

'I have just left him,' she said. Her colour deepened a little as she spoke. Something in her tones caused him slightly to cloud his brows, as though from a vague perplexity. His face grew somewhat paler, and he took one or two steps nearer to where she stood.

'Ah!' suddenly exclaimed Eloise, while turning an abrupt rosy-red. 'I believe you have begun to guess my secret before I've told you a word of it. Here, give me both of your hands.' So speaking she glided up to him, and seized both of his passive hands in both of her own. 'It was all settled to-night. We are engaged to be married, Alfred and I. It seems so funny to call him "Alfred." You like him, do you not? I know you do, by the polite way in which you treat him. But then, everybody *must* like him—I think he has no such incommmodity as an enemy, And you're pleased, are you not? Well, if you are, tell me so.' She was shaking each of his hands in an impulsive, intimate manner, while a very full and pretty smile bloomed on her blushing face.

Reginald never remembered afterwards how he behaved at this crisis. He believes it most probable that he acquitted himself with decent self-possession. But the ordeal did not last long, for a little while later Mrs. Ross appeared in the hall, and Eloise, deserting him, ran coyly toward her guardian with the important intelligence.

Reginald slipped away after this. He went upstairs into his own room, and, locking the door, threw himself within a chair. An hour passed while he sat thus in the almost utter darkness of his chamber, but it did not seem to him longer than five minutes before he at length rose and struck a light. Looking at his watch, he promptly left the room and went downstairs through the silent house. All the family, including Wallace Willard, had evidently retired for the night; but on reaching the servants'

quarters he found them still occupied, and was enabled to give some low orders to the head groom, with whom he held converse in a certain gloomy passage-way. Then he passed upstairs again to his own room.

He now packed a portmanteau with a few needful articles. An hour or so later he threw himself on the bed, having left his light still burning. He remembered that he ought to leave a few lines to his mother, in some way accounting for his intended departure the next morning. But he was incapable of making the effort that such an act would have required. Besides, he could write on reaching New York. His lamp burned on, and the night grew. But though his eyes often closed, he did not sleep. Sometimes a faint sigh escaped him; sometimes he stared fixedly at the opposite wall for many moments; sometimes he lay with lowered eyelids; sometimes he moved his head in painful restlessness from side to side.

But finally, at a very late, or rather a very early, hour, sleep overmastered him. And during this sleep he was visited by a strange dream—by what many people would, perhaps unhesitatingly, call a vision, holding the old marvel-suggesting word as more pertinent to the present circumstances than any natural physical explanations. He was lying on the lounge in the sitting-room downstairs. The windows were shaded from the outer sunshine; the pale matting, the rugs, the bamboo furniture, the graceful surrounding ornaments, were all dimly evident to him. Presently his mother appeared at his side. 'Does your ankle pain you much now, Reginald?' she tenderly asked, and her hand began to smooth his hair while she spoke. 'No,' he answered; 'not at all.' And then his mother murmured, in the most natural of voices, while he seemed to feel only a vague half-surprise at her words: 'Eloise is coming home this morning, you know, with your brother Julian——' Almost imme-