

CHAPTER II.

MY home was a comfortable one. It was much too large for my bachelor requirements, but I have always had a taste for spacious, well-furnished rooms ; and not being dependent upon my profession for an income, I was enabled to gratify my taste in this regard. The house had been occupied for many years by my predecessor, who had spent a large amount of money upon it previous to transporting himself to the West End. Ordinary folk would have unhesitatingly called the situation cheerful. It was one of a dozen similar buildings on a terrace facing the principal road in a London suburb. The road was broad and had a bold crescent-like curve towards each end. At regular intervals on the road were planted chestnut trees, clothed in waxen blossoms during the early summer. Even the splendour of these trees in bloom had no soothing effect upon me, though I was ordinarily an admirer of all that is beautiful in nature. I always saw the chestnuts as I had first seen them in the winter when I settled down in my new house, standing with