

Mendel remembered Cézanne's portrait of his wife, and how he had intended to tell Logan that it had made him feel like a tree with the sap running through it to the budding leaves in spring.

He told him now, and added:—

"It doesn't matter that I did not understand you in life."

"No," said Logan. "Don't go away!"

"I'll stay," replied Mendel; "I'll stay."

Then he was in a horrible agony again, as the marvellous clarity he had just won disappeared. Logan knew what he was doing, that he was taking with him all the weaknesses and vain follies which had so nearly brought them both to baseness, and Mendel knew that Logan must continue as a powerful force in his work; but he crushed the rising revolt in himself, the last despairing effort of his weakness, and gave himself up to feeding the extraordinary delight it was to the poor wretch, lying there with his force ebbing away, to give himself up to a pure artistic purpose such as had been denied him in his tangled life. Through this artistic purpose Logan could rise above the natural ebbing process of his vitality, which sucked away with it the baseness and the folly he had brought into his friend's life. He could rejoice in the contact of their minds, the mingling of their souls, the proud salute of this meeting and farewell. It was nothing to him that he was dying, little enough that he had lived, for he knew that he had never lived until now.

The nurse came and said the patient must rest.

"Don't go away!" pleaded Logan.

"I'll wait," said Mendel, patting his hand to reassure him.

"Half-past two," said the nurse as she followed Mendel out. "What a remarkable man!" she added. "What a tragedy! I suppose the girl was to blame too."

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