

there are mysteries, my dear, in this human frame of ours which, dissect and pull them to pieces as we may, we cannot discover. It is where spirit and flesh join that we doctors are baffled. If I dare go back so far, I would say, Some young mother of the Irrian race was shown that dead hand and told of its curse, and her child when born had the fear and power of the hand in its nerves. Now, passing all this traditionary lore, let us get at some shred of truth. To obey Mr. Irrian's request, we must make a search which will prove at least that a man died and was buried."

But in this matter tradition was the only clue to go by, and tradition said that "without bell or book" the prisoner was buried at dead of night beneath the floor of his dungeon. So the stones of the old disused forgotten place of horror were removed, and beneath was found a human skeleton—proof that under the black shade of its damp vaulted roof some living man had agonised and died. There he lay, compassed murkily about with the the twisted tangle of legend and of fear that the centuries had wound about him; and from out the murkiness could be dragged only these bleached bones.

From such a poor, sad, helpless heap as this was it possible such a history of sorrow, death, and vengeance could arise? It seemed so, for, though the flesh dies, the spirit lives.

With a doctor's eye and surgeon's touch Doctor Arnold handled and looked at these poor remnants.

"It is odd," he said; "but the right hand is certainly missing."

They all retraced their steps up the dark winding stairs and through the maze of old dark passages, contrived for sin, into the living sunshine and the day; then Estrild turned to Harold with a sigh of relief, and both felt life was very fair, and light was lovely, and God's earth very good.

"He was shut out from all these," Estrild said softly; "and we realize now the cruelty of it, and guess dimly at the suffering. But surely now he will be at rest, for the prophecy written on his portrait is fulfilled to the letter!" Then she repeated the lines known at Trame, which Mary had given to Gilbert. "If you had not risked your life in that dreadful leap," continued Estrild, clinging closer to her lover's arm, "I must have died—the water was very near."

They had strolled into the garden and were alone, and Harold's answer was pressed upon her lips.

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