long gone! Women *are* so—and you must even be patient, Master Absalom. . . .

"But, mind you, this was not the first I ever knew of this disorder of Sir Oliver's. Ask her ladyship what I told her at Kips Manor; it was when she herself had seen something of it, and spoke of it to me. But I could not tell her of all the times I had seen it. Too much would have come to light over that.

"Only, mark you—the most that I had seen in old years fell short of this. To wander out so far from his sleeping-room, all ill-clad and exposed to the cold morning air, un-looking in his sleep—for so he must have done—some securely-closed door! . . . it was outside all I knew of him at his worst. So that, to see him thus, I was as nigh con-founded as I might have been had I come fresh to the sight of it. I was afeared—and that's the truth!

"However, I was not too frightened to see one thing plain; that I could pass him, myself unseen, and get away at my quickest into concealment again. There was no time to lose, for he would be missed, and followed, to a certainty. Now, no path led to the stable-door except the Box Walk itself, unless, indeed, I had risked meeting some-one coming from the house to search for the wanderer. So I walked straight on.

"Sir Oliver turned from the fountain basin, and walked towards me as I came. I was not very near him yet, but I could see that he seemed laughing to himself, though his eyes had no expression. He stopped, after a few paces.

"You can recollect the place, Master Absalom, to know where and how we stood? . . . Well—what follows befell thus. I walk on, mark you, to pass him by, he being in mid-pathway. Of a sudden I see his face change, as though he waked. His eyes are fixed on mine, and he understands. I, too, understand, and then I see that my