

ing forward, stood a tall, attenuated figure wearing a barrister's wig and gown. The face was mobile, the cheeks were flushed with a hectic color, and long nervous fingers were still pressed, angular, upon the strings of a violin. Seated upon a hassock, with her hands locked round her knees, her head thrown back, and her great dark eyes still filled with a dreamy ecstasy, was the child.

It became necessary to speak.

"I hardly know how to explain this intrusion, even to myself. I appear to have been drawn up magnetically by your music."

"We owe our roses to him," I heard the child whisper.

The other had quietly divested himself of his wig and gown, and had laid the violin upon the table. He bowed with an old-world courtesy, then spoke.

"No need for apology, sir. My little one tells me that we owe this sweet-scented garniture of our room to you. We should have felt regret had you not paid us a visit, if only to inspect its disposition."

I was at once made welcome, with I know not what unostentatious hospitality.

That visit was but a precursor of others. One evening when I happened to call earlier than I had been wont to, I found the child seated, as usual, on the hassock, and the other standing, as when I had first seen him, clad in wig and gown. This time he did not divest himself of these on my appearance, but merely turned towards me with a smile.

"We are endeavoring to keep our faculties from rusting," he said in an explanatory manner. Seeing that I was at a loss to understand him, he continued: "The little one sits as judge, while I discourse from an imaginary brief. We find that our chamber here possesses at least one great advantage over the courts proper. Though our contention fail to give us satisfaction, we can always introduce harmony into the proceedings." And he waved his hand gravely in the direction of his violin.

The curiosity I began to feel was considerable.

"You have thrown your doors open to me," I said. "Treat me still further as one of yourselves by not allowing my presence to interrupt you."

"You must not blame me for the consequences," he exclaimed. "Sit down."

Having gained my point, I crossed to my old place by the window; and, turning to the attentive child, my host proceeded to take up his discourse at the point at which he appeared to have dropped it. Cleverly employing the manner of a bewildered speaker repeating himself, he was enabled, by this means, to capitulate for my behoof the terms of the case he was arguing. My interest certainly did not decrease as he proceeded. Gradually losing all trace of mimicry, his voice mellowed as he warmed to his subject, whilst his periods increased both in breadth and delicacy of finish. I could not but marvel at the rugged rhetorical force displayed; and I watched with a keen interest the sinuous course pursued amidst the subtlest distinctions. It all seemed so much a matter of course to the solemn child seated there on the hassock, with a fathomless look of wisdom in her great eyes, that, recalling the scene afterwards, I could almost fancy I had been dreaming.

As time passed I came to know more of this map; and as our friendship grew I obtained some

insight into the curious mosaic of his past. It was with some surprise I learnt that, though he had been banished to the bar twenty years previously, he had never taken a brief.

"I once knew an attorney," he said confidentially, as though he were making some curious revelation, "but that must have been many years ago. Such briefs as that attorney might have to dispense I was to have had; but he somehow lost sight of me. I was disappointed, and—but there, you can deduce the rest. My organism is wretchedly unsuitable for enabling me to utilise social intercourse as a lever for advancing myself in the profession. Thus the sequestered and not unenjoyable background of life has been mine." He smiled abstractedly. "And yet—note the psychological phenomenon—I wait in daily expectation of the case which is to bring me fame and discomfort." Then he turned the conversation.

At another time he told me how he and the child had come together. He had been paying a visit to a friend at one of the hospitals, and had drifted upon an event at once tragical and mysterious. A lady, whilst walking in the street with her little daughter, had been seized with a sudden illness; had been taken in and tended, and had never spoken again. The child had been interrogated as to her friends and, stupefied with grief, had replied that she knew of none. She had given an address and on inquiry being made at the house named, all that could be ascertained was that a lady had lodged there, and that her husband had died abroad some months previously. Advertisements were inserted in the newspapers, but no response to them was received. Then it was that my neighbor of Garden Court went forward and offered to take charge of the waif; and the authorities of the hospital, after inquiry, had gladly acceded to the request. Since then the strangely assorted couple had grown to love each other tenderly.

I found my thoughts constantly occupied with them. Concerning both there was something so abnormal, so foreign to my previous experience. That this middle-aged man, intellectually so graciously endowed, should after twenty years be still waiting for the brief which had never come to him within that period, appeared incredible. At night I dreamt of the subject with which my thoughts had been engaged during the day, and in my dreams what I had seen and heard combined and recombined in a myriad of fantastic forms, over which one figure seemed to preside—that of Demosthenes Coke, robed, bewigged, waiting. I tossed about feverishly, with an inexpressible longing to be concerned in some way in the fulfilment of his expectation taking possession of me. When I awoke in the morning inarticulate desire had shaped itself into articulate expression. I had merely to complete my plan.

I arose, inspected the letters which lay upon my table, and observed that one of them was from my uncle, the attorney. On opening it I found the notes of a case, in the settlement of which my assistance was required.

It appeared, from what I read, that a late client of my uncle's, on hearing of an only and beloved son having married in opposition to his wishes, had cut off all communication with him, and had subsequently died. The son had been completely lost sight of, and a nephew, presumably the heir, had