

CHAPTER XIX.

"THIS, then," said Mr. Ashcroft, sinking into a chair and burying his face in his hands, "is what Doctor Englehorn feared."

Ralph Brabazon's body was now laid out on the couch. I had expected to find the features distorted and unsightly in death; but I found them glorified with a calm and beautiful peace. The expression was that of one who had passed out of the world, not with the agonising wail which had fallen upon my ears, but with a great sigh of relief.

I stood for some time looking down upon the body of the man whose path in life had been different from the path which all other men may tread, who had with his own hand closed upon himself the gates of life, the portals which no man may reopen, and who had opened upon himself the mysterious and awful gates which disclose the paths of eternal happiness or eternal sorrow. Which of these was Ralph Brabazon now treading? I could not regard him as an ordinary suicide. No base or cowardly impulse had caused