

"She is gone!" said one.

"I knew He would take her!" said the widow, rising to her feet; "I never prayed to Him in vain!"

"No, no," cried the surgeon, "lower her head.—a little wiser, Mr.—," addressing the clerk.

She sighed deeply and slowly returned to consciousness. In the meantime the vessels had been secured, and the dressing having been completed with much dexterity, she was conveyed to one of the side-rooms of the accident ward.

The surgeon immediately came forward, and showing the assemblage the extensive and severe nature of the injury, informed them that the means they had seen used were the only ones that could be had recourse to to save the patient's life. He adverted to the unusual and very trying nature of the scene altogether, and recommended them never to be unprepared for such occurring in their own future practice. He concluded by stating that he had no doubt the case would do well.

Next morning we found she had passed a good night; indeed, all promised a rapid recovery. The second night she slept well, and there continued to be no indication of an unfavourable result.

Immediately after the operation I wrote to Southern an account of it. The next day's post from Westwater brought me the following answer:—

"My dear—,

"I regret exceedingly my idea of carrying the girl Granton to the city. The adventure should have been consummated at Westwater;—but, indeed, what with her own and her mother's madness, I always had doubts about whether the affair could be brought to a desirable wind-up. I think she can be of little use to me now, after being pruned in the manner you describe, so Williams may have her for me. I leave her a leg-acy to him—eh? By the way, I should like to have the job hushed up as quietly possible, as it may interfere with another small piece of business I am about to engage in. When will you be out to Westwater? I have a number of things to show you,—one a new application of the eccentric motion in lappet-weaving, an idea I hope you will give me some credit for. I have found the book, too, that denies the paddle-wheel to be a modern invention; but you will hear and see all when you come.

"Believe me, my dear—,

"Yours very truly,

"EDWARD SOUTHERN."

This most heartless and depraved letter I actually read twice over, before I could convince myself of its reality; and from that moment I resolved never to hold communication with such an atrocious scoundrel.

Next day I went in to see how she was. I found her mother absent. She appeared overjoyed to see me alone.

"Well, Mr.—," said she, with much animation, "has he come—is he here?"

"Do not think of him any more Cheeny," said I, "you have been most dreadfully deceived by him. He is a most unprincipled villain."

She stared at me with a look as if she had not understood me.

"Did you write to him?" said she at length.

At this moment the thought forcibly seized me, "Shall I not endeavour, even at the eleventh hour, to disabuse her of this delusion, and show her at once the character by whom she has been so wofully duped?" I put the letter into her hands.

She caught it quickly and rose up in the bed to read it.

"Ah," said she, "how well I know that noble hand, so beautiful, so manly, so like himself!" She pressed it to her lips and bosom. I watched her as she read; she grew very pale, while a look of bewilderment overspread her features. She read it through without appearing quite to understand it; then looked at the signature, the date, and the address; then drawing in a deep breath, and passing her hand over her forehead, to hold aside the yellow curls that were wanting across it, began again, and read it over once more. When she had done, she seemed for a moment in a kind of stupor, then dropping the paper on the bed, fell back upon the pillow, and, covering her face with her hands, turned toward the wall.

My heart smote me on the instant for what I had done. I could not stand beside her. I left the side-room, and, going off to my own apartments, sat down alone to curse my extreme folly.

Next day, at the hour of visit, the poor girl was reported delirious, the affection being what medical men call the low, muttering delirium, as distinguished by Dupuytren from the excited disorder usually called by that name. Two days this lasted, during which she took nothing but the stimulants usually administered in such cases. On the third I went to see her. She gave a weak languid smile when I entered, and, when I took her wrist, pressed my hand, while a single tear stood in each sunken eye. Her face was now fearfully changed. No one could have believed her to be the fair factory-girl I have elsewhere so vainly attempted to describe. Her cheeks were hollow, her skin wan and clammy, her lips shrunken and livid—nothing of her bright beauty remained save the golden tresses and the beaming blue eye. Her mother was beside her; and, from the absence of the delirium, entertained strong hopes of her recovery. She had one of the hospital bibles on her knee, from which she continued to read, but all the while I saw that her daughter's thoughts and attentions were far, far away.

Next morning I went to see her again, and was made aware of one of the most singular and incredible phenomena that have ever come under my experience. When I entered she seemed much excited. She motioned me to her, for she was now so weak she could scarcely make herself heard.

"What men are these that came and took me away, Mr.—?"

"Took you away, Cheeny, what do you mean?"

"Why, two dark, indistinct men, that came here last night when I was asleep. They opened the door, and came in with a black board, laid me on it, and carried me away down a narrow, crooked staircase, along a cold long passage, that sounded strangely and drearily as they walked, till we came to a big black door, marked No. 14, for the moon shone through a little grated window, and I could see it quite plainly, though motionless with weakness, cold and terror. The door opened, and they bore me into a large, cold, and dark place, with a high window, with iron bars, and having a curious, earthy smell. They then laid me on a table, and left me, locking the door as they went. I lay for some time, when another door opened, and I could see into a large square hall, crowded with dim figures. One of them, a tall, dark being, approached me; I fainted away, and on coming to myself found that I had been

conveyed back. Oh Mr.—, this is a strange place, and we trust in you for protection; did they take me for dead, and were they going to dissect me?"

She told me this with an appearance of extreme terror. For my part I was thunderstruck, and utterly at a loss. She had described with the most unerring exactness the private stair of the ward, a long underground passage which communicated with the cellars, &c. of the hospital, the dead-house, the fatal No. 14, on which she said the moon shone through the little window, and, lastly, the clinical lecture-room. Now, both morally and physically, it was impossible she could have left the side-room, for the night-nurse sat up in the ward all the night, and had observed nothing; besides, in my own pocket was the key of the private ward opening out upon the staircase, which I had locked with my own hands the evening before, this being part of my duty in the house, and which, on examination, I now found as I had left it. Of course sleepwalking is out of the question. But so exactly had she described it! And then, along with that fact, to think that she never in her life had been in the hospital, in this city, indeed out of Westwater at all, and that when she was brought in she entered by the large front door, and up the great stone staircase I at first described, to the ward; that from thence to the operating theatre, and back again to the side-room, comprised the whole of her removals! It was indeed a most inexplicable dream, delusion, or whatever you may call it, and one of those facts that seem to sport with our ignorance of that most mysterious branch of science, the physiology of the nervous system. I mentioned it afterwards at a society meeting to a student, a friend of my own, and he referred me for an explanation to the study of Mesmerism.

Unable at the time to trust my own reason—she persisted so strongly in her statement—having procured the key of the door No. 14, I opened the private door of the ward and descended the staircase. On reaching the door I could not help pondering on the precision with which she had described every particular. On going into the dead-house (a large stone-paved place, with a high barred window, where the bodies of those who died in the hospital were kept till removed by their friends) I found everything as should be, and no trace of any one having been there.

As I returned along the passage, musing upon the above, I was met by the sub-porter of the institution, who informed me that there was somebody outside the back-door (by which the friends of patients were admitted, though only at a particular hour.) The person had been knocking furiously for a considerable time, he told me, but had latterly been a little more quiet. I bade him unfasten the door, which opened into a quiet lane, leading down the hospital and a large churchyard. He did so. A man was sitting upon the step. I touched him with my foot, when he sprang to his feet, and showed me—Williams. I was much surprised. He looked exceedingly worn and haggard.

"Bless me, Williams!" said I; "I thought you were in London. How did you come here?"

"Oh, I cannot tell you, Mr.—. Is she living?"

"She is; but very, very ill. Williams." "Oh, let me see her, good Mr.—, as you hope yourself for mercy?"

Well, so you shall, but come in and compose yourself a little. It is against rule; you should have had an order from the matron; but I will go and get you one."