
FACT AND FICTION

man lying on the grass in Hyde Park, drenched to the skin with the night's heavy rain, unconscious, and apparently dying. The papers in his pockets proved that he was Philip Vaughan. A long and desperate illness followed, and for months both life and reason trembled in the balance. Lord Liseombe hurried up to London, and Vaughan's servant explained everything. Arthur Grey had been taken ill on the homeward voyage. The symptoms would now be recognized as typhoid, but the disease had not then been diagnosed, and the ship's surgeon pronounced it "low fever." He landed at Southampton, pushed his way to London, arrived at his lodgings more dead than alive, and almost immediately sank into the coma from which he never recovered. It was impossible to communicate with Vaughan, whose address was unknown; and when his telegram arrived, announcing his instant return, the servant and the landlady agreed that he must have heard the news from some other source, and was hurrying back to see his friend before he became invisible for ever. "You're just in time" meant just in time to see the body, for the coffin was to be closed that evening.

* * * * *

The struggle was long and desperate, but Vaughan had on his side youth and a constitution, not strong indeed, but unweakened by profligacy. By slow degrees his nervous system rallied from the shock, and after a long period of foreign travel he returned, in great part, to his former habits.