

knuckle of one he set his teeth. Blood was there when he drew his hand away.

She finished: "It is all here, letters, certificates. Your mother's letters, Percival, and your father's. They are all in order from the first. There is one here to his grandmother and one to his lawyer telling them of his marriage. He left those with her when he went away. Then the letters from India."

He drew his hand from his mouth, the blood on his fist. "Leave me alone," he said. "Go away, Aunt Maggie, and leave me to look at them alone."

There was that in his voice which smote terribly across her spinning brain and caused her to obey him.

### III

An hour he was occupied in reading the yellowed sheets whose heritage he was; for long thereafter sat and stared upon them. These devoted lines in that round hand were his mother's: his father's those ardent passions in those bold characters; he their son. He felt himself a shameless listener to penetrate these tender secrets; he felt himself a little child that hears his parents' voices. Sometimes, in that first mood, the blood ran hotly to his cheeks; sometimes, in that second, there came sobs to his throat and great trembling. Memories of thoughts, impulses, happenings that had been strange, returned to him, crowding upon him; here was their meaning, their interpretation here. In the library with Mr. Amber, "thinking without thinking as if I was in some one else who was thinking," shadows about the room and a moth thudding the window-pane — here the secret of it! In the library with Mr. Amber and the old man's cry: "Why do you stretch your hand so, my lord?" —