

mering apologies, told her story that night to her mother in her own room, Lady Woolrych bent over and kissed her tenderly, saying with a sigh, "My darling, we shall all be sorry to lose you, but I think you've chosen wisely; I'm sure you've chosen wisely. He's a good young man and a fine fellow. We could wish for no one better to marry you, Bertha."

But when Lady Woolrych, wiping her eyes, went in five minutes later, to tell her husband, with many praises of Harry's manliness and sterling good qualities, Sir Arthur answered somewhat uneasily, "He's a very nice young man certainly, and seems to be full of high principles and fine enthusiasm, and all that sort of thing; and they tell me he's sure to get on in his profession also. Sir Benjamin Wroxall says he's the ablest student he ever had, and he'll one day be President of the College of Physicians. But there's something in his face I don't quite like—something in his face that somehow frightens me."

"Frightens you, my dear!" Lady Woolrych interposed. "Why, I think he's got the kindest and handsomest face I ever saw, except yours, Arthur."

Sir Arthur hesitated. "Oh yes, handsome enough," he said, "and kind, I grant you; but there's something in him that reminds me strangely of somebody—well, there, never mind about it now, if you please, Amelia. The other face was kind and handsome too, I remember."

For a moment there was silence. Then Sir Arthur, fingering his eyeglass

nervously, said with a little start, "I wish he didn't take such an interest in poisons. I don't like these men who go in for poisoning; it isn't at all a pleasant subject."

"But my dear," Lady Woolrych objected gently, "somebody *must* know all about poisons, of course, or what should we do to get cured when we took them by accident? Look at the good he was able to do to poor little Tay this very day, now. Bertha would have cried her dear eyes out if she'd really lost him."

"I know, I know," Sir Arthur answered testily. "But I don't like poisons. I'm prejudiced against poisons. I have my reasons. I like the young man, and I see that he's really very fond of Bertha; but I wish he didn't go in for poisons. It's a horrid subject, a ghastly subject, and I can't and won't pretend I like it."

III.

SIR Arthur's prejudices were not invincible, and Harry Prior's gentleness and goodness of heart soon overcame them. Melbury Regis had never before had so popular a doctor. Everybody liked him, the poor especially; for Harry was always ready to take as much pains and trouble with his poorest patient as with the great folk at the Hall: Sir Arthur's family. Lady Woolrych, too, was very fond of him, and ready to welcome him as Bertha's husband. As for Bertha herself, her admiration for Harry was quite unbounded; she thought him the cleverest, wisest, kindest, and dearest man that ever existed; and, making due