

nervous and depressed. When my new friend Strange and I parted for the night, I felt as little disposed to go to rest as I ever did in my life. The thunder was still lingering among the mountains in the midst of which our inn was placed. Sometimes it seemed nearer, and at other times farther off; but it never left off altogether, except for a few minutes at a time. I was quite unable to shake off a succession of painful ideas which persistently besieged my mind.

"It is hardly necessary to add, that I thought from time to time of my travelling-companion in the next room. His image was almost continually before me. He had been dull and depressed all the evening, and when we parted for the night there was a look in his eyes which I could not get out of my memory.

"There was a door between our rooms, and the partition dividing them was not very solid; and yet I had heard no sound since I parted from him which could indicate that he was there at all, much less that he was awake and stirring. I was in a mood, sir, which made this silence terrible to me; and so many foolish fancies—as that he was lying there dead, or in a fit, or what not—took possession of me that at last I could bear it no longer. I went to the door, and, after listening, very attentively but quite in vain, for any sound, I at last knocked pretty sharply. There was no answer. Feeling that longer suspense would be unendurable, I, without more ceremony, turned the handle and went in.

"It was a great bare room, and so imperfectly lighted by a single candle that it was almost impossible—except when the lightning flashed—to see into its great dark corners. A small rickety bedstead stood against one of the walls, shrouded by yellow cotton curtains, passed through a great iron ring in the ceiling. There was, for all other furniture, an old chest of drawers which served also as a washing-stand, having a small basin and ewer and a single towel arranged on the top of it. There were, moreover, two ancient chairs and a dressing-table. On this last stood a large old-fashioned looking-glass with a carved frame.

"I must have seen all these things, because I remember them so well now; but I do not know how I could have seen them, for it seems to me that, from the moment of my entering that room, the action of my senses and of the faculties of my mind was held fast by the ghastly figure which stood motionless before the looking-glass in the middle of the empty room.

"How terrible it was! The weak light of one candle standing on the table shone upon Strange's face, lighting it from below, and throwing (as I now remember) his shadow, vast and black, upon the wall behind him and upon the ceiling overhead. He was leaning rather forward, with his hands upon the table supporting him, and gazing into the glass which stood before him with a horrible fixity. The sweat was on his white face; his rigid features and his pale lips, shown in that feeble light, were horrible, more than words can tell, to look at. He was so completely stupefied and lost that the noise I had made in knocking and entering the room was unobserved by him. Not even when I called him loudly by name did he move or his face change.

"What a vision of horror that was, in the great dark empty room, in a silence that was something more than negative,—that ghastly figure frozen into stone by some unexplained terror! And the silence and the stillness! The very thunder had ceased now. My heart stood still with fear. Then, moved by some instinctive feeling, under whose influence I acted mechanically, I crept with slow steps nearer and nearer the table, and at last, half expecting to see some spectre even more horrible than this which I saw already, I looked over his shoulder into the looking-glass. I happened to touch his arm, though only in the slightest manner. In that one moment the spell which had held him—who knows how long?—enchained, seemed broken, and he lived in this world again. He turned round upon

me, as suddenly as a tiger makes its spring, and seized me by the arm.

"I have told you, that, even before I entered my friend's room, I had felt, all that night, depressed and nervous. The necessity for action at this time was, however, so obvious, and this man's agony made all that I had felt appear so trifling, that much of my own discomfort seemed to leave me. I felt that I must be strong.

"The face before me almost unmanned me. The eyes which looked into mine were so scared with terror, the lips—if I may say so—looked so speechless. The wretched man gazed long into my face, and then, still holding me by the arm, slowly, very slowly, turned his head. I had gently tried to move him away from the looking-glass, but he would not stir, and now he was looking into it as fixedly as ever. I could bear this no longer, and, using such force as was necessary, I drew him gradually away, and got him to one of the chairs at the foot of the bed. 'Come!' I said,—after the long silence my voice, even to myself, sounded strange and hollow,—'come! You are over-tired, and you feel the weather. Don't you think you ought to be in bed? Suppose you lie down. Let me try my medical skill in mixing you a composing draught.'

"He held my hand, and looked eagerly into my eyes. 'I am better now,' he said, speaking at last very faintly. Still he looked at me in that wistful way. It seemed as if there were something that he wanted to do or say, but had not sufficient resolution. At length he got up from the chair to which I had led him, and, beckoning me to follow him, he went across the room to the dressing-table, and stood again before the glass. A violent shudder passed through his frame as he looked into it; but, apparently forcing himself to go through with what he had now begun, he remained where he was, and, without looking away, moved to me with his hand to come and stand beside him. I complied.

"'Look in there!' he said, in an almost inaudible tone. He was supported, as before, by his hands resting on the table, and could only bow with his head towards the glass, to intimate what he meant. 'Look in there!' he repeated.

"I did as he asked me.

"'What do you see?' he asked next.

"'See?' I repeated, trying to speak as cheerfully as I could, and describing the reflection of his own face as nearly as I could. 'I see a very, very pale face with sunken cheeks—'

"'What?' he cried, with an alarm in his voice which I could not understand.

"'With sunken cheeks,' I went on, 'and two hollow eyes with large pupils.'

"I saw the reflection of my friend's face change, and felt his hand clutch my arm even more tightly than he had done before. I stopped abruptly and looked round at him. He did not turn his head towards me, but, gazing still into the looking-glass, seemed to labour for utterance.

"'What!' he stammered at last. 'Do—you—see it—too?'

"'See what?' I asked, quickly.

"'That face!' he cried, in accents of horror. 'That face—which is not mine—and which—I SEE INSTEAD OF MINE—always!'

"I was struck speechless by the words. In a moment this mystery was explained,—but what an explanation! Worse, a hundred times worse, than anything I had imagined. What! Had this man lost the power of seeing his own image as it was reflected there before him? and, in its place, was there the image of another? Had he changed reflections with some other man? The frightfulness of the thought struck me speechless for a time; then I saw how false an impression my silence was conveying.

"'No, no, no!' I cried, as soon as I could speak,—'a hundred times, no! I see you, of course, and only you. It was your face I attempted to describe, and no other.'

"He seemed not to hear me. Why, look there!' he said, in a low, indistinct voice,

pointing to his own image in the glass. 'Whose face do you see there?'

"'Why, yours, of course.' And then, after a moment, I added, 'Whose do you see?'

"He answered, like one in a trance, 'His,—only his,—always his!' He stood still a moment, and then, with a loud and terrific scream, repeated those words, 'ALWAYS HIS, ALWAYS HIS,' and fell down in a fit before me.

"I knew what to do now. Here was a thing which, at any rate, I could understand. I had with me my usual small stock of medicines and surgical instruments, and I did what was necessary,—first to restore my unhappy patient, and next procure for him the rest he needed so much. He was very ill,—at death's door for some days, and I could not leave him, though there was urgent need that I should be back in London. When he began to mend, I sent over to England for my servant—John Masey—whom I knew I could trust. Acquainting him with the outlines of the case, I left him in charge of my patient, with orders that he should be brought over to this country as soon as he was fit to travel.

"That awful scene was always before me. I saw this devoted man, day after day, with the eyes of my imagination, sometimes destroying in his rage the harmless looking-glass, which was the immediate cause of his suffering, sometimes transfixed before the horrid image that turned him to stone. I recollect coming upon him once when we were stopping at a roadside inn, and seeing him stand so by broad daylight. His back was turned towards me, and I waited and watched him for nearly half an hour, as he stood there motionless and speechless and appearing not to breathe. I am not sure but that this apparition seen so by daylight was more ghastly than that apparition seen in the middle of the night, with the thunder rumbling among the hills.

"Back in London in his own house, where he could command in some sort the objects which should surround him, poor Strange was better than he would have been elsewhere. He seldom went out except at night; but once or twice I have walked with him by daylight, and have seen him terribly agitated when we have had to pass a shop in which looking-glasses were exposed for sale.

"It is nearly a year now since my poor friend followed me down to this place, to which I have retired. For some months he has been daily getting weaker and weaker, and a disease of the lungs has become developed in him, which has brought him to his death-bed. I should add, by the by, that John Masey has been his constant companion ever since I brought them together, and I have had, consequently, to look after a new servant.

"And now tell me," the doctor added, bringing his tale to an end, "did you ever hear a more miserable history, or was ever man haunted in a more ghastly manner than this man?"

I was about to reply, when we heard a sound of footsteps outside, and before I could speak old Masey entered the room, in haste and disorder.

"I was just telling this gentleman," the doctor said, not at the moment observing old Masey's changed manner, "how you deserted me to go over to your present master."

"Ah! sir," the man answered, in a troubled voice, "I'm afraid he won't be my master long."

The doctor was on his legs in a moment.

"What! Is he worse?"

"I think, sir, he is dying," said the old man.

"Come with me, sir; you may be of use if you can keep quiet." The doctor caught up his hat as he addressed me in those words, and in a few minutes we had reached the Compensation House. A few seconds more and we were standing in a darkened room on the first floor, and I saw lying on a bed before me—pale, emaciated, and, as it seemed, dying—the man whose story I had just heard.

He was lying with closed eyes when we came into the room, and I had leisure to examine his features. What a tale of misery they told!

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