to his ears the faint, muffled sound of the town-clock. He started. It struck,—once,—twice. He listened, fearfully, expecting a third stroke. But it did not come. In his overwrought, nervous state, however, there had gradually been creeping into his mind a scene which he could only blot out by a terrible effort. Feeling faint, he took another draught from the bottle. Then he looked at his watch; it was two o'clock. He turned down the gas and reseated himself. He would take a rest before he tried to come to some final decision. His eyes slowly closed, and his head fell over the back of the chair, face upwards, his mouth gaping. And in this way he fell into a troubled sleep.

He slept for some time; but suddenly he moved quickly. His mouth opened wider, and his hot breath came quicker. He was having a terrible nightmare. On a wild, stormy night he saw himself and a companion making their way along the edge of a rugged cliff, which looked out upon the sea. They spoke together, quarreled,—struggled; and he saw himself hurl his companion over the cliff into the sea! As he heard the body strike the water with a dull splash, his eyes opened in fear. The wind was beating the heavy, half-formed sleet against the window-pane in impetuous blasts. He arose to brighten his dim surroundings by