

"It is strange," said the Count: "This dejection of spirit, will, I fear, overthrow my reason, and I beg you to help me if you can."

"Perhaps an inordinate ambition is the cause?"

"No; I am not ambitious for a more exalted position than I now occupy. It exactly suits my tastes and my desires."

"Perhaps there are family troubles, or the loss of some loved one?"

"No, doctor; peace and love reign in my family, and none have been lost."

"Have you any enemies?"

"Not that I know of."

"What subjects habitually occupy your thoughts?"

"There doctor you touch a subject I have hardly spoken of, I am a skeptic. From my point of view the forms of religion are repugnant to common sense, however reasonable its mysteries may be. I do not believe in religion, yet I must confess that one of its dogmas haunts me like a spectre. I try to persuade myself that it is the result of a disordered mind, and yet I am continually occupied with it."

"May I venture to ask what it is?"

"A vision of the last judgment is continually before my eyes. The end of all things seems to have arrived, and the great white throne is set up—upon this throne is seated One whose look,