

candles, which it was her husband's duty to snuff, she would open the dreaded quarto and prop it firmly on the table before her. Then, after giving out her text in a tone that need not have disgraced Hugh Peters or the most famous preacher of her persuasion, it was her custom to lift her eyes and look round to assure herself that all was cringing attention; and this was the trying moment; woe to the boy whose gaze wandered—his back would smart for it before he slept. These preliminaries at an end, however, and the discourse begun, the danger was over for the time; for, in the voluptuous roll of the long wordy sentences, and the elections and damnations, and free wills that plentifully bestrewed them, she speedily forgot all but the sound of her own voice; and, nothing occurring to rouse her, might be trusted to read for the hour and half with pleasure to herself and without risk to others.

So it fell out on this occasion. As soon, therefore, as the steady droning of her voice gave me courage to look up, I had before me the same scene with which a dozen Sunday evenings had made me familiar; the dull circle of yellow light; within it Madam's horn-rimmed glasses shining over the book, while her finger industriously followed the lines; a little behind, her husband, nodding and recovering himself by turns. Not now was this all, however: now I saw also *imprimis*, a dim oval face, framed in the background behind the two old people; and that, now in shadow now in light, gleamed before my fascinated eyes with unearthly beauty. Once or twice, fearing to be observed, I averted my gaze and looked elsewhere; guiltily and with hot temples. But always I returned to it again. And always, the longer I let my eyes dwell on the vision—for a vision it seemed in the halo of the candles—and the more monotonous hung the silence, broken only by Mrs. D——'s even drone, the more distinctly the beautiful face stood out, and the more