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Confessions of a Maniac.

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(Concluded from Page 148.)

Emile was standing at the door of my new house, smiling the kindest welcome as I approached. It was a cold day, and he had ready for me a cheerful fire, which he stirred with great energy, after he had drawn for me my favourite chair beside it.

"Here is not exactly the same aspect of things," said he, "as we find at the parsonage: but here is all that is necessary to make a Christian contented; and you, Flora, I am sure, will not wish for more."

I answered with a heavy sigh; for I felt that the contentment of a Christjan was not mine to feel.

It was a peculiar feature in the character of Emile, that he spoke rarely, and with apparent difficulty, of his own feelings. He seemed to live for others, not for himself; and thus, though his loss had been so much heavier than mine, he never alluded to his own personal affliction; but assumed a constant cheerfulness of manner, in the hope of imparting it to me.

"I must now tell you," he said, "in plain terms, that I am promising myself the pleasure of spending a long evening with you, if you will allow me to be your guest. I set off on my journey for Cambridge to-night. A chaise will come for me at ten, and I hope to meet the mail at eleven."

I had started too evidently at this intelligence, and I endeavoured to conceal my emotion, by asking, in a tone of assumed indifference, if he expected to stay long at Cambridge.

"I am unable to say," he replied, "how long. It will depend upon how and when my future lot is fixed. As soon as I learned that Mr. B—— intended taking the whole duty of this parish himself, I made application in two quarters, and at present I have nothing to do but to wait patiently until the line of duty is pointed out to me."

"Then you leave this place entirely?" said I, the words absoulutely choking me as I uttered them.

"Entirely," he replied, "except that I hope sometimes to visit the friends I leave behind. And, Flora, you will write to me often, will you not? And tell me all about the schools, and the work-house, and the poor old people?"

What else he said, I cannot tell. I felt a coldness, like death, stealing over me. In another moment I should have lost the power to escape, and my secret might have been betrayed. Fortunately, I started up, and, rushing into my own chamber, gave way to such a violent burst of grief, that my servant came to my assistance. She had lately become expert in administering my favourite remedies, and now entreated that I would take something to support my strength, for that I had had nothing that day.

She brought me my accustomed medicine. It seemed to produce no effect. I took a double quantity, and soon began to feel as if I could bear to look the fact in the face, that Emile was really going to leave me.

My servant carried down a report that I was ill. Emile was alarmed. He sent up many messages of inquiry, and offers of assistance. I should have gone down earlier, but that on turning towards the glass, I saw my face all flushed and heated, and looking any thing but ill. I could not, however, for this reason, afford to lose the last evening I might possibly ever spend in the society of Emile.

He met me on the stairs, with a look of the most anxious solicitude.

"It is all over," said I, "if was a mere nothing—only a sort of faintness I am subject to."

I would gladly have changed the subject; but he stood beside

my chair, hung over me, and looked into my face, with an expression of the deepest concern.

"And what do you take for this faintness, Flora?" said he. "Why, to-day," I answered—"I have taken—my servant brought me a small quantity of brandy. I was almost insensible at the time, and should probably have taken anything else that she might have offered to me."

"Brandy," said he very gravely, "is a dangerous medicine." "I take so very little," said I, endeavouring to smile off the subject, and at the same time blushing deeply,— "I take so very little, and really I don't know what else would do me good. Can you tell me?"

"I am not much skilled in medicine; yet thus far I dare go; and I repeat, that brandy is a dangerous medicine for you. I will not deny that there are cases where it may do good to the body, if it does not endanger the mind. But do not trust yourself to it, Flora; it is worse than poison to you."

"What can you mean Emile? Do you think I am addicted to intemperance?"

"Far, far from you and me be such a thought!"

"Then what can you mean?"

"I mean, Flora, that your character as well as your circumstances are peculiar. I mean, that you are one whose talents must be employed, whose conscience must be satisfied, and whose affections must have an object; and that you never can know happiness without one or all of these. Yet it has pleased God, as if, for your especial trial, so to place you for the present, that you will have no regular occupations to demand your attention, no relative duties to call you out of yourself, and no object to love.

"Spare me, Emile! in mercy spare me! I knew the horrors of my fate before. Why will you place them before me in this new and hideous form?"

"Think not, dear Flora, that I would willingly exaggerate, what you call the horrors of your situation. Far happier to me would be the task of making the duties which still await you, more attractive than they are. Permit me, however, as a Christian friend, to be faithful to you. Permit me to feel as if you were in reality my sister."

"Then when you speak of duties, Emile, you must tell me, as a friend, what you think mine are; for I have looked around, but it appears to me that I have no place in society—no business on the earth—and"—I would have added, but feared to shock his feelings by an exposure of the real state of mine—"no claim to an inheritance in heaven."

"You grieve me to the heart," said he, "when you talk in this melancholy strain, so unworthy of your principles, and of yourself. I entreat you, Flora, to shake off these morbid miseries, and to be again your better self."

"Never! I shall never be again what I was!"

"You will never, it is true, be again the cherished daughter of a proud and happy parent; but there is still between your heavenly Father and yourself, the same relation as before, the same account of responsibilities to render, the same to fulfil. It is not with you as with many others, who have simply been born within the pale of Christian fellowship. You have publicly acknowledged, and in some respects acted upon, a more especial call to honour your Saviour's name. Your talents, your genius, all increase your influence, and your influence increases your responsibility."

"You forget, Emile, that there is no one now left for me to influence, either for good or evil."

"No, Flora, it would not be easy for me to forget, that you have now no one to cherish with your love, no one to look up to you with partial admiration, no one to be cheered by your coming in, or saddened by your going out, no one to receive from you the kind offices of strictly affect on. I must forget my own existence,