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in his own degree, is almost as living as a personal acquaint-
ance; every event is as clear as a personal experience. And
if this be true of the story written à la grâce de la plume,
where both events and characters unfold themselves like the
buds of some unknown plant, how much more strongly is it
the case of the story that has so long been mused over that
one day it had to be told! Then the marking events of the
actors' lives, their adventures, whether of sorrow or of joy,
their sayings and doings, noble or bright or mistaken, re-
corded in the book, are but a tithe of the adventures, sayings
and doings with which the writer seems to be familiar. He
might write or talk about them, in praise or vindictiveness
as he loves or dreads them, for many a longer day—but he
has one main theme to make clear to his hearers and must
respect the modern canons of the Story-telling Art. Among
the many things therefore he could tell, and he would, he
selects that only which will unravel a particular thread of
fate in the tangle of endless consequences; which will render
plausible the growth of passions on which, in a continuous
life-drama, is based one particular episode.

Of such a kind is the story of Adrian Landale.

The haunting thought round which the tale of the sorely
tempest-tossed dreamer is gathered is one which, I think,
must at one time or other have occurred to many a man
as he neared the maturity of middle-life:—What form of
turmoil would come into his heart if, when still in the
strength of his age but after long years of hopeless separation,
he were again brought face to face with the woman who had
been the one passion of his life, the first and only love of his
youth? And what if she were still then exactly as he had
last seen her—she, untouched by years even as she had so
long lived in his thoughts: he, with his soul scarred and
seamed by many encounters bravely sustained in the Battle
of Life?