

the heap of dry stalks, the faint crackle grew into a snapping blaze that rushed upward with a sudden roar, and the booby bag was wreathed in tongues of flame. Never have I seen a more beautiful fire, or gazed with such a strange mixture of emotions at the fascinating leap and play of the flames. It was a period in our lives, Joseph's and mine, I moralised, and even as the gross elements of our natures subjected to the scorching fire of love became transmuted and purified of——

There are times, when given the occasion, I might preach a wondrous sermon; this was one of them, but my train of thought was interrupted by a muffled stentorian shouting from the direction of The Briars, which led me to run to the edge of the field, from where the lights of the house were clearly visible. I listened intently, and the sounds reached me in a sort of savage rhythm and cadence that I knew too well,—Joseph's performance had begun!

So I stood and listened, a distant, fascinated auditor and speculator; for I could see the light in the kitchen, and though the words were indistinct I well knew every syllable he uttered, and that