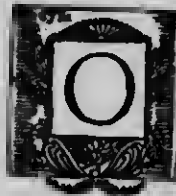


XLVIII



ON this Monday afternoon Mrs. Hunter despatched her brother to New York, a thoroughly alarmed man, and he thus passes out of this story toward the sad fate of those who lack power to resist temptation.

Mrs. Swanwick, to Mary's great relief and somewhat to her surprise, appeared at Edgewood on Tuesday morning, and Mrs. Hunter, who had returned the afternoon of the day before, was not pleased with this addition of another and a too watchful witness.

Mr. Fairthorne kept his room on Monday. He was restless all day, complaining of sharp pains in his heart, and asked repeatedly for Lucretia. Dr. Soper had been sent for, and had advised quiet and turkey soup rather than chicken soup. He hoped the arsenical drops would be given punctually ten minutes before the meal, but if unfortunately forgotten then to be given ten minutes after the meal. Above all, there should be no excitement. He went away, as usual, optimistically at ease, leaving the nieces by no means reassured.

Mrs. Hunter had a late supper, having arrived after dinner. After a little more packing, she sat