

ance, her unfailing interest, and her softly genial manner presented powerful inducements toward resignation.

A fortnight of absolute inability to walk left Reginald, at its end, equal to occasional hobbling peregrinations about the house, with the aid of a stout cane. And what, now, were his feelings toward the woman whose many kind offices had so lessened the acuteness of past pain and the tedium of enforced inaction? It would have been scarcely possible for his esteem of her character by any noteworthy degree to deepen; but in so far as concerned his less rational and reflective valuation of her excellences, he was very willing to assure himself that a marked change had taken place. Nothing is more difficult to trace with accurate precision than are the shadowy boundaries between an excess of devout spiritual respect, as in a case like Reginald's, and that warmer unreasonable state of sexual attraction which dispenses with self-inquiry and lapses away into the bland heedlessness of rosy sentiment. Reginald felt sure that he had passed these boundaries, and was repeatedly on the verge of telling Beatrice so, in appropriately ardent words. Indeed, it happened, on a certain morning, that, after Beatrice had read aloud for more than an hour from Browning's 'Men and Women,' and then left him upon the lounge in the sitting-room, the man took himself severely to task for useless procrastination.

It was about mid-day, and the windows were shaded coolly from the somewhat fierce July sunshine outside; a dreamy veil of dusk covered the lightly elegant appointments of the room—its pale matting; its soft-blue rugs, scattered over the floor; its slender bamboo furniture, and its many tasteful ornaments of statuette or book-rack or flower-filled vase. Reginald's self-reproaches, vehement for a slight while, soon took the form of a gently comfortable resolution, much

in accordance with the tranquil ease of his surroundings. Yes, at the next opportunity—which would doubtless occur that same afternoon, when Beatrice had promised to renew her reading—he would end all further needless delay. It even occurred to him that a certain graceful relativity and sequence might be made to surround the words which he contemplated speaking, if he should suggest that she read from the latter passages of the 'Princess,' where, though small resemblance exists between the position of Ida toward her wounded lover and that of Beatrice toward himself, there would still be an almost exquisite fund of suggestiveness in those lovely lines which describe how two wedded souls, each with its separate yet similar lofty aim, each with its reciprocal tribute of respect, affection and trust, may in the end reach that sweet triumph of

'The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,
Life.'

Shortly after this dilettante piece of meditation, Reginald fell into a pleasant doze. His ankle had rather murdered sleep on the previous evening, and doubtless for this reason his nap was a somewhat sound one. Awakening about a half-hour later, he was straightway conscious of having been roused from sleep by some sharply disturbing agency. His lounge was close against one of the side windows of the room. Loud cries, as though from a terrified child, were sounding somewhere near, and he soon discovered that they seemed to emanate from a portion of the lawn just beyond this window. With but slight effort he was able to throw back the blinds. There was no piazza against this portion of the house, and a green sweep of sunlit lawn was immediately brought to view. At a distance of perhaps fifty yards away, he perceived two figures, one that of a little girl, the daughter of the head gardener, Haslitt, while the other figure was plainly that of Bea-