

A HOUSE OF TEARS.

CHAPTER I.

TWELVE years ago I bought a practice and rented a house in a London suburb. I was then in my thirtieth year : consequently I am now forty-two. Most men, especially men of my profession, are young at thirty years of age, but I was never a young man. At forty-two, not a very advanced age, I am quite an old man. My face is haggard and my hair is gray.

I cannot now explain how it came to pass that I selected medicine as a profession. I had little taste for the practical portion of my studies : unsightly objects always created an almost overwhelming sense of disgust within me. I fainted at my first entry into a dissecting chamber. Still, the theoretical portion of my studies had, even in the beginning, a strong attraction for me ; and by the time I found myself fully qualified to kill or cure there was established within me