

days a week, dragged out for three months in defiance of a labouring heart and tattered nerves. And it didn't help things when fools came and told him how bad he looked; as if he did not know it! For the last week he was living on dry biscuits, champagne, coffee and cigars; the corporation had to be launched. And on the night when his work was done, he was carried home to die. Nothing could save a man, said the doctor, if he tried so hard to kill himself.

For three months Lancing lay in a darkened room, panting as his heart raced and stopped, trembling at distant sounds and wondering when the blood, which surged to his head like a river in flood, would burst through the skull like water from a broken main. The bone, he knew, was thin as paper, for the "clock-clock" of trotting horses on Riverside Drive stung and bruised his unprotected brain. For the first month his wife was with him night and day; by gripping her wrist he could remain in bed when the ship rolled. (Evidently they were taking him to England, as arranged, and had carried the house bodily on board to avoid disturbing him; it was hard to believe that any ship could keep afloat when it rolled until he felt himself falling perpendicularly out of bed.) After the first month she disappeared. He was convinced that she had gone overboard in one of the recent heavy seas, and cried like a child, with long, quivering sobs, until she was led in between two nurses. Then he cried because she, too, was ill. At the end of the second month he began to sleep naturally, all night and most of the day, being roused for a few moments to have milk poured into his mouth. The room had become steadier, and the bone was growing more over his naked, pulsating brain, though he still panted as though he had been running. Once he enquired, slowly but clearly, where his wife was; the doctor said that she was asleep. A week later she was rather unwell; as he gained strength, the reports of her grew graver; only when he was strong enough for the news, did he learn that she had died a month before.