

to her forehead, then ebbed again, leaving her marble-pale. She gave a slight start, as if she would have changed her mind and kept the strangers from entering ; yet she made no motion to arrest them.

"She has just remembered something in this room that she doesn't wish us to see," thought Virginia ; but it was too late to retreat, without drawing attention to an act which she could not explain. They all went in, the others apparently suspecting nothing ; but in a second Virginia instinctively guessed the reason of her hostess's sudden constraint, and the sympathetic thrill that ran through her own veins surprised her. In a panel of the darkly wainscotted and curiously gilded wall was placed a life-size portrait of a man. It was an oil-painting, defective in technique, perhaps, but so spirited, so extraordinarily lifelike as to give an effect, at first glance in the twilight, as if a handsome young man were just stepping in through an open door. Virginia seemed to meet the brilliant, audacious eyes ; the frank, almost boyish smile was for her ; and—whether because of the half-told story of this strange house, or because of the brave young