

been the terms, heretofore, on which Reginald and Beatrice had stood, they could find nothing in past experience at all like their present intimacy. They took frequent walks and horseback rides together; sometimes he would spend a whole morning in reading aloud to her. Mrs. Ross had noticed, too, certain unmistakable symptoms of contentment in Reginald's bearing while he was with Beatrice (if no more emphatic term should be applied), which seemed like the happiest sort of augury.

But in Beatrice's manner, as days lapsed along, she could read nothing. Nothing, too, in the girl's composed and power-suggesting face, over whose broad-moulded forehead the low-growing hair, somewhat coarse of texture, made full black ripples. It was a face whose every feature she had learned dearly to love, but most of all its limpid gray eyes, energetic, sympathetic, intellectual. More than once had a steadfast gaze into those eyes made Mrs. Ross tell herself that here was the woman of women whom it would delight her to have her son Reginald marry.

'Reginald is not a weak man,' she had once told Beatrice. 'Instead of this he is a sort of maimed, half-incapable giant. In numberless ways he baffles analysis, because every trait, with him, takes its force from a fragmentary spring of action—what his mental life needs is its missing half—he is like a tall, perfect tree snapped in the middle. Does this seem wild fancy?'

Naturally Beatrice had been mystified at the time these strange words were uttered; but an explanation had followed them which astonished her deeply. She learned from Mrs. Ross that Reginald had been the eldest of twin brothers. The two boys were five years old when the younger brother, Julian, was seized with scarlet fever in its most malignant form, and died after an illness of a few hours, having been till now in a condition of

perfect health. The disease was developed in Reginald almost simultaneously, but by what seemed a miracle he was saved.

During those five years before Julian's death, Mrs. Ross had often watched with singular interest what close bonds of mutual similarity, both in nature and in temperament, bound the two little brothers together. The way in which outward objects or new ideas impressed them; their respective tendencies of affection or prejudice toward certain people; their trivial likes and dislikes in matters of amusement, food, and the commoner impulses of sense; their susceptibility to the forces of humour, compassion, anger, disgust; all these, and many more embryo or full-developed characteristics bore, each with each, an element of resemblance startlingly salient. Persons before whom she mentioned, however, what seemed to her questions of such curious import, laughed at her wonder and assured her that every pair of twins was thus reciprocally constituted. But as time passed she became fonder of her illusion, and used to tell herself that in some strange way one soul had become divided between two bodies.

Nor did this illusion, with Mrs. Ross, possess a single morbid touch, a single shadow of discomfort. She never watched the children when they played together without a secret gladness at their charming interchangeable traits. She sometimes used to wonder whether between their very physical motions there was not a subtle concordance, and repeatedly she had assured herself that many thoughts occurred to both of them at one and the same moment. In appearance they were so alike that she, their own mother, even up to the time of Julian's death, would often omit to make use of the few slight signs by which she told them apart. And, as previously has been said, her strange idea regarding them dealt her no pain. Even if for a moment she calmly ad-