

I do not wish to recall this bad time nor the worse that antedated my departure from London, when I was at the mercy of venal doctors and indifferent nurses, dependent on grudging bad service and over-paid inattention, taking a so-called rest cure. But I do wish to relate a most curious circumstance, or set of circumstances, that made my stay in Pinelands memorable, and left me at the end of my sojourn there, and of my illness, obsessed with the story of which I found the beginning on the first night of my arrival, and the end in the long, fevered nights that followed. I myself hardly know how much is true and how much is fiction in this story; for what the *caché* of letters is responsible, and for what the morphia.

The house at Pinelands was called Browans, and it was haunted for me from the first by Margaret Eldon and Gabriel Stanton. Quite early in my stay I must have contemplated writing about them, knowing that there was no better way of ridding myself of their phantoms than by trying to make them substantial in pen and ink. I had their letters and some scraps of an unfinished diary to help me, a notebook with many blank pages, the garrulous reticence of the village apothecary, and the evidence of the sun-washed God's acre by the old church.

To begin at the beginning.

It was a long drive from Pinelands station to Browans. I had sent my maid in advance, but there was no sign of her when my rickety one-horse fly pulled up at the garden gate of a suburban villa of a house, "standing high," it is true, and with "creeper