

was well thought of." He had risen to his feet when she had finished placing the plaister on the cut, and, looking at himself in a mirror to see it, had caught also a reflection of the lawn beyond the terrace, and the servants laying a table beneath the trees. He had no appetite for breakfast, but he must affect one. It might be easier to eat than he fancied, when it came to trying.

Yes—food was not amiss after an effort or two. But he was farther than ever from daring to thrust the horror in his heart into the unsuspecting life of the girl; while she, for her part, guessing some disquiet in him, strove to allay it more and more with mirth and sweet speech. Never had she been more charming: how she would have lasted! O that he had not been Cain, to enjoy this fair fruit that he had plucked! He cursed his petulance and want of self-discipline. Could he not have had the sense to see where prudence lay?—a slight wound for the nonce; or even a bad one and a long nursing, but never this inexorable, overmastering Death, that comes to all and comes to stay—that has his way with what was once a man. But he had tried—yes, he *had* tried—to disarm his opponent; yet the old fellow's sword-hand was too strong for that! Think of it, had he only had this much to tell, that a bout of sword-play had been fought on fair ground, and a swift turn of his point had left her father at his mercy—to be generously spared! His magnanimity, that would have been, quickened in his brain; gave him a moment's half-ease, and was dismissed, leaving him poorer than before, as he sickened at its falsehood.

Had he ridden in view of the Old Hall? She went back to her questioning, after he and she had eaten, there on the lawn below the cedar-trees. The Old Hall was her father's house, his birthplace and hers. Only a year ago she was little more than a schoolgirl there; knowing nothing, all the world before her. What was she now?—