

countenance, for I saw her in her carriage but two days since ; I was not very close to her, certainly, but near enough to see she is as pretty as ever."

"Nevertheless, my friend, she is dying," rejoined Colonel Delaware.

"Dying!—good God! and we sit talking here ; let us hasten to her instantly, and you will explain the circumstances while we are on the road," I hurriedly uttered, while preparing to invest myself with the overcoat that is ever the companion of my midnight rambles.

To my surprise, my visitor stirred not, but mournfully shaking his head, said, "Not so, my dear doctor, you cannot see her to-night ; whether we can manage for you ever to do so, I know not ; for now she resolutely refuses to have any advice, asserting that her malady is beyond the reach of human skill."

"Pooh, nonsense! and you suffer her to injure herself physically and morally, by giving way to such caprices," said I, very crossly, throwing down the coat, and planting myself in my own chair—for I can be a little testy when those in whom I am interested will not do as I think they ought.—Softening, however, as I looked more closely into my friend's face, I added, "At least, tell me all you can. Where is the seat of her complaint? how long has it been apparent? and what are its symptoms?"

"I can only tell you," he replied, "that about a month since, she began to waste away, losing both appetite and strength, and also to a great degree the power of sleeping ; she turns with disgust from all sustenance, and it is with the greatest difficulty she can be persuaded to swallow a few spoonfuls of any food in the course of the day. That pure colour you used to admire, now only appears in sudden flushes ; she will not admit that she is ill, yet she has been frequently observed to shed tears over her boy, pressing him to her heart with almost convulsive energy. Since I was elected a member of the House of Commons, I have had a separate sleeping apartment, fearing that the late hours I am obliged to keep might disturb Clara, whose constitution, you have often told me, though not sickly, is very delicate. In the day-time she will scarcely suffer me to remain five minutes away from her ; so that I could not have come to you

at any other time but this, when she believes me engaged at the House. Above all things, she implores me not to acquaint you with her state."

"She is afraid I shall cure her, I suppose," I said, this time to myself, feeling a little nettled at this want of confidence towards an old friend of her father's, who had known her from her birth. "All this is exceedingly unsatisfactory, and I can come to no conclusion from it," I observed, after a minute's reflection. "The fact is, I must see her myself, and I will be at your house to-morrow about eleven o'clock. Don't be alarmed," I continued, anticipating the words he was about to utter, "I will make my visit appear a purely accidental one."

He then rose to depart, and as I conducted him to the door, I endeavoured to cheer him by expressing the conviction I really felt, that he had, through over-solicitude, magnified the evil ; I then returned to my fireside to meditate on what had passed.

As I write this principally for the guidance of my young successors in the healing art, should they ever encounter a similar case, I must describe Clara Delaware. She was the only child of a young Spanish lady of high rank, who was found near the field of Albuhera, by Colonel, then Captain Mortimer, entirely unprotected, having lost her father and two brothers in the engagement ; she was only ten years of age, and her preserver sent her over to England, where she remained for six years under the care of his aunt. At the expiration of that time, Mortimer married her. After they had been united about a year, she died in giving birth to Clara. For eighteen years the sorrowing husband devoted himself to the care of the legacy his wife had left him ; he then esteemed himself fortunate in being able to bestow her hand on Colonel Delaware, to whom her heart was already given. His task being thus accomplished, two months after his daughter's marriage, his spirit fled to rejoin her whom he loved so well. This was the first sorrow Clara had ever known, and so deeply did it affect her, that for months I despaired of saving her, and only the joy of becoming a parent herself effectually roused her from the deep dejection her father's loss had plunged her into. She inherited her mother's almost Eastern style of beauty and acutely nervous temperament,