

ENOCK CRANE

ment he hesitated. Then he felt for the small key on his watch-chain, and unlocked the tiny drawer containing the daguerreotype of the young girl with the dark, wistful eyes. For a moment he held it in his hand.

"My wife at eighteen," he said, returning to the table and holding the portrait under the light.

Joe bent over it reverently, studying the delicate features, the drooping, melancholy mouth, the wondering, dark eyes.

"What a beautiful face!" he said.

"Yes, poor child, she was beautiful—*then*," returned Enoch.

"What wonderful eyes!" said Joe.

"Yes," said Enoch. "They reflected her whole nature; her sensitiveness, her melancholy, high-strung intensity. Too delicate a mechanism to last; a nature capable of great suffering—gentle natures always are. One who loved with her whole heart—her whole being—her very soul. When the change came, all this complex and delicate fabric withered—was consumed to ashes like lace in a flame. She became another being; when the mind is gone there is nothing left. I wanted you to see her as she was," said he, returning the portrait to the drawer and locking it. Then seating himself on the arm of his chair, he continued, in a calm voice full of courage: "I must return to Ravenswood to-night. The funeral is on Monday. Explain my absence to Moses—to the rest, if you like, simply say that I am out of town, and if——"