

A STORY OF THE METROPOLIS.

BY H. CAMERON NELLES WILSON.

AN old house on an old street in that part of the great city of London situated on the Surrey side of the Thames, and known as Kennington—a house gabled, and with that unmistakable look of antiquity which is found only in countries stamped by the hands of time and history. The upper portion of the house projected over the street; the same panes that rattled in the casement windows had glistened with the frosts of more than a century ago; an iron lamp that had swayed to the touch of the same breezes as had rustled the flags proclaiming the arrival of the first King George, now swung before the street door, clanking with the same chains, filled with the same quality of oil, and throwing the same wavering, unsteady light. A brass plate was nailed to the door, and on it were the words, "Jerome L. Maitland, Musician."

Jerome Maitland was sitting in his studio; a fire blazed upon the hearth, for it was a cold spring day; without, the twilight shadows were deepening, and as the blaze rose brightly for a moment, the Professor's face would be distinctly discernable; then, as the ruddy glow ceased, his features would become enveloped in the gathering dimness.

It was a kind face—sorrowfully pathetic, wistfully tender; his eyes were of a deep blue; he had an abundance of soft grey hair, which softened and subdued the general contour of his white face; the mouth was firm, without being hard, and when he smiled, the thin lips parted with a radiant joyousness that was inexpressibly attractive. There was a story connected with his life, but, like many an unwritten romance, like many another tale of sorrow, it was unknown to the

world, and the Professor kept it locked within his heart.

"Not even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile or sigh."

And thus it was with the musician. Those with whom he came most in contact could express their sympathy only by the many kindly acts, which all flowed in one channel and to one purpose—that of endeavoring to brighten the Professor's lonely life.

The Professor was not morose; he was always ready to laugh at the latest joke; every child in the street was sure to find in the old man a jolly confidant in any prospective escapade; and it was even whispered that one first of April he had helped his youthful colleagues in an attempt to surprise the fierce spinster who lived three doors farther down the street, and was supposed to have a weakness for the musician.

His studio was a favorite gathering-place of the neighbors. It was a quaint old room; dark oak panels covered the walls; carved rafters supported the ceiling; rich-wrought tapestries hung before the many entrances—curtains of Tyrian purple, in which were woven pale-green Egyptian grasses and saffron-colored reeds, the fragrance of which reminded one of some dewy, Iris-clad river bank, with slow-coursing water threading its way in purling melody past the low-bending Nile plants. Long, glittering spears, sheathed sabres, and a Mamaluke's dagger flashed upon the panelled walls. Fur rugs partially covered the polished floor, which reflected the liquid-lapping flames of the burning logs, and the flickering, glimmering lights of the candles. In one corner of the room was a handsome, curiously-carved In-