

expression of her countenance checked me and at last, taking it up seriously, I endeavoured, by every argument that suggested itself to me, calling in the aid of religion,—philosophy and common sense, to demolish the monster her imagination had raised. In vain; I could not flatter myself that even for a moment her belief wavered. When I arose to depart, which I did, promising myself to return again and again, when I had considered the case a little, she gave me a letter sealed with black, to deliver to her husband after her death. Reflection added considerably to the uneasiness I already felt. I saw in her altered form what dire havoc imagination had already made; and when the extreme nervous susceptibility of her system was considered, there was but too much reason to apprehend the very worst might happen, unless her mind could be relieved from its present state of painful tension by some most satisfactory and conclusive means. Telling her husband his wife required amusement and change, and requesting him to procure her daily some friendly society, so that she should be as little alone as possible, I paid her myself long and frequent visits. All my spare moments I employed in searching books for anecdotes and arguments, which I trusted might prove more convincing than my own. Often in the night I congratulated myself on having found some new light wherein to place it, that must at once satisfy her. Still in vain; all my efforts failed in changing into hesitation the firm, fixed belief, so clearly to be read in her calm, mournful eyes. My prescriptions failed equally in improving her bodily health. I saw her waste almost as I watched her; I felt her pulse grow slower and weaker under my fingers, and the fatal night was fearfully near at hand. My anxiety rose almost to agony—indeed, I am persuaded that a fortnight of such suffering would have finished the doctor as well as the patient. All imaginable expedients I thought of and rejected—among others, that of bribing two men to come forward and confess they had entered her apartment, and acted the warning scene for a lark or a wager; but as she told me their features were indelibly impressed upon her mind, I abandoned that. The scheme on which I paused the longest, was that of giving her, on the fatal night, a dose of laudanum, so that she should sleep

over the dreaded hour; but her rapidly-increasing weakness obliged me to relinquish that, as too dangerous; and the nearer the day approached, the more obvious it became that her constitution would not stand opium. I asked the opinion of several of the most eminent medical men of the day; but, (as I could not introduce any of them to her without at once proving to her how ill I thought her, and which would have had the most disastrous effect,) without seeing her, and understanding her temperament, they could not conceive the danger, and thought she would get over it with a fright. Thrown thus on my own resources, with the life of this young creature, a wife and mother, depending on the wisdom of my treatment, I neglected most of my other patients to devote myself to her, and spend all my evenings with her and her husband. Her manners were always most winning, but became daily more so; she spoke to us all with such an affectionate expression. It appeared almost as though she sought to secure our love for her memory, when she herself should be summoned away.

On the evening of the 8th of April, the evening but one before the dread night, she was suddenly seized with a violent fit of hysterics, succeeded by fainting fits. Colonel Delaware, who for some time past had, with the usual blindness of affection, imagined that his wife was recovering, now, for the first time, as he knelt by the side of the bed to which we had carried her, perceived partly the imminence of her danger. I cheered him, poor fellow, as much as possible, and on seeing Mrs. Delaware comparatively restored, I returned home; and after a night of most anxious consideration as to means of getting my patient over the dreaded midnight hour, the remembrance of a play I had seen when a boy flashed upon my mind, and I instantly determined to adopt the old stage trick of changing the clocks. My plan, though it presented some difficulties, was soon arranged in my mind, and I began, for the first time for several days to entertain hope. The next evening I confided to the Colonel that his wife had a fixed idea that on the following night she would have an attack similar to the one she had just recovered from, which would be the crisis of her malady; that I myself thought it not improbable the excited state of her nerves