

may not miss any of the illuminating power of God's truth. So shall our beliefs and our deeds grow unto the perfect day. One of the critics in a recent account said that we should not find Holmes at his best in his stories, not in "Elsie Venner," certainly not in "The Guardian Angel," still less in a 'Mortal Antipathy.' We venture to join issue with him here: especially as regards the 'Guardian Angel,' for which we confess a great and longstanding love. "Elsie Venner" is not so pleasing, it is a problem in morbid humanity, attributing the unexpected variations in a girl's disposition to the serpent bite experienced by the child's mother; after a certain number of years the snake within her dies, and the struggle that ensues, costs the girl her human life as well. In the "Guardian Angel" we have a charming picture of New England Life as vivid as any we remember. There is a certain likeness in some respects in atmosphere to the 'House of the Seven Gables' of Hawthorne, but Holmes does not reach the transcendent heights of Hawthorne, nor can he depict the depths of jealousy and penitence like the author of the 'Scarlet Letter.' He's too near the average of human experience for that his life seems to an observer full of genial sunshine, we can scarcely think of him as steeping in tears his bread though we would not therefore deny him all intercourse with the heavenly powers. His, is however the gospel of geniality rather than the worship of sorrow! In this story we have the psychological problem presented by the conflict in one girl's nature of the presence of the influence of varying ancestors. As in the octave of a note we can by properly listening hear the original note as well; so in each individual, each ancestor seems to live again and produce a note in the life of the descendant, now subsidiary, now predominant, now tending to strengthen the life, now tending to destroy its moral equilibrium. This is the keynote of the history of Myrtle Hazard, one of the most charming heroines we have met in fiction. We read of her early experiences in the New England home like another daughter of Heth, under Aunt Silence's severe Puritance rule, with the lurid hymns, and with the forbidding strictures of the hardly reformed, but stern poor relation, Cynthia Badlam with her mysterious and half suggested story of pain and shame, one who might have been forgiven much, but who did not therefore love much. The book begins with Myrtle's flight in a disguise like that adopted by Angelica in the lovely episode of the tenor singer: then we have the rescue of the disguised girl by one

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