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THE MYSTERY OF MARTHA WARNE.

(A TALE OF MONTREAL)

BY

ARTHUR CAMPBELL.

MONTREAL:

J. THEO. ROBINSON, PUBLISHER.

THE

MYSTERY OF MARTHA WARNE.

CHAPTER I.

I do not believe in ghosts; I am not superstitious. If I were I should be a miserable man. All stories of apparitions, visions, and that sort of thing I have always ignored; I look upon them as merely so many idle tales, having no real foundation in fact. Spiritualism I have ever believed to be a fraud; and I have no patience with those who seek to unravel the secrets of the future. But let those who have studied this subject, and who, like me, regard all such things as idle and unprofitable delusions, endeavour to explain what I am about to relate. As for myself I shall never attempt to give an explanation; it would be worse than useless for me to try to do so. When I think of all that has happened to me, my brain becomes confused and my head swims; it was only today that I stood still for a moment in the street, and asked myself if it were not impossible that such things should be. I could not answer the question; I cannot answer it. I shall not try. But I shall tell the very truth; I shall not change, nor add, nor conceal, a single item in the record of this, my wonderful experience.

I have not told my wife. If I did she would not believe me. If she thought that I was serious she would become alarmed lest I be about to lose my reason. When she reads this she will have no idea that it was I who wrote it. I have not told my friends. I have told no one. I do not even hope to be believed. Yet it is absolutely necessary for my own peace of mind that I should take the world into my confidence. By doing so I am well aware that I shall only succeed in making a very mysterious circumstance seem yet more mysterious. I cannot help that. I believe that it is my duty to tell what I have to tell in as few words as possible, and be done with it. I do so. Those who scoff at it as fact may relish it as fiction. In either case my mind will be relieved of an almost intolerable burden.

Of myself I need say little. I am a physician, and have a large practice. I reside in the city of Montreal, the commercial metropolis of the Dominion of Canada. I have lived there for over twenty years. I am married and have a family. I know that I am generally respected and esteemed, both by my professional brethren and by the different classes of society. I have, during the twenty years or more that I have lived in this city, accumulated a considerable fortune, saved out of the returns which a good and ever-increasing practice has brought in to me. I think I need say no more of myself nor of my position; they but very slightly affect the story which I have to tell. Let me proceed.

CHAPTER II.

One night in January of last year I was sitting in my library. It was a little after ten o'clock. I had been out lecturing to some medical students, and had come in feeling a little fatigued. I was making myself very comfortable, and had taken off my boots and placed my feet upon a chair in front of a blazing fire. I held in my hand a magazine, and was leisurely turning over the pages. Beside me, on another chair, was a glass of hot whiskey and water, which I had mixed before sitting down. I was thus prepared to enjoy myself after the labours of the day and of the evening.

I was turning over the leaves of the magazine, as I have said, very leisurely, and was preparing to sip my whiskey and water, when the door opened and a maid entered to announce that a person was waiting to see me in the office.

Doctors are accustomed to be interrupted; but I do not think that we ever grow quite indifferent to the fact that our rest is about to be disturbed. I know I do not. "What sort of a person is it?" I asked.

"A young girl, sir, and gave no name."

"A young girl—very well, Anne," I replied, "I

suppose I shall have to go down; I will be there in a minute." Then I looked at my feet and at the fire, and felt that I might just as well remain where I was, and let the girl come to me. "No—tell her—ask her to step up here. Stay—is it a lady?"

"A lady? No sir, just a plain girl I think," said the servant.

"Just a young girl. Very well, tell her to come upstairs; I am tired to-night."

I am a man of method, and this was very irregular on my part. However, a man of methodical habits may sometimes permit himself to indulge in the luxury of a small irregularity. But I do not remember ever having done this before.

Anne took her departure. I laid the magazine aside, and sat up straight in my chair in order that I might be able to rise when the young woman was ushered in. But I waited several minutes and no young woman came. I stirred the whiskey, I raked the fire; still no sign of my visitor. I was angry at this; what could Anne mean? In my disgust at this very unnecessary delay, I determined that I would go and fetch her myself. I was resolved that she should come up into the library. Having once made up my mind to see her there, I was not going to be baulked. So I picked up my slippers, which had been merely lying on the floor beside my chair, and, putting them on, went out into the hall.

I had hardly crossed the threshold when I met Annie coming back in no small perturbation. I stopped her at once. "Annie, what does this mean?

It seems to me you have been a long time. What does it mean?"

"Sir—she is gone, sir, gone."

"Gone?—who?—where?"

"The girl. I don't know where she's gone, sir; she was in the office when I went in, sir, standing by the window. I told her how you would see her in the library, and asked her to step up."

"Well."

"Well sir, before the words were out of my mouth, away she went, out the door into the street, like a wild thing."

"Like a wild thing, eh? Did she show that she heard you?"

"No sir, she didn't appear to hear, but she must have heard me. Just went off like a shot, out of the door. I went out and waited for a minute, thinking she might have somebody else waiting outside; but there wasn't anybody, and she hasn't come back again.

"She may go to the——that is, never mind anything more about it, it doesn't matter," I said, going back to the fire and taking a sip of the whiskey. "Come to consult me, I suppose, and lost heart at the last minute, though they don't usually do that when they once make up their minds to come," I thought to myself.

So ended my first—I cannot say interview with—I may say experience of—the girl whose strange story I am telling.

CHAPTER III.

A few weeks passed, I cannot exactly say how many, when this circumstance, which in the meantime I had wholly forgotten, was recalled to my mind. Dr. Brant, an old friend of mind, and I, were sitting together one evening in my library; and during the course of our conversation he mentioned incidentally the number of visitors he had had the evening before. There were, he said, thirteen. "Thirteen!" I replied; "then my practice, doctor, is larger than yours. I had fourteen. I counted them over this morning. I go one better than you."

It is very hard, as the Americans say, "to get ahead" of Dr. Brant. "You do, do you?" said the old gentleman, smiling. "Well my friend, now that I come to think of it, I also had fourteen. But as it happened, one of them, a young girl, was in too much of a hurry to wait and see me; however, I may as well count her in, and, counting her, I make up the number fourteen." And the doctor smiled as much as to say that he was even with me again.

A young girl. Rather absurd it was, but I made up my mind that this was the same girl. "What sort of a girl was she?" I said.

"Very modest, and apparently respectable," said Dr. Brant; "at least so my assistant said; why?" "O, nothing," I replied; "only it was a strange thing to do."

The doctor did not pursue the subject, nor did I tell him of my experience of, perhaps, the same person. We discussed other matters, smoked our pipes, and drank our whiskey. After his departure, however, I thought over the matter. It might be the same girl; if so, it was a strange thing: then again it might be an altogether different person; if so, it was a matter of no moment. For two or three days the occurrence lingered in my mind, and I found my thoughts returning to it at odd moments. Then, as my time was very much taken up with professional work, I forgot about it Again it passed out of my mind completely.

CHAPTER IV.

It was some time later—I remember that it was on Ash Wednesday, and Ash Wednesday was late last year—that, coming in from a sleigh drive, I was met by Anne in the hall. She followed me up to the door of my room and knocked. I called out to her to come in. Putting her head inside the door without entering, she said with a certain suggestiveness of awe and importance, "the girl, sir!"

The girl. I asked, "what girl?"—but I recollected in a moment, and knew very well what Anne meant. This was the girl who had come to see me before, and who had gone away without giving me a chance to speak to her. This was the girl who had played a similiar trick on Dr. Brant. I had not a doubt of it.

I did not hesitate a moment. I straightened my collar in order to impose upon Anne, and succeeded in getting it awry. Then I rushed downstairs to my office. I must say that I was disappointed. On entering, I saw no one; and I was about concluding that the girl had again left the office in the same precipitate manner as before, when I heard a slight sound, as of some one drawing a short breath, behind the door. I turned round, and there, in the shadow of the door, holding on to the handle with one hand

and swinging to and fro a small woollen muff with the other, stood the girl.

She was quite a young girl, I should think of about eighteen or twenty years of age. And I may as well say at once, that a more ordinary looking person I have never seen, nor expect to see. She had queer little black eyes, like beads, set deep in her head, a turned-up nose, and a small mouth expressive of nothing in particular. She was rather poorly, though not meanly dressed, and wore a bright scarf of red and yellow, or some other gaudy mixture of colours, round her neck. As far as comfort went, she seemed to be quite prepared for any inclemency of the weather, either of wind, rain, or snow. Her jacket was thick, her scarf was no less ample than it was conspicuous, and she wore overshoes. Such was the girl.

I motioned to her to sit down, and remarked that as it was rather cold she had better sit near the fire. She took a chair. Then I made some more remarks on the weather, for a doctor is nothing if not sociable. At first she did not answer any of my questions; but, after a little persuasion on my part, she managed to frame a few sentences. When she spoke, her voice at once attracted my attention. Some people are better physiognomists than others; doctors have rare opportunities to study character; and if they do not do so successfully, to a certain extent at least, are not likely to obtain much prominence in their profession. But some men are much quicker in reading faces than others; one will look at the

nose, another at the eye, and another at the forehead, while I have known acquaintances of mine to form an opinion with regard to a stranger simply by looking at his mouth. Physiognomy never was my forte. I have judged men by their faces again and again, as we must all of us do sometimes; and I have often been mistaken. I have, however, my favourite way of forming an opinion of new people: I always pay particular attention to a person's voice.

This girl had a matter-of-fact voice. Those who are more or less gifted with imagination usually betray it by a richness or mellowness of tone, as well as by a variety of accent, when speaking. Of anything like imagination I would say this girl was utterly destitute. She spoke in a monotone, and her voice was thin and hard. As will be seen presently we discussed, during our interview, matters of the most absorbing interest; yet she neither raised nor lowered it, from beginning to end; except, indeed, when she told me what I knew to be untrue, when she did lower her voice a little. Let me try to remember our conversation. As to the first part of it, it was wholly on the subject of headaches and sleepless nights, and I will not weary the reader by detailing it. Passing on to the more important matters, it was somewhat as follows.

"You tell me," I said to her, after thinking over what I had heard from her for a minute or two; "you tell me that you are living alone. How long have you lived alone?"

"I have lived by myself—for two months—more—ever since December."

"For two months; ever since December. You say you are an orphan, that your father and mother are dead. With whom did you live previous to the time you mention, previous to last December?"

This question she did not seem disposed to answer; but I pressed it. "You must not mind me making these inquiries," I said. "The fact is you seem to be the victim of nervous despondency. I can only suggest a remedy when I know what is the cause of this depression of spirits. Where do you live?"

She hesitated—and when she answered, I knew she was telling a lie. "On—Bleury street."

"Bleury street. Well, will you tell me this; with whom did you live up to last December?"

"Who did I live with? I kept lodgers in my house."

"How many? Who were they?"

"One family."

"Only one family. How many people were there in that family?"

"There was—a man, his wife, and two children; four persons."

"How long did they live with you?"

"For four years; they moved into the house shortly after my father died."

"How old are you?" I said.

"Twenty-three," she replied.

"Twenty-three? You hardly look that." I endeavoured to be as agreeable as possible, and thought it wise to pay a compliment now and then. "How

was it that your friends—for I presume they were friends, after living with you for such a length of time—how was it that your friends came to leave you?"

"Yes, they were friends of mine," she said, answering a question which she was not asked; "they were good friends to me for a year or more."

"They were; then why did they leave you? Was it a matter of business merely? Were they bettering their position in the world?"

"Yes sir."

I did not believe her. She was only answering my questions for form's sake. I am an obstinate man. When I once begin to question a patient, I do not leave off without learning what I wish to know, if patience and perseverance are likely to end in success. I was not making much headway; but I persevered.

"Is your house a large one?" I asked.

"Yes sir, quite large."

"Then why do you not take in new lodgers? it is not wise for you to live alone."

"That is true, sir. But no one will come."

"No? How is that? Have you tried?"

"Yes sir, I have. Two people have moved in and moved out again. They wouldn't stay any time. I can't do anything. I have tried and tried and thought and thought, but I don't know what will become of me!"

"Ah! Then there is something of which you have not yet told me," I said, feeling a certain relief.

"Now tell me, without any more beating about the bush, what it is that is the matter?"

The girl look at me for a moment in a doubtful way, and then closed her lips tightly. I was about to address her again, when, all of a sudden, she let her hands which had been folded in her lap, fall to her side; and burst into tears.

At this I was deceived. I immediately bethought me of a story of sin and shame, of weakness and betrayal. And yet, no; the more I looked at her as she sat there sobbing in a half convulsive way, the less I was inclined to rank her as one of those erring ones of whose sad story the world knows so much and yet so little. She had several times, I felt confident, told me what was not true, and tried to deceive me; but from the very fact that she had not deceived me, and that her efforts to hide the truth were too plain not to be noticeable, I implied that she was not false by nature. It now remained for me to discover the real cause of these tears.

I waited for some little time, for no wise man will ever seek to deprive a woman of her right to have a good cry if she wants one, and then began my questioning again. I was wise enough, also, not to begin where I left off.

"This weather," I said, "is very severe, and does not suit everyone's constitution. I fancy, from your appearance, that you feel the cold very much; am I right?"

"No," she replied; not as I know of. The weather doesn't hurt me; it isn't that!"

"It is'nt? And yet you shiver now in this warm room. What am I to infer? Are you sure you are not suffering from cold?"

"Cold? No, no, no, nothing like that, my head aches, my eyes ache, my heart beats. Can't you help me?"

"My poor girl, help you, willingly."

"Then what will you do?"

This she said eagerly, and I felt rather nonplussed for an answer. Before speaking, I got up and drank a glass of water. This gave me time to think.

"The first thing," I said, sitting down again,"—"the first thing I will do is to offer you good advice. I think you need that more than anything else. And I will begin by saying that it is absolutely necessary that you should live no longer alone. You must have friends, or at least acquaintances of some sort or description, in the same house with you. You have not told me why your lodgers left you as they did; perhaps it doesn't matter; I cannot judge: but you must endeavour to get some new ones. You seem to be rather sad or reserved; I am very sorry for you; but I do not see my way clear to suggesting any particular remedy for this. I would like to help you in this matter, but it is difficult to do so unless one is very familiar with the life and character, and I may also say, the circumstances, of the person one is treating. With regard to you, I cannot pretend to any such familiarity, and therefore am obliged to content myself with vague generalizations. Do you understand me?"

No; she did not. It was perfectly plain that she was not attending to what I said. She was moving her foot backward and forward on the floor, making a pattern on the carpet. This naturally displeased me.

"You are not attending to what I say," I said; "do you not think it would be better for you to do so? You have come to me as a patient; now the first thing for you to do is to listen to my directions, even if you do not follow them in the future."

Thus appealed to, the girl looked me straight in the face. "Your directions, sir, are very good in their way, perhaps; but they are of no use to me."

I was astonished, and no wonder. "What do you mean?" I said.

"I mean, sir, it is no use, you cannot help me. I will die in the end. I know I must; I must not keep you any longer. No, nothing can be done."

The tone of utter despair in her voice touched me much. There was no make-believe about it whatever. As she spoke, she rose from her chair, and put her hand into her pocket. Evidently she was going to pay me a fee. I arrested her, however, feeling that I had in truth done nothing deserving of remuneration.

"Before you pay me," I said, "I should like to be able to feel that I have done something for you. This I cannot feel as yet. No—I cannot take your money, not without I know what I am taking t for."

"Your are very good, sir, very good, I—I should

not have come; I knew it would be no good;—but"—

I was fairly roused. It is not often that I lose my temper, but this was more than I could stand. I was tired of being spoken to in enigmas, tired of vague generalities; I spoke out.

"Girl," I said, planting myself in front of her, and fixing my eye upon her. "tell me at once, what is the matter with you?"

"Sir?"

"I demand, I ask, I must know, before you leave this office—what is there the matter with you, what is troubling you? Why have you come to see me? I insist upon your telling me, and I will permit no more evasions of the truth."

At this peremptory question, her colour rose a little. She stepped back a short distance and seemed to consider the matter.

"Well—I am waiting for an answer!"

"Yes, sir. I will answer you; but don't be hard on me, will you?"

"No—I will not. Only tell me the truth."

"I will. You wish to know what troubles me."

"I do."

"Well; I don't know what to say; you will laugh, or you will tell me go to some other man; or—or"—

"I will do nothing of the kind. Tell me your troubles, and, as I have said before, if, I can, I will help you. If I cannot, I cannot."

"Oh, Dr. Thorburn! How can I make you

understand it ?—I can't It is impossible—impossible. It cannot be true; but it *is* true. Tell me, Dr. Thorburn, is it possible that, when people are dead "—

"Yes."—

"When people are dead, they ever come back?'

"Come back where ?"

"Come back again. Is it possible ? Tell me."

I shook my head, this was not what I had bargained for. I felt rather incredulous, I suppose I looked so. I was little prepared for what was to follow.

"You say they cannot come ?"

I shook my head again.

"No, they cannot—they cannot; it is impossible !" At these words I attempted to speak,and raised my hand as if to ask her to pause. But in vain; rising from her chair with her face flushed and her eyes burning with a fire that I should not have believed possible in such a person, she waved me off, and commenced to tie her scarf in a double knot. "No, of course not; of course not. The dead cannot come back again; they cannot, and therefore they do not. Yes—yes—and yet—they *do* come ! Yes, I understand it; it cannot be, and, if it cannot be, it must not happen. Yes, you are right, you cannot help me. You could not help me, as you said, unless you knew my case. You were right. You do not know it; you never will know it. I must go home again ! No, I will not offer you money ? Why should I ? Have you done anything for me ? Have I got any

good from coming? Have I learned anything that will help me?"

"Stay," I said, "let the money question be waived altogether; let us not consider it at all. Let us have a little more conversation on this subject. I may be able to help you yet; I may be able to help you to get rid of these—these—these illusions."

At the word "illusions" she interrupted me. "Illusions? Yes; perhaps so; I wish to God they were! The trouble is they are not; they cannot be. You do not understand. I might try and explain to you what it is, but you begin by taking for granted that I am deluded."

"My dear girl," I said, "do hear me. It is not a common thing in our practice to meet with such cases as yours, but we do so occasionally; and in every such case I have seen good results flow from the fact that the patient began, although in some cases it may be with reluctance, by acknowledging that the ghosts of the dead or whatever it happened to be that he or she was troubled with in the way of apparitions and visions, were the creatures of a disordered imagination. Now I want you"—

"No, I won't! I shall not begin by telling a lie or trying to deceive myself. I know better. As I said before, I am not going to pay you; I have nothing to pay you for. But I will not take up your time longer, for it would be of no use to do so. You do not believe in me, I do not believe in you; I shall thank you and leave."

"As you please," I remarked. "If you have no

faith in me, and would not value my advice, I suppose it would be loss of time for you to remain. I would have been very willing to do what I could for you, but if it is useless—".

"It is quite useless," she said, drawing her shawl over her shoulders; "quite useless! I may thank you, Dr. Thorburn; I wish you would believe me; perhaps some day you will: if I should ever want you; if I should ever send for you; would you come?"

As she said this she gave me a piercing glance: I felt a conviction of her sincerity overpower me at that moment.

"I will surely come."

"You will—thank you—then that is all!"

"All—yes. Except—would you mind giving me your name?"

"No; my name is Warne—Martha Warne. Good-night."

"Good-night," I said; and in another moment the door had closed behind her.

CHAPTER V.

A ghost-seer! Such had been my visitor. Not a gaunt mysterious personage with a hectic flush or glittering eye, such as we are accustomed to associate with the seeing of visions and dreaming of dreams, but a plain matter of fact young woman, of whom it might without disparagement be said that she was common-placeness itself personified. And I had spent half an hour trying to discover what bodily ailment she had been suffering from, I, who of all things in this transitory world, have the greatest contempt for ghost-seers and visionaries. Some men, I know, like to investigate such things as apparitions and visions, going from effect to cause, and from one cause to another, until at length they discover the origin of what seems, at the outset, a supernatural interference with the ordinary laws of existence. But I have never had either the taste or the time for such studies. They do not interest me. Martha Warne should have gone to some other physician, to me, of all people in the world, her case would seem the most unworthy of serious consideration.

I will, however, go so far as to say that I felt a certain amount of curiosity regarding her. I did

wonder what manner of ghost it was that condemned her to sleepless nights and joyless days; I was almost sorry that I had not asked her for some particulars concerning it. But I have such a dislike of pretending to entertain serious opinions regarding such things, that I felt I could not have done it. Looking back, and reflecting upon our interview, felt that, on the whole, I had done what was right. A little curiosity was, I thought, natural; but it was just as well unsatisfied, seeing that, to satisfy it, it would have been necessary to ask the girl to tell a story which I was sure beforehand was a farrago of nonsense and best left untold. Taking it altogether I had done wisely in letting her go as she did.

In this frame of mind I went up to my room and got ready for dinner. In this state of mind I continued for some time. But I have now to relate a series of circumstances, in the face of which all my opinions, theories and principles, vanish into smoke.

CHAPTER VI.

It was a very wet night about the first of April Everywhere in the city the streets were full of melting snow, mud and slush, and streams of water were running one way or another, according as there was more or less room for them, without regard to the gutters. The wind blew steadily from the south-east, and, at intervals, the rain fell in torrents like a thunder shower; which, after a while, would subside again into a mist and sometimes cease altogether, and allow the dull gray clouds overhead to be seen, hurrying across the sky.

It was during one of the intervals between the showers that I went out; and the light of the street lamps was sufficient to enable me to keep on the dryest part of the sidewalk, and avoid the muddy pools. I had a long way to go, up over the hill, through the dirtiest part of the city, and a good piece beyond; but I am comparatively young, and am blessed with a goodly share of physical strength and powers of endurance; so I did not look upon the long tramp ahead of me, inclement as the night was, as a very great endeavour.

My wife was anxious that I should drive; but there are certain seasons of the year when I make

it a rule to drive as little as possible. To plod along in a buggy, with the horse sinking knee deep in the mud one moment and splashing it up in one's face the next, with the wheels dragging painfully on, the one on your right being almost up to the axle in water and the other grating on a piece of frozen ground, while the rain is beating down on the dashboard, in your face and on your person, wetting everything, even your feet, is to me the most unpleasant of all sensations. Part of the day I am compelled to drive; but I invariably take to my heels before the day is over. Any one who knows what the streets of Montreal are in April will readily understand my preference for footing it, even on a stormy night such as I have described.

I need not say that I know the city well, that I know all the peculiarities of the different parts of it. No one knows it better. I know all the civic authorities and the functionaries dependent on them. I know the magistrates, whom to look to for justice, whom to look to for injustice, whom to avoid altogether if you wish to keep out of the newspapers. I know with whom it would be wise to consult with regard to educational matters; and what man has the greatest recommendations to fit him for the control of the Sanitary Board. I know all the aldermen; I know all the policemen, and where to find them. And, notwithstanding my repugnance to driving when it is possible for me to walk, I think I may say that I know all the streets, both up town and down town, as well as any cab-driver.

My way, as I said before, lay up a steep hill through the least inviting part of the city. In fact, I had to walk the whole length of St. Urbain street. This street, according to some authorities, divides the English part of Montreal from the French; part. I cannot say that I fully coincide with this assertion. No street, to my mind, can be said to do this; if it is necessary to name one street or another as a dividing line, however, I suppose St. Urbain street would do as well as any. But a mixed population of French and English inhabit this and a dozen other streets in the vicinity. One part of the city is distinctly English, another part French, but there cannot, in strictness, be said to be a dividing line.

St. Urbain street is in no way remarkable except that it is always very dirty. As every street in the city is in a more or less wretched condition about the first of April, this street at that season of the year loses its sole claim to distinction. This night it fully sustained its reputation. Water was running down the middle of the street in a furious manner, two or three different streams of it, sometimes coalescing, sometimes dividing into as many more. The sidewalk was in a much better condition. It was paved with brick, and was very uneven; the slush was mixed with ashes which had been put out to prevent people from slipping when it was icy, and in the darkness it was not always possible to tell whether a black spot ahead was a piece of brick pavement, a heap of ashes or a pool of water. But it was very much better there than in the middle of

the street, and I made my way along without much discomfort.

I met, considering the kind of night it was, a good many people. No one would have ventured out, I am sure, unless it was absolutely necessary. But in a large city, I have often observed, there are always to be found persons as unfortunate as oneself; it will be a very inclement night indeed that one will not find companions in misfortune as one trudges wearily through the streets in the dark hours of evening. Men with umbrellas struggling, not always successfully to keep them from blowing inside out, boys with their coat-collars turned up and their hands in their pockets, girls in waterproof cloaks and girls without any protection whatever but their ordinary clothes, children, even old women, I met coming down the hill. Business, necessity, one thing and another, had forced them to come out in the rain and wind like myself.

When I reached the top of the hill I stood still for a minute to rest. The other side of the street, just opposite to where I was standing, a rather disreputable lane ran at right angles to the street up which I had come. At the corner, opposite to me, there stood a large brick building used as a public school, although I believe that it was not for that purpose that it was built. Leaning against the brick wall, and in the full light of the street lamp at the corner of the street, I saw a policeman. It was the figure of a man of gigantic size, and was encased in the usual policeman's uniform, except that he had

changed his ordinary helmet for a broad brimmed cap like that of a sailor, as some of the police do on rainy days. As the broad brim of his cap, drawn over his forehead, threw his face into shadow, I did not recognize who it was; but I noticed that he stood as motionless as the brick wall behind him, and that, instead of looking up or down the street or straight before him, his face was turned upwards, as if he were engaged in contemplating the roofs of the opposite houses.

Quite fascinated, though why I did not know, I stood still for several minutes and gazed at him. Then, bethinking myself of my errand, I turned and continued my tramp. After half an hour's steady walking I reached my destination; and was soon seated in front of a comfortable fire with a glass of brandy and water in my hand.

What my business was it matters not. It was of a purely professional nature, and could be of no possible interest to any one but myself. Let it suffice to say that after a consultation of two hours or more with a brother physician whom I had come to meet, it was successfully accomplished, and I set out to return the way I had come. On my way back, as it was very late, being in fact after midnight, I met no one. I was very busy, thinking over my errand and its result. It was raining, but not heavily; it had been pouring in torrents while I was under cover, but now, fortunately for me, it had slackened considerably. I went doggedly on, going over some calculations in my mind, and mentally adding up figures.

I fancied that I had made a mistake in some important statements I had written out in the course of the evening, and went over a lot of statistics in order to satisfy myself whether I had been right or wrong. At length I succeeded in convincing myself that I had been right.

When I arrived opposite the school-house, I glanced instinctively across the street; what I expected to see, if I expected anything, I do not know; but there, leaning against the brick wall, still gazing up at the roofs of the houses on the other side of the street, was the gigantic form of the policeman, as motionless as ever. I started :—it was a terrible night and lonely, and I had been three hours gone :—yet there he was; and he had not, to all appearance, moved an inch since I had passed before.

I stopped for a moment or so, looked incredulously at him, and started to cross the street. But the street was a rushing stream of water; it was late; I knew that I ought to be at home; and I reflected that if he chose to stand there all night, it was no business of mine :—so I retraced my steps, and continued my course down the hill.

Half way down the hill, however, I paused. I felt a great, a very great desire to go back. I hesitated, I reasoned with myself, laughed at the idea of running about to look at policeman at such an hour of the night and in such a storm. But to no purpose; back I felt myself impelled to go. Making a frantic dash, and wetting both feet in the attempt, I forced

my way across the street, and re-ascended the hill. I found the policeman in the same place, nor did he move nor make any sign whatever that he was conscious of the approach of a stranger. Far from it; the closer I got to him, the more immoveable he seemed to be. I walked up to him and stood before him. He did not seem to be aware of my presence. Placing myself directly in front of him, so close that the buttons of his coat rubbed against my waterproof, I looked up—for I am a short man myself—into his face. I knew the face very well. It was the face of Policeman Logan who *was buried at the close of the year!*

CHAPTER VII.

Here for a moment I pause. What shall I say? What can I say? I can say nothing, absolutely nothing. If I had any explanation to offer, any reason to give, it would be well; but I have none to bring forward, none to offer. I say nothing. I will, however, explain, in a few words, who Policeman Logan was, and what I knew of him.

At this distant date, persons will hardly remember a sudden death that took place in the city of Montreal towards the close of the year 1886. Early one morning about the hour of five, country milk-men coming into town discovered the body of a man lying dead on the pavement. The dead man was Policeman Logan. An alarm was given, enquiries were made, and the body was taken in charge by the authorities. As is customary in such cases, a *post mortem* examination was held at the Montreal General Hospital, in the room set apart for that purpose. I was one of the doctors whose duty it was to assist at the investigation, and well remember with how much interest it was regarded by all who had any share in the task. A more finely developed man than the deceased I do not think I ever saw. He was fully six feet three inches height, straight in

as an arrow, and of almost perfect proportions. Everyone who was present expressed admiration at his well developed physique, and more than once since I have heard some of my brother physicians referring to the subject. There was no doubt whatever that his sudden death was caused by heart disease; and, when this became known, public interest in the occurrence died out.

I cannot say that I had known anything particular of Policeman Logan during his life. Slightly acquainted with him I was; but I had never met him in a professional way until—let me be pardoned the remark—I found him on the dissecting table. I may add, however, for it is not a thing to be lightly regarded, that he bore a good character and was a man of temperate habits.

CHAPTER VIII.

My feelings, as I gazed upward into his face, can better be imagined than described. And yet no one who has not experienced similar sensations can imagine them. I do not say that I was afraid; fear is no word for the sensation I experienced the moment I became aware at whom I was gazing. I am no coward; I am not superstitious; I never saw a spectre or a ghost before, and I hope that I never may again: but a sick feeling came over me, my throat grew dry, and a strange cold sense of horror seemed to overwhelm me. I felt a sharp stinging under my eyelids, a horrible sensation which I cannot describe. I would have moved away if I could have; but I seemed to have lost the power to do so.

What did I do? What could I have done? I was fascinated. I stood looking at him, looking at the buttons on his coat, looking at his great thick neck, looking up into his face, shuddering as I did so. I tried to speak. I thought that, if I could say something, the spell under which I seemed to lie would be broken. But it was in vain that I tried to articulate a syllable, the sound died in my throat; I could not speak. I could not move; I could hardly even control my power of thought; I could only stand and gaze, fascinated.

If, on the other hand, the figure of the policeman had moved only in the slightest degree, I should have felt at liberty to turn which way I would. But it did not. He seemed to be as much a fixture as the brick wall behind him. The light from the street lamp was beating on him, and showed off in strong relief against the black darkness of the night his blue coat and cape of India rubber. The lower part of his face also was in the full light; the upper part, including his eyes, was thrown into shadow by his broad-brimmed cap. To all appearances utterly unconscious of my existence, let alone my close proximity to him, there he stood, gazing steadfastly up at the roofs of the houses across the street. I, quite fascinated and, I am bound to confess, under a sort of spell, stood gazing as steadfastly at him.

How long I stood there in the same position I do not know. It seemed a very long time; possibly it was not many minutes. The rain, which for a while had been holding up, began to fall again heavily. I was, as it were, protected a little from it by the brick building alongside, and even perhaps by the immense form of the policeman himself. At least I did not mind it. I knew that it was raining; I knew that it was raining hard; but I did not even try to move. I could not turn my head; I could not help looking at him. Had he glanced at me, had he moved a muscle, had he given me any intimation whatever that he was aware of my presence, I think I could have moved away; but he did not. He stood rigid, firm, fixed, immoveable.

At last, from standing in the same position so long, and perhaps also from staring so fixedly in one direction, I began as it were to lose myself and become completely absorbed in one idea, as people are supposed to do when they are under the influence of a mesmerist. I have always despised, and do still despise, all persons who allow themselves to become the dupes of mesmerism, spiritualism, or anything of the kind; but I confess that on this occasion my power of will seemed to be concentrated on one idea; and that idea seemed to be something separate and apart from myself and beyond my control. In other words, after a time—how long a time I do not know—my fear, which had been so great at first, lessened, until it was quite gone; and I simply waited in expectation of—what?

The policeman, as I have before remarked, kept his eyes fixed steadfastly on the house opposite. While I stood gazing at him abstractedly, I remember that the thought crossed my mind, "what was he looking at?" I felt at first a vague, then a stronger, then an absorbing desire to know. After a few minutes, forgetful of everything else, forgetful of the fact that a little while before I had lost the power of motion, I turned my back to him and began to gaze in the same direction as he.

At first I saw nothing at all. The street lamp that I have mentioned was not three yards away from us and it had been shining, as I have said, full on the policeman's face. On the other side of the street there was no light; for a minute or two I seemed to be peering into the thick darkness only.

Then gradually I made out the outlines of a house: There were, just opposite to us, three houses, all similar in appearance, and not in the least remarkable or singular. High wooden structures, once, I imagine, inhabited by the wealthy, now abandoned to the poorer classes, there was nothing about them to attract attention. Yet I confess that I gazed with no ordinary interest at the middle of the three.

I looked at the roof; I saw the dim outline of chimnies; I saw the line of the roof distinct from the gray sky behind it. I saw the dark shadows under the projecting eaves. I saw the windows; I counted them; there were five in the second storey and four in the first. One thing only struck me as singular. The door was open!

Why should it not be? What was there remarkable about an open door? Perhaps some one was just coming out; perhaps some one had just gone in; perhaps it had been left open by mistake, or had blown open; there might be a hundred reasons for it being open.

Yet I was not satisfied to think so. The idea that there was something peculiar about a house which leaves its door open at night and in such a locality, took possession of my mind, and was not to be dislodged. What could it mean, this house with the open door? What could it mean? Was it possible to find out?

The thought fascinated me. I am usually, and, I think, with reason, considered a very careful, prudent man, one who is not liable to be excited at any

time or under any circumstances. Yes, I am usually cautious. If I acted differently this time from what I usually do, I do not know why; I do now know that I did. I am simply relating facts which are present to my mind. Let me continue.

I crossed the street, not even turning in my haste to take a last look at the policeman. I believe that I again got my feet well soaked for my pains. But I did not mind that. I crossed over, looked up the street and down the street and around, to see if there was any one near; and then mounted the two wooden steps that led up to the door.

I will not say that I was not a little apprehensive. No man likes to play the part of a housebreaker if he is not accustomed to it; and I own to a feeling of shame at my presumption as I passed through the doorway. But pass through I did; my curiosity overcame every other feeling. I walked deliberately in at the open door, and stood in the hall.

I wondered, as I did so, what prompted me; surely something did. I went round the hall carefully, groping about in the darkness, feeling my way. It seemed to be quite empty. It was a very ordinary hall as far as I could make out. At last I came to the staircase. It was of wood, and uncarpeted. Something impelled me forward, and forward I went, one stair after another; and every time that I put my foot down, it seemed to me as if the sound reverberated through the house.

At the top of the stairway I paused. Where was I? Was I in an empty house? It seemed as if it were

indeed so. And what was I doing there, I, a married man with a family, and therefore bound to be all the more scrupulous with regard to my actions—I, standing at the top of the stairway in a strange house, at the hour of one in the morning—how would it be if some one were to discover me? For a moment, these considerations weighed heavily with me; for a moment I felt like dashing downstairs, out and away, as quickly as possible. But I did nothing of the kind. Having got so far, I made up my mind that I must see something before I left.

I stepped along the upper hall. Like the hall below it was empty. There was no carpet, and every step I took seemed to echo through the darkness. I could just discern a window at the further end. Slowly, very slowly and carefully I made my way to the window and looked out.

The window looked into the street; it was, in fact, directly over the front door, and therefore looked towards the place where I had been standing. As I looked out, I could see, through the pouring rain, the lamp at the corner, shedding its light amid the darkness around, and the form of the policeman behind it. I shuddered at the sight; for, now that I had got across the street and into the house, he seemed to be looking straight at me. Indeed I imagined that he was actually conscious where I was, and fancied that I could see the gleam of his eyes under the brim of his cap, distant as it was.

This must have been imagination, but it held me for a time impassive. I looked out from the window

of this apparently empty house into the street under much the same spell-bound feeling as I had experienced before. And in the same way I mentally noted several small details which at a time of such unusual excitement would naturally be overlooked. I noticed that the glass of the window was clean as if it had been lately washed or rubbed, that the floor was clean and not dusty, that there were no cobwebs or any other appendage, denoting neglect or decay, and that the air of the hall was fresh and pure. These things seemed to me to go far to prove that this house into which I had wandered, was, although empty, not deserted.

I was pursuing this course of reflections, having lost once again, as I did in the street, my sense of fear, when, all at once, my heart seemed to stop, and my hair stood up on end. In the hall below, there was a sound; the street door through which I had entered closed!

Was it a step? Was it a tread? Was it a cry, or a rustle, or a fall? None of these. The door closed firmly but not loudly, and then something seemed to move. It was not a tread, not a foot-step, not a rustle. I cannot describe the sound. The sound of the wind blowing gently in at an open window conveys the best idea I can give of it. Something was moving below, something was coming upstairs, something was passing through the house; what I knew not.

I did not exclaim, I made no sign with my lips to see or to hear I endeavored not. Falling on my

knees, with my eyes closed and my hands clasped in horror, I cowered in the darkness before an unknown presence. I confess my extreme fear; I admit my utter loss of self-control; how many, after such an experience as I had just gone through, would have done otherwise! In that desperate moment the thought of my rashness and folly filled me with an overpowering sense of shame. Whatever exposure might be impending, whatever punishment might ensue, I felt that I deserved it all. I was hopeless.

How long I lay there, crouching on the floor by the window, I cannot say; it could not have been long. Whoever or whatever it was that was moving in the hall and upon the stairs, did not come near me I heard something moving; I could swear that some one passed within a few yards of me; but that is all. No one touched me, no one approached me.

I was still in an agony of apprehension as to what was about to happen, when a sharp, short cry rang through the house. It was not a cry of pain; I am an old experienced physician, and I can distinguish in a moment a cry produced by pain or physical suffering from an exclamation of fear or surprise. But neither was this a cry of fear nor of surprise. It betokened neither: it was an exclamation of despair.

That cry brought back my courage. Most men in the presence of the unfamiliar and the unknown become cowards. Brave sailors and soldiers, if placed outside of their own spheres of action, not unfrequently become overcautious or even timorous. Thus

it had been with me. But the cry of the suffering, the sight of the despairing inevitably brings back to a man whatever courage, whatever manhood he has ever been possessed of; and arouses to his mind the will to help, to succour, or to cheer. In another moment I was on my feet once more, ready to turn and profer my assistance to whomsoever it was of avail.

Sound is very deceptive, but I was sure the cry which I had heard had come from a room on the very flat on which I was standing; it was not a loud cry, and I was confident that it would take but a few steps to lead me to the room whence it had proceeded. I stood up and looked around. I had come straight along the hall from the stairway; I would now examine the rooms one by one, until I found the person who was in need of help. That I was about to render a service, I did not for a moment doubt, for what else had I come?

I was already two or three steps from the window, when it crossed my mind that I had not looked out after regaining my feet to see if the figure of the policeman still remained a sentinel or watcher on the corner opposite. I retraced my steps and looked out again. There had been a strong conviction in my mind that I would find him gone; and, sure enough, gone he was. The street lamp still shed its light around the corner, and shone bravely amid the rain and mist; but the stalwart figure leaning against the brick wall, with the dark coat and broad brimmed hat, was no longer visible. I was glad that it was so; it seemed to me to indicate that I was to

have no more to do with spectres or ghosts, but was henceforth to meet with human beings and minister to their needs. With this agreeable presentiment, I started again.

I cannot very well describe the way the house was built. It was a plan common in buildings of an early date. This house, I presume from its size, had once been inhabited by wealthy people, as there were rooms on each side of the hall, and the ceilings were high. On the second floor, where I had been for some time, there was a narrow passage-way which separated the rooms at the front from the rooms at the back. Half way between the window and the stairs, therefore, I stood at the beginning of this passage-way. Looking along the passage-way, I saw a faint light streaming through a door, which must have been open only a crack.

The house, then, was inhabited. When I found that it was so, I felt a new sensation. I felt alarmed, not so much for myself as on account of the occupants. I can hardly help smiling at the idea, but I really seemed to feel myself more than half a house-breaker, and I thought how frightened the person or persons in that room would probably be if they knew that a strange man had entered the house, and was standing within a few yards of them. On the other hand, the cry that I had heard did not tend to re-assure me; I began to think about it, and stopped a moment to consider what it was best to do.

Now was the time to turn back and leave the house. I felt that if I did right I would go.

But it is not in my nature to start on a tour of investigation and leave off just when there is some hope of getting to the root of the matter to be inquired into. I listened; there was not a sound. I could hear nothing, not even the wind and the rain outside. No groans, or moanings, or sighs, nor any manifestations such are usually met with in haunted houses were apparent to my senses.

I made up my mind what I would do. I would go very cautiously along the narrow hall, and take one look in at that open door. Then, my curiosity satisfied, I would go home and tell my wife a lie as to my late whereabouts, and endeavour to forget all I had seen and done. I felt that if she were to be told the truth, she would without doubt, infer that my mind was affected. Better I thought to tell one's wife a lie than let her suffer so painful an apprehension.

I crept along. Every time that I put my foot to the floor it seemed to me that I made so much noise that I must perforce be heard over the entire house. Half a dozen times I stopped to listen, and held my breath. Two or three minutes I must have waited just beside the door, summoning all my courage to take the last step. I half expected some one to rush out and knock me down; it seemed to me that the inmates of the house, whoever they might be, must be aware of my presence.

At last I took courage and advanced a couple of steps to a position from which I could see the room. The door opened in such a manner that I was

obliged to stand at the further side of the doorway, in order to look through. As I glanced, with some trepidation, though the half-open door, I could not forbear uttering an exclamation aloud.

The room was of moderate size and dingy. The floor was bare, the walls were bare, there were no curtains to the windows. A small iron bedstead stoop opposite the door. Near the bed was a wooden table on which, in a brass candlestick, stood a lighted candle. The most noticeable article in the room was a trunk, open, and apparently half full of clothes, which stood near the table. On the side of the bed sat a young girl. Her face seemed familiar. In a moment I recognised her; it was Martha Warne!

CHAPTER IX.

I have said that I uttered an exclamation; I did. I do not believe in ghosts; I did not expect to see ghosts. I cannot exactly say that I expected to see robbers, cut-throats or assassins; but I confess that when I saw the interior of the room, with this young girl as its sole occupant, I could not help giving utterance to my surprise. It was not only that I recognized her; had I recognized, in the young person who sat on the side of the bed in this room, any other acquaintance, it would not have so startled me. In a moment came back the recollection of her visits, of her hesitation, of her confession, of my contempt, and of her abrupt departure, leaving me in complete ignorance of the facts of the case which was to have been presented to me. Would to God I had listened to her! And yet, had I done so, would I have given any credence to her story? No; I could not have believed a word of it; I could not have believed a word of it. And now, what had happened! As I found myself looking at her my brain seemed to be all in a whirl; I felt like one in a dream.

Martha Warne, as I once before remarked, was neither beautiful nor the reverse. There was nothing in her personal appearance to excite remark. But if, when I had seen her before, she had failed to interest me, I now made ample amends for the callousness of the past. Never, to my dying day, shall

I forget her, as I saw her at that moment, sitting on the side of the bed, beside the table. Although it was then long past midnight, she had not begun to undress. Her hair, long, straight, and of a light brown colour, hung down over her shoulders. Her elbows were resting on her knees, and her chin was resting on her hands. But it was the expression of her face that startled me. I have seen people annoyed, amazed, excited, agonized, but this young girl's face expressed neither annoyance nor surprise, excitement nor pain; her expression was one of blank despair.

How shall I tell it? How shall I describe the feelings which overwhelmed me as I stood there gazing at her, while the minutes wore away and the hours of the night rolled slowly on? She was quite unconscious of my presence; she neither moved nor looked around her; her eyes seemed to be staring, and yet seeing nothing. If she had looked up in the direction in which I stood, I think she must have seen me; but she did not. The time passed slowly. Long as I had been in approaching the room, it seemed to me that the time had been short in comparison with the period I spent at the door. My feelings once more underwent a complete change; I had been fearful, anxious, nervous; now I was nothing of the kind; the only sentiment which remained and which pervaded my whole nature, was one of pity. What her trials were I could not, of course, know; but such a look of helplessness, despair, despair past all words, I had never seen on any human face. The opinion that I had formed

CHAPTER X.

We stood face to face. We had parted in my study, this girl and I, she full of contempt and dispair, I pitiful and half compassionate, yet withal cold and unsympathic. We were again face to face. What changes the events of the last few hours had brought in the opinion which each had then formed of the other! What oceans of experience I seemed to have crossed! With what interest and awe I gazed at her! What her feelings were I cannot say; but with no little emotion must she have beheld the scornful physician coming to her rescue, at this fateful hour when death seemed so near and all hope gone.

For a little while we looked in each other's eyes in silence. I was the first to speak.

"Martha Warne."

"Dr. Thorburn."

Her voice trembled. The hard, desperate look on her face relaxed, and her lips moved nervously. She clasped her hands, and, looking down to the floor where lay the shattered fragments of the little glass bottle, shuddered at the danger from which she had escaped. Placing my hands on her arms, I moved her gently backwards, and without speaking to her, motioned her to be seated. Then, for some minutes

I busied myself with picking up the pieces of glass and obliterating as best I could the stain on the floor. From the smell of the liquid I knew that it must have been a dose of such narcotic power that, after taking it, she would have gone to sleep never to awaken. I spent some time in this way, knowing that, in the state of nervous excitement in which I had found her, it was best for her to have time to collect her thoughts. While I was engaged in this work she sat with her face hidden in her hands. When I had finished, I sat down beside her, and asked to be allowed to feel her pulse. She gave me her hand with a child-like submission.

"The first thing I must do for you," I said, "is to get you a nurse. You are in a fever, and you want rest and care. You shall have both. Now, to-night, while you are suffering and oppressed by so much physical and mental distress, it will be best for you to say as little as possible to me. Some other time we will talk of your troubles; not now. Before, when I met you, I let you leave me without doing anything to help you. Providence has sent me to help you to-night, and I will do my best to aid you."

She turned her face towards me and burst into tears. I felt that, in the state of mind in which she was, nothing could do her more good, and for a little while I kept silent. Then I resumed.

"I wish you," I said, "to place yourself entirely under my care and guidance. I want you, for the present, to let me think and act for you. I want you

of her before, that she was a girl whose character was beyond and above reproach, a girl whose life was untinged by the gaudy lights and fitful shadows of an evil career, was strengthened. So much was, as it were by intuition, perfectly plain to me, and I felt a deep and absorbing interest in her, a yearning anxiety to know what had been her misfortunes and trials to have brought her to such a pass.

I waited; I waited long. Still she sat there in the same position, moving not a muscle. I felt that I must sooner or later, in some way or other, make my presence known to her. I felt that I must, before I left, endeavour to help her, if help were in my power to give. I thought over the strange circumstances which had induced me to enter the house at such an unseemly hour, of the vision of the policeman, and its strange effect upon me, how I had passed and repassed him, how I had gone back to take a closer look at him, and how I had been spellbound at the sight when, at last, I stood before him, face to face. I thought of my strange entry into the house, of my hesitancy and apprehension, and of the fatality which had seemed to urge me forward. I thought of the wild sharp cry of despair which had suddenly rung out in the stillness of the night while I was on my knees by the window, awaiting I knew not what. I thought it all over, and once or twice I pressed my hand to my forehead to make sure that I was not in a dream. It seemed more like a dream than a reality: it seems like a dream now.

But to continue. While I was wondering whether

an all-watchful Providence or a mere freak of chance had induced me to follow up this strange series of adventures, the girl made a faint motion with her hand. She seemed to be feeling for something.

At first I thought she was looking for her handkerchief, and paid but little attention to her movements. Her eyes she did not move. She put her hand behind her, then bent forward and reached it to the floor, then drew it back again into her lap. Her head now rested only on one hand. She did this again and again like one in a dream, as if hardly conscious of her own actions. The third time she did it she found what she sought for, and drew forth from behind her a small bottle or phial, which appeared, as far as I could judge, to be full of a colourless fluid. Immediately the thought burst upon me with lightning-like rapidity; this girl was contemplating self-destruction!

It was no chance! Men may call it chance, or they may call it fate, they may call it providence. Some unseen power had surely led me thither. I had arrived in time to save a young girl from taking her own life, a life which I felt sure, from looking at her alone, was one of innocence. I had come in time. I was not a minute too soon. Innocent though she might be, she was resolute, this girl, and full of determination to accomplish her dire resolve. If I had waited for half a minute, I would have been too late. She pulled the cork from the bottle, and was raising it to her lips, when I rushed forward; and, without saying a word or making any pretence of accident, dashed it to the floor.

just to feel that I am taking care of you, that I am your guardian, your protector. I want you to place implicit confidence in me. Will you ?"

She did not answer.

"I am not going to do anything strange," I continued, thinking of the reserve she had maintained during our interview in the study, and wondering whether, after all, it would not be better to let her talk to me a little and relieve her mind;—"I am not going to do anything unusual, I often take sick people under my care, and act for them as if they belonged to me. Will you not let me do this for you."

She shook her head, but I persevered none the less.

"I can see for myself," I went on; "I can see for myself that very strange and, as far as I am concerned, inexplicable things are happening from time to time in this house. I can see that when you spoke to me of ghosts and dead men coming back again, you were not, as I thought, a victim of hallucinations:—or, if you are, then I am also."—

At these words she started to her feet. Her eyes sought mine, with a strange look of fear not unmixed with triumph, which soon, in its turn, changed to pity.

"You—you have seen him! You have seen him—is it not so? *Have* you see him? Can it be possible? Oh, Dr. Thorburn!"

I motioned to her to sit down again. I felt myself no longer a ghost-seer. The presence of a single

other human being had done away with the effect of my previous experience. I was again a physician; and determined that, for the time being, I would ignore aught but physical maladies.

"Do not," I said, "think any more of what you or I or anyone else has seen to-night. We will discuss the subject fully in a day or two, when you are better able to do so."

"I—I shall never be better—never! You do not know what you ask."

A doctor hears this said fifty times a day. I paid no attention to it. "What perplexes me now," I continued, "is, who is to remain with you while I go away to procure a suitable nurse for you. You ought not to be alone."

At this she burst into a laugh.

"Alone? I, alone? O, Dr. Thorburn! what else should I be? What else shall I ever be? Who would stay with me, to see what I see, and hear what I hear? Some of them think I am mad and others say the house is haunted; who would come here, do you think, to keep me company?"

"Who?" I said; "now that is just what I wish to say to you. I am not going to ask any of your friends to come and stay with you; I know that would not answer my purpose at all. What I propose is that I should get a nurse, a woman whom I can trust, to come and take care of you, for a few days at any rate. I have determined, with your permission, to investigate these mysterious circumstances, and I shall assume for the present the entire charge of you. Will you agree to this?"

"Oh!—useless to try" she said sighing, and her face resuming the old expression of despair; "you do not know what you ask; you do not know what I am; you do not know what I have done—"

"I do not," I replied; "but it does not matter now; you need help; I can supply it; is not that enough?"

"Yes,—but, Dr. Thorburn, do not you wish to know all about this fearful—this fearful—"

A sob prevented her from finishing what she was going to say. "Stop," I said; "to-morrow—another time—tell me all. To-night, nothing. I want to know nothing now. I am going away to bring back a responsible woman to look after you, and every thing that requires looking after in this house. Are you afraid to stay alone?"

"Afraid?—Oh, God, I afraid! Afraid?—"

"I mean," I said, "will you mind waiting alone until I come back? If I mistake not, you are always alone, so you will not be afraid; am I not right?"

"Alone; if I could only be alone—O, Dr. Thorburn, Dr. Thorburn! why did you come? Why did you come? I might have been safe now, safe now from it all, and it would all be over. Oh! do you know what you have done? There is no hope for me, no hope for me until I die; then there will be rest! And you have driven away my last hope—my last hope!"

"My dear girl," I said, pressing her hand as I did so, "my dear girl, you are mistaken; believe me,

there is hope, always hope. Without hope one might well be driven to despair. But God has sent me to you, and you must try and take courage. Will you remain quiet and wait for me until I come back ?"

She nodded, but did not speak. I saw that she was going to do as I wished, and rose to go. As I turned to the door she called me back.

"Dr. Thorburn, here; you will want the key."

"The key; what key ?"

"The key of the front door; where is it? Yes, in my pocket." As she spoke, she felt in her pocket for the key, and, having found it, handed it to me.

"The key of the front door! The front door is open." Then it flashed across my mind that I had heard it close while I was waiting in the hall. "Give me the key, all the same; I may be mistaken."

But I was too late; she had started to her feet again. "Open ?—open ?— Then—you *did* see him !"

I hesitated, and mumbled something under my breath.

"You saw him—tell me, you saw him ?'

"Saw him," I said, looking at her very earnestly as I said it—"saw whom, the policeman ?"

"Eh ?—the policeman;—the policeman;—who does he mean? What is it—what do you mean ?—what policeman ?"

Here was a mystery. I would have given much to have sat down then and there and asked for enlightenment, but duty forbade. "Never mind," I said, "I will tell you all about it again—to-morrow.

Only let me have my way to-night. Do you retire to bed while I am away. Let me find you there when I return. I will come back in an hour; only be patient."

She came forward, however, to where I stood, and laid her hand on my arm. "Dr. Thorburn—I will do as you wish—only, before you go, listen—listen to what I say to you; listen to me and promise me what I ask you. Dr. Thorburn, I believe in you; I believe every word you have said; I know you will do what is right; I know that you will tell me what is best, and will tell me the truth. Will you make me a promise?"

"A promise? Yes, I will. You trust me; I will trust you; let us have confidence in each other."

Her eyes filled with tears, and I felt her hand tremble as I took it in mine.

"Dr. Thorburn—you know nothing about it, I can see that; you know nothing. I can see that you have had something strange happen to you or you would not be here; but you really know nothing, do you?"

"No," I said; "I do not."

"You do not"—she breathed more freely—"you do not. But you must know it all. I want you to promise me this: Will you come again, here, to-morrow night at the same time to see me, and come alone? Whoever you bring to stay with me can stay if you like also; but I wish you to come yourself. Will you?"

"To-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow night, at the same time, a quarter to twelve or about that. Say you will come; promise me—"

"I promise."

A sad smile that went to my heart fluttered over her face for a moment and then was gone. She withdrew her hand from mine. "Thank you, Dr. Thorburn, thank you. Another day, another night, and it will all be over. It will all be over. Thank you, Dr. Thorburn, thank you—thank God!"

Her earnestness, her intensity, the thrilling tone of her voice all impressed me, and inspired me with a feeling I had never known before. It seemed as if I were just on the threshold of some unseen world, on the point of some great discovery. Some terrible secret was to be laid bare. I could hardly bring myself to turn away. In spite of myself I trembled.

CHAPTER XI.

I left her standing in the middle of the room, and made my way to the door. I dared not look around, lest I should be prompted to ask questions which had better be left for the morrow. I passed out into the hall; there, at the end, was the grim light of the window; here was the passage-way by the side of the staircase; here the stairs. I felt my way down; there was a balustrade, and I held on by it; I could not see the lower hall; all was dark. Then it flashed upon me that I should have provided myself with a candle. I had not thought of it; neither apparently had Martha Warne. I might have gone back for one, but, by this time, no doubt, the girl was preparing to retire to bed, and I would only alarm her. At any rate, I thought, I can strike a match, and that will do.

I am a smoker and always carry matches. I found one and struck it. It burned slowly, but at last the blue light of the sulphur died out and the wood caught fire. Then I could see the hall. It was very grim and bare. There seemed to be nothing on the floor, nothing on the walls. The front door was closed. I tried it; it was locked. I looked around me for a moment with an uncanny feeling, remembering how it had been wide open when I first saw

it. Who, thought I, had entered since then? Evidently not the policeman, for the girl upstairs seemed to know nothing whatever of him. When the light shone I could see no trace of anyone. Yet somebody had shut the door, somebody had gone upstairs after me. And it was not Policeman Logan. Were there, then, more ghosts than one? But who spoke of ghosts?—who believed in such things?—In strange thoughts indeed was I indulging!

While I was looking about me the match went out and I was forced to light another. When it was half-burnt I put the key in the lock and turned it. The door opened. I stepped out into the street; my heart gave a great thump, for I was free once more

Free—in the open air—ah, it was indeed refreshing! I remember how I stood on the pavement and drank in the moist air. Moist it was in truth for the rain was falling in torrents, pouring down straight in large drops, flooding the street, flooding the gutters, running down over the side-walk like a brook. But I felt free, free of the mouldy atmosphere of the house, free from the dread surprises that were always in store within, free of the girl's calm look of supreme despair. I felt free even though soaked through and through, free and full of nerve.

I had before made up my mind what I would do. I would start at once for one of the Roman Catholic sisters of mercy who I knew would be willing to come and nurse my newly-found patient. I am a Protestant, a Presbyterian in fact; but I know whom to trust and whom not to trust with a case like that of Martha Warne. Trained nurses are invaluable

but these sisters of mercy are trained in two ways; they are not only good, kind and capable women, able to watch by a sick bed and to attend a patient with care and skill, but their life teaches them to maintain a strick reserve and a non-interference with things that do not concern them, to which all other women are strangers. I have seen much of them, very much; and I cannot speak too highly of them.

I had a mile and a half to go, and could not find a cab except by going a mile out of my way. This I was not willing to do; time was too precious. So I walked the whole distance. It seemed to me that the water was running in at the toes of my boots and out at the heels. As I had rubbers on my feet which were new and could therefore have had no holes in them, I suppose this was impossible; but it seemed so. I am sure that the water ran in a stream down my back and that there was not a square inch of dry clothing on me.

In a wretched plight indeed was I, when I at length reached my destination. Anywhere else I should have felt ashamed, but here I knew there would be no surmises, or, if there were, that I would never hear of them. It is one of the supreme merits of these women that they ask no questions; if they know you, they trust you; if they don't, not a word is wasted; the door is shut in your face.

They know me well, and it was not long before I was seated in a cab with a nurse beside me, driving off to St. Flavie street. As I passed along, or rather as we passed along, I looked at my watch. It was four o'clock in the morning.

CHAPTER XII.

It is not necessary for me to describe in detail how we arrived at our destination, how we found Martha Warne in bed, how I gave my nurse charge concerning her, and took my leave. Just before I left, she put up her hand, and, drawing my head down, said in a whisper "at half-past eleven this next night;" and I answered, "I will be here." In another minute I was gone.

The day was dawning when at last I reached home and got into bed. Of course no one in the house had been much exercised about my absence. I did, indeed, tell one little lie. When my wife said "dear, what kept you, I thought you said you would be home at eleven," I answered, "so I should have been if I hadn't met with some one who required my services, as I was coming back:" that was all.

Day was almost dawning when I got to bed. As for sleep I got none. I turned over and over, rose from my bed, drank some brandy, took a few whiffs from my pipe, did everything I could think of to induce sleep; but in vain. I would have taken a dose of chloral only that I was expected at the Hospital at ten in the morning, and I must first dress and breakfast, which would leave but little time for sleep. I spent the night, what there was

left of it, in misery. As often as I closed my eyes, I saw the great form of the dead policeman, standing in the glare of the gaslight. If I succeeded for a moment in driving the thought of him from my mind, I saw, instead of it, Martha Warne's face with its agonized expression of despair, as I had seen it after making my way to the door of her room. After awhile I fell into a sort of doze, when the shrill cry which I had heard seemed again to ring in my ears, and I awoke with a start. I looked for the full light of day to drive away these phantoms and recollections, thinking that I would be able to snatch a few hours of repose before my daily duties called me to rise and go to work; but no; the darkness faded away, the sun rose, and the gray light of an April morning grew stronger and stronger, and the forms that had haunted me from the beginning still stood at my bedside. I could not get rid of them. I even went so far as to reason with myself aloud, to try and fancy that I had been the victim of nightmare: but I only got the more confused; and the recollection of all that I had seen only got the more vivid, the longer I thought of it all. For me there was no rest.

The hours wore on and my head began to ache. As the daylight increased, so did my discomfort; I could hardly remain in bed. At last I rose and went to a looking-glass: I seemed to have lost my own identity. The face I saw reflected in the glass frightened me: not a vestige of colour was left in my cheeks; the pallor of death seemed to have spread itself over my face. I was horror-struck.

To go about the labors of the day was now impossible. I resolved to go back again to bed. Ringing a bell, I summoned my wife, and telling her that I had a very severe head-ache, requested that I might not be disturbed during the day. This done, I took an opiate and retired to bed. Ere long I was sleeping soundly.

It must have been many hours before I awoke. When I did, I, for a long time did not think of looking to see what the hour was. I was no sooner awake than it all came back to me; and with a clearer brain and a lighter head I was able to meditate for a while on what I had gone through. Alas! many times since I have meditated, thought, dreamed, fancied, reasoned; and I am as far to-day from arriving at a solution of the questions which puzzled me, as I was when I lay on my bed that afternoon.

It must have been a couple of hours after waking that I rose and called for food. I was too impatient, too anxious for the night to come, when I could hurry to the bedside of Martha Warne, to be able to occupy the intervening hours with any professional business. I refused all callers; I answered no summons; I told my wife not to bother me; I left my letters unopened on the table. I ate very little. I drank copious draughts of water, fearing to indulge in anything stronger, for my brain was already so excited that I was obliged to calm myself as much as possible. Let no one think that I am by nature an excitable man; far from it; I am of a phlegmatic temperament, and have seldom known real nervousness.

And yet I think I was more excited than many persons would have been of a different nature from mine. There is a theory in medicine that spasmodic attacks of asthma vary in intensity according to their greater or less frequency. If one should not occur for a longer time than usual, it is likely to be more severe when it does come. So with people of my temperament; nervousness as a rule is a word for us without meaning; but let our sluggish nervous system once be aroused to undue activity, and we suffer tenfold the pain which would fall to the lot of a man of what is called nervous temperament. My pulse beats as a rule slower than is customary for a man. On this occasion I felt as if my veins would burst if I did not keep moving around and drinking in deep draughts of water.

CHAPTER XIII.

Time will pass. Time does pass always, though sometimes we feel that the present will never end. I have sometimes counted the seconds in a minute wondering if a minute is always as long as it is while I am counting it. I thought that day would never end, that night would never come; yet it did; after a weary, weary watch, the sun began to get lower in the heavens, and the dusk began to creep on. As it grew darker, I grew calmer, my step got firmer, my pulse got slower, I began to breathe more deliberately and to think more clearly. I even went so far as to go down to the dining-room and take dinner with my family. I sat at the table like an automaton, carved, ate, like a machine. I was asked how my head was and if I was going to bed early to get more sleep. I answered that I had a case of peculiar interest to attend to, and it was in order that I might be able to attend to it that I had stayed in and rested all day. At this no one remarked. My wife did, indeed, tell me to be careful of myself; but this she does on an average of once in every twenty-four hours; so I was sure that in her mind, at least, there were no suspicions of what I was going to do. I did not see, either, how anyone but myself could know anything of what was transpiring at the house on

St. Urbain street. But when one's mind is full of one subject the air seems overcharged with rumours and suspicions; it seemed to me as if I must have been watched. Now I know that I had no partner in these wild and unfathomable experiences. Now I know that no one but I saw, no eye save mine gazed on these ghostly forms of men laid to rest in the grave months before. Had others seen such strange sights, I must have heard of it. Not having reasons such as mine for secrecy, the story must have been told and retold a hundred times. But I alone, save her of whom I have spoken, the unfortunate Martha Warne, and whose sad story I have yet to tell, am the only man who has witnessed this, the strangest scene perhaps, ever known in this old and romantic city.

After dinner I retired to my room and spent a couple of hours in solitude. As the hour for my departure approached I grew calmer and calmer. I reasoned with myself and succeeded in gaining some of my habitual self-control. I was now about to see or hear, so I said to myself, things which it would never be my lot probably again to come in contact with, things such as few men ever meet with and in which the world at large either totally disbelieves or has little faith at best. To do this I must start with a clear head, an unprejudiced mind, and a composed body. I began to feel that I was prepared for it. I felt strong, ready to grapple alike with foes mental or corporeal, to meet the shadows of the dead, the arm of flesh, or an intricate physiological problem.

At ten o'clock I put on my boots and brushed my

hat. It was hardly time to start, and I did not wish to be on hand too early; I knew that, once in the street, I would walk at a very rapid pace and would reach my destination in fifteen minutes; so I lingered. Then I played a tune on the piano. I know nothing like music to reduce one's feelings to a state of equilibrium. The story of Saul and his evil spirit, driven away by the melodies of David, has always had a fascination for me. I have struggled occasionally with evil spirits, myself, in the same fashion; and have found the method efficacious. I advise persons of an irritable disposition to try it. I am, however, passionately fond of music: those who are not would possibly derive no benefit from the trial.

I played a piece of Chopin's, a prelude. There was no light but the fire-light, and the room was getting shadowy and ghostly. Again and again I played over the last few chords; and left the piano, as I always leave it in fact, with a sense of regret. I went to the mantel-piece; on it was a bronze clock; the gilded hands pointed to half-past ten. It was time to start.

Another moment and I was on the way. How different a night from the last! The storm had ceased; clouds were still hurrying across the sky, but the rain had stopped some hours before. Instead it was now turning cold, and the frost was stiffening the mud under my feet as I passed on. Ever and anon the clouds parted and the blue sky appeared. There was no moon, but the stars shone

bright and clear. The wind had also changed, and was blowing from the north. The frosty air raised my spirits still more and I felt a peculiar exaltation of mind, something that I have frequently observed in others, but never before experienced myself. I thought of my walk the night before; wondered if I should see the policeman. I knew very well that I would not: who ever saw a ghost when he expected to see one and was prepared to see one? No one I felt sure; though I had always disbelieved in ghosts, I knew enough about them to know that. But still I felt that something was going to happen, and I felt a childish sense of eagerness. A new case, some very peculiar disease or strange complication, something out of the ordinary run always inspires a medical man with an absorbing interest that a layman views with feelings of mingled wonder and contempt. I am always enthusiastic; but this was something so strange, so unlooked for, that I hardly knew how to restrain my feelings within due bounds; yet so peculiar, and, on the face of it, so unnatural was it that I dared not take anyone into my confidence. Even as I walked along, with the recollection of all that had happened the night before absorbing my mind to the exclusion of every other thought, I once or twice stopped and asked myself—"is this true —am I not dreaming?—did it all really happen?—will I, indeed, find this house and this girl of whom I have dreamt all the day long?" So do these things which impress us most deeply seem after a short lapse of time.

St. Urbain street! I turned the corner in such haste that my foot slipped on a piece of ice, and I almost fell over on my nose. Righting myself, I resolved to be more careful, lest any untoward accident should disable me. Then I pressed on more rapidly than ever. It took me no more than five minutes to walk up the street. I strained my eyes as I went. Yes, there was the high brick building, there was the street lamp, there the lane, and there, opposite, the three tall houses: yes, I was there at last.

The policeman was not to be seen; but then I had not expected him; he had already served his purpose; he had directed me, as it were, to the room where the hapless girl had been preparing to escape from this world of trouble, and nothing more was necessary. As to what his connection with her difficulties had been, I expected to find out what it all meant shortly. I was satisfied so far.

I opened the door and went in. A lamp was burning in the hall; I was expected. Taking a hasty survey of the hall, I passed on, without stopping, upstairs.

CHAPTER XIV.

The door of the room was open. I looked in. The first glance re-assured me; they were waiting for me.

The girl was in bed as I had left her. I could not see her face; but, from the position in which she was lying, as well as from the general state of quietude pervading the apartment, I knew that she was in a comparatively composed state of mind. The nurse, with her white scarf falling over the side of her face, was sitting at the bedside with a book in her hand; her beads were lying on the bed a few feet away from her. One candle only was burning, standing in the brass candlestick on the table, the same as the night before. The face of Martha Warne was turned from me. She did not appear to be paying any attention to the devotions of her nurse, who was not, indeed, reading aloud.

I rattled the handle of the door, so as not to alarm them by breaking in upon them suddenly, and entered. When the nurse saw me, she rose and advanced. The sound aroused the girl, and she turned around in bed. Our eyes met. Greeting the nurse with the usual respectful enquiries as to how she had passed the day, I passed on to the bedside and bent my head.

"You have come."

This was all she said. She looked the better for her rest during the day. Her hair was brushed back neatly from her forehead, and her lips were redder and less firmly compressed. Her eyes, however, seemed to be larger, and brighter than ever, and full of eagerness. For the moment I almost felt sorry for having promised to allow her to talk; but, after a moment's consideration, I pressed her hand and answersd—"yes, I have come."

"Thank God!"

"How do you feel to-night?" I asked.

"How do I feel?"—happy; happier than I have felt for—oh, for months. I feel as if, at last, it is all coming to an end, as if,"—"Hush!" I said, looking in the direction of the nurse, "you have not told her?"

"Told her? No, I did not, Dr. Thorburn; I could not *tell* anyone. If one could see for himself, well; but I never could tell anyone what was killing me. No," she added in a lower tone, "poor, good woman, don't worry *her*; she need never know. "You may be sure of that," I said, "tell no one, except me if you think it best, I am ready. Let me first, however, speak to the nurse."

"The other room is ready for her," said the girl. "Come, nurse, the doctor is going to send you off for a sleep; I have something to say to him, and he will go out as he came here, without troubling you, after I have finished talking to him."

The nurse, while we had been speaking, had stood

at the door, looking thoughtfully at the floor. What her thoughts were I could divine pretty well. I had told her the night before, as we drove along in the cab, that my patient's mind was in a slightly disturbed state, and that great care was necessary in dealing with her, so as not to interfere with her whims. I went forward and motioned to her to go into the hall. After moving up to the table, and taking another candle from the drawer, which she lighted, she did so. I followed, and we closed the door behind us.

As in duty bound, I asked for a full report of the day. It was entirely satisfactory to me, if not to my informant. Martha had talked wildly enough at times, sometimes being, the nurse feared, on the verge of delirium; but it did not appear that she had said anything of importance. "Her talk," said the nurse, "was sometimes of men, sometimes of women, oftener of some spirit which she seems to expect to see before she dies. When I asked her about it, however, I got no answer, I think she was in a kind of dream at the time."

I commended the woman for her care, gave her a few directions for the morrow, and saw her to her room, not a very finely furnished apartment, but quite equal to that of her patient. As the house had been, until a few months previous, let to lodgers, it had not been difficult for her to find materials for furnishing a room for herself. As soon as she was safely out of the way I returned to Martha Warne.

The first thing that attracted my notice, as I re-entered the room, was the dimness of the light. Only one candle was burning, and, as I noticed another candlestick on a little shelf which was fastened to the wall behind the bed, and had noticed also several spare candles in the drawer which the nurse had opened, I asked leave to light another. To my surprise the girl declined to permit me. I asked the reason, wondering whether the light would hurt her eyes. She answered in the negative, saying that she would like best to tell her story in as little light as possible. The idea seemed to me to be an absurd one; but, finding her to be in earnest, I agreed to do with the one candle. This point settled, I drew my chair up to the side of her bed, and prepared myself to hear her narrative. Before beginning, she took a few mouthfuls of brandy. I looked at my watch while she was drinking it; it was then exactly twenty-one minutes past eleven.

CHAPTER XV.

I have now to relate the narrative of Martha Warne, as told me by herself. I shall give it (as nearly as I can), in her own words. I remember every word spoken by her so distinctly, and can call to mind so vividly the intonation of her voice throughout, that I think I shall depart in very few instances from her own language. As a matter of course it is impossible to express on paper the accent used when speaking, the hesitancy, rapidity, calmness, or agitation of the speaker; these must be left to the reader to imagine for himself. But I undertake to give the sum and substance of what was said, and, in nine cases out of ten, the true words from the speaker's own lips, during this remarkable conversation. All comment I reserve until the end. It was necessary for me, seeing that she was from beginning to end labouring under the greatest mental excite ment, to question her and ask for explanations of many of her remarks. In order to keep as nearly as possible to the literal truth, I have made up my mind to reproduce all my questions and remarks as they were asked or interjected at the time. Let me commence.

It was tweuty-one minutes past eleven, and I had drawn my chair up close beside the bed. After

drinking a few mouthfuls of brandy-and-water which I had given her, she turned round, putting the tumbler down, and fixed her large dark eyes upon me.

Dr. Thorburn.

"Yes."

"Dr. Thorburn—I wish to ask you a question."

"Yes—Ask it."

"Dr. Thorburn—Dr. Thorburn!" As she spoke she rose in bed, leaning on her elbow, "Dr. Thorburn, tell me, how shall I tell it:—do you know that I am the only living person who knows when and where a man whom you and other people have looked for many months and have never found nor yet heard of, met his death?—do you know that?"

"No, no; I do not:—whom?"

"Dr. Hoegel!"

I started to my feet. Dr. Hoegel?—Dr. Hoegel? The words seemed to ring through the room. It rang in my ears like a voice from the dead; it rang out in the night like a cry of appeal to me. Dr. Hoegel—I took a few rapid steps to the door and then went back again wringing my hands. I had expected something strange, something unexpected, something terrible; but never, never, had I dreamed of tidings of him, long lost, long unheard of, long given up by all, friend and foe alike, as one whose fate would never be known, whose grave would be forever undiscovered!

I must now enter upon a slight digression in order to explain who Dr. Hoegel was, and why the

mention of his name should cause me so much astonishment. He was a young German doctor who had settled in Montreal. An orphan, and driven from his native country by the stringent laws requiring military service, he had found a refuge in Canada, and was engaged in Montreal in the study of medicine. He was called doctor by his associates, but, as a matter of fact, he never took a degree. This young man was, for a couple of months, my assistant. I had, therefore, every opportunity of knowing him well. He was short and fat, with lightish brown hair, inclining to baldness, and thin blue eyes. He was not good looking; his face was too devoid of colour, and his lips were thick and ill-set. Like most Germans he wore spectacles, which helped to detract from his personal beauty and, as far as I could see, served no useful purpose, for he never saw anything of his own accord. As regards his character I can say little. He was decidedly honest; outspoken, to a fault; so brusque, indeed, that my wife, woman-like, took a dislike to him the first time he appeared at our table, and never more than tolerated him. He was very reserved, and scarcely ever expressed an opinion unless one were forced from him; when he did speak, he talked sensibly enough. As I do not like officious and voluble people. he and I agreed admirably; I may say, indeed, that I never had an assistant who suited me better. I have known many medical students whom I have conceived a greater regard for; but that is quite another thing.

This young man left me about the middle of Sep-

tember and went into lodgings; and here comes in the most remarkable part of the story. About the middle of November, or rather earlier, for I think it was the ninth of the month, he suddenly and completely disappeared. It was not a case of running away to escape creditors or anything of that nature. Most of his bills were paid; his clothes were left at his lodgings, his entire effects were found at his place of abode. One afternoon he left his room, saying that he might not be home again before the next day; and from that hour he was never seen again.

His disappearance at the time was the occasion of much comment. The daily press talked the matter over, suggested every accident that could possibly befall a man within a radious of one hundred miles of Montreal, and kept on discussing the matter until there was nothing more left unsaid. The authorities of the Medical College, where the unfortunate young man had intended to graduate, offered a large sum for information of his whereabouts, and left no stone unturned to solve the mystery of his untimely disappearance. I interested myself, feeling myself to be somewhat of the nature of a guardian of the young fellow, and did everything I could think of to discover what had become of him. The result of all our efforts put together was simply *nil*. He was last seen by his landlady at four o'clock one Saturday afternoon, wearing a dark gray tweed suit, with a cloth cap. Standing in the doorway he had called to her not to expect him home before the next day about mid-day, adding that if anyone of his friends

called to say that he was gone to Lachine. The landlady had promised, and that was the last she saw of him. Since that hour he had never been seen alive or dead. Such is the story of Dr. Hoegel, and I leave it to my readers to imagine the effect which the mention of his name by Martha Warne produced on me.

For a moment, after resuming my seat, I buried my face in my hands, to collect my thoughts. Then I looked at her again. She was still sitting up sideways in bed, resting on her elbow. Her eyes had an unearthly brilliancy, and, I thought, a remorse pictured in them which completely softened me. Mechanically I asked the questions which rose to my lips :—

"Dr. Hoegel—Dr. Hoegel—you tell me—is he living or dead ?"

"He is dead."

"He is dead ; you know it. And how did he die ?"

"He was killed—murdered."

"Murdered ?"

She bowed her head.

"And by whom ?"

"It was not I who did it ; but I stood by and saw it done."

"You ?" Again I involuntarily started to my feet. This was a revelation too awful. But the sight of the girl's face, full of remorse and sorrow, calmed me, and again I resumed my seat. "Tell me, Martha Warne, what it means ; let me know the worst you have to tell. Only tell me the truth."

"I will tell you everything. It will take me some time to do so, but you will be patient, Dr. Thorburn. I have longed to tell some one, longed to tell you, for, oh, so many months! God only knows what I have gone through since that night. O, God forgive me, God forgive me!"

I was silent giving her time to collect her thoughts and overcome her emotion.

—"It is a good while now, Dr. Thorburn, two years about, since Dr. Hoegel lodged with us. Then my mother was alive. He wasn't Dr. Hoegel at all, I believe, but every one called him so; and so didwe. That was before he was in at the hospital as much as he was afterwards; at that time he would have been with you, I think."

"Yes," I said, "two years ago he was my assistant; but, as you say, afterwards he was engaged almost altogether in work which they gave him to do up at the hospital."

"Well, when he lived with us," she continued, "I of course saw him a good deal. Though he hadn't much to say, he was a nice spoken man when he did speak, and we all liked him. He and I became friends; I saw him every day for a little while at a time, and gradually we got to know each other well. You understand."

I was not quite sure that I did; but I nodded assent. "Well—well—now I must tell you something, Dr. Thorburn; do you remember John Logan, the policeman?"

I gave another start at the name; but she was so

intent on her story that she did not notice it, and repeated the question. Did I know him? Yes I should say I did. "John Logan—you remember him? He died—died of—what did they say?—heart disease, at the end of last year. You knew him?"

"I knew him."

"John Logan, Dr. Thorburn, was attentive to me; he was to marry me. He was a good many years older than I, but he was a good honest man and could afford to keep me well; and though I didn't like him at all when first I knew him afterwards I agreed to marry him because I saw that I would be getting a good husband."

"I see."

"Now—I must tell you; the whole truth is this; John Logan was jealous of Dr. Hoegel."

"Ah!"

"John Logan was jealous. Now I feel as if I must have been to blame; and yet I wasn't. At first I never suspected such a thing. Dr. Hoegel was only a lodger, and one must see a good deal of one's lodgers. Often and often John came up to see us and sat down there at the front door with a scowl on his face and never saying a word, when I didn't know what could be the matter with him, and hoped this disagreeableness wouldn't grow on him. But it did. He got worse and worse, every week, all summer; and still I didn't know what was amiss with him. I had a hard time off and on with him and my mother; she was ill and I had to wait on her all day long besides looking after the house."

"And when did you find out what was causing this coolness towards you on the part of John Logan?"

"Not till Dr. Hoegel went away, which he did on in the summer. Mother got worse and worse and we began to feel that she was not going to get well again. Then Dr. Hoegel left; I couldn't spare any time to look after his rooms, and mother and I both thought it would be best for us to be alone. Then, one night when John and I were alone together, he told me."

"He told you he had been jealous of Dr. Hoegel?"

"He did."

"And what happened?"

"We quarrelled. I was very angry, so angry that I forgot what I was saying and told John Logan I would never speak to him again. I was angry because I thought he might have known better. Dr. Hoegel and I never had anything to say to each other that he might not have listened to. There never was a word of sentiment between us. I used to sew buttons on his shirts and do little things for him, and he was grateful. He always paid his rent, and never came home drunk, as so many of them do. And we always spoke well of him when we got the chance; that was all. But John Logan had got it into his head that I allowed him to make love to me. John hated all the medical students. He had broken some heads among them; or they had broken his, I dont know which; and he hated them, one and all."

"All policemen do," I said.

"Well John Logan did—just hated them. And when I defended Dr. Hoegel and told him that he had never done or said anything but what was right, he flew into a passion and swore he would knock him on the head. This made me angry; we were both angry; the more he talked, the more I laughed at him, for it very foolish of him if he had only known it. And we ended by breaking off our marriage engagement."

"When was this ?"

"That was in August—no September; in the beginning of September; and then for a few weeks I saw no more either of Dr. Hoegel or John Logan. Dr. Hoegel I would not have seen anyway; for it would not have been like him to think of us and come and see us; he was not that sort of a man at all."

"When *did* you see them again ?"

"Well at the end of September my mother died. Just two days before her death, I met Dr. Hoegel in the street and he asked after her. I told him how she was, and he offered to come and see her, free of charge. I allowed him to come, and he came. That was the last time I ever saw him—but one. He could not help her any, she was past all help. Two days after she was dead."

"Poor girl !—and what of John Logan ?"

"After mother died he came back. He said he was sorry for what had happened, and asked me to forget about it. At first I didn't want to, but I was

lonely and sick, and I had to take new lodgers; and with one thing and another I was so distracted in my mind that I took him back again. Dr. Hoegel I never saw or heard of in those times. I think John knew that, and we got along pretty smoothly. All through October we used to see each other every other night, and things went on just as they should have done. Then it all came to an end."

"What came to an end?"

"Everything—everything. Oh, Dr. Thorburn, what I have lived to see! God only knows it all Neither you nor any one can help me now. What time is it?"

I looked at my watch. "Twenty minutes to twelve." She breathed a sigh of relief.

"I have so much to tell, Dr. Thorburn—and I wish to have plenty of time. You have been in Montreal for a good many years, haven't you? Do you know St. Laurent?"

"St. Laurent—the village of St. Laurent. Yes, I know it; I have driven out there, several times. Of all the places near Montreal, however, I know it the least."

"Who would want to know it?" said the girl with some bitterness; "no one, I should think, who could help it. But I have an aunt there, an old woman who lives alone, so full of whims and notions that no one can live with her. And on in November, two months after my mother died, this old aunt took sick; and I used to go out to see her every day I could spare the time."

"How did you go?"

"Twice I drove, but at other times I walked. It is six miles, and too far for me, for I was always tired. But when I walked out I used to stay over all night and that rested me."

"And you went alone?"

"That is what I am going to tell you. Sometimes I went alone; but sometimes John Logan went with me. It all depended on the time of day; he was on duty part of the day; and if I didn't wait for him I had to go by myself. But I didn't mind that."

"Did he drive you?"

"No, he walked with me. And sometimes I went out one way and came back another; that is, I drove out in the morning and walked into town at night. And John would walk out to meet me, you see, and bring me home."

I nodded.

"Well, Dr. Thorburn, now I must tell you this dreadful story. You won't hardly believe it, for it sounds too strange to be true. But it is true. And this is what happened. One night John came to visit me, and I told him that I wanted to go out to St. Laurent the next day. He said very well, that I had better drive out in the morning, and he would walk out and meet me in the evening. I agreed to this, and we made arrangements; I was to leave St. Laurent about half-past seven in the evening, and he would meet me about a mile from the village. No one is ever afraid to walk on the village road, you know, for there are always a number of people

round, and everything is quiet. John could not get off earlier, or I would not have put it off to so late an hour. Well, that was the arrangement we made; and, the next morning, I drove out, as proposed. I stayed all day with my aunt, and, after tea was over, made arrangements to come home. I didn't like the look of the sky; it seemed to be threatening rain; but it wasn't raining at seven o'clock, and I determined to start and take my chances. I knew John would never fail to come, and I did not want him to have a longer walk than was necessary.

Well—my aunt objected, said it wasn't fit for me to start for such a long walk, and prophesied rain—but I didn't listen to her. I knew that John would not be able to stay out at St. Laurent all night, and thought it would be such a long walk back for him, if he had to come all the way; so I started. I had an umbrella and a water proof, so Ididn't feel afraid of the rain. My aunt shook her head at me, but I paid no attention to that; at half-past seven I was off.

At first it was pleasant enough; but after I got out of the village it seemed to come up thick like a mist. You know what a mist is. One can stand a heavy rain better; and, when once you get soaked through and through, you can plod along with the water rnnning in at your toes and out at your heels. I don't mind anything so long as I can see, but I hate perfect darkness. There should have been a moon, and we spoke of its being moonlight when we planned our walk. Even if it had rained there

would have been light enough for me to see the fences and the gutter. But a thick mist—I felt afraid when I thought of it.

It came up, however, thicker and thicker. I felt frightened, and got flurried. There wasn't anything really to be afraid of, and I laughed at myself for being nervous; but still I was. I began to think of all sorts of queer things, of things I had read about, and ghosts and bad men. I felt ashamed too, but I couldn't help myself, and wished John would come. Of course it wasn't very late, and I hadn't gone a great way, but it seemed far, and I didn't know what to do. I counted one, two, three, four, five, six, and so on; and thought perhaps when I got to a hundred I would meet John. But I didn't. Then I counted to a thousand; but still I went on without meeting anybody. And then I began to get nervous to such an extent that I couldn't walk straight, but kept tumbling into the gutter; and once or twice I ran into the fence."

"And did you meet no one?"

"At first I did. And if I had been wise, I would have gone into a house. But after a while, you know, there are no more houses, and then every minute I thought I must meet John Logan. I was sure he would come at the time he promised."

"And something kept him—"

"Of course. He was a policeman, and I should have known that he wasn't always able to do as he liked. But he always had come when he had arranged to, and I never thought of his failing me

this time. But I was in a terrible plight. I walked on and on and on, stumbled over stones, got into the gutter and got my feet wet. O, I had a miserable, miserable time! At last I felt tired out, and commenced to cry."

"And had you any idea how far you had gone?"

"Not for a long while. I cried for a while, and then I stopped: it seemed so stupid to cry. But I couldn't help myself. Even then it was as if something dreadful was going to happen, I had that feeling; I can't well explain it. I felt tired, too, and wished I had a place to sit down to wait for John. I thought if I could only sit still for a little while it would be all right. But I sat down just for one moment, and the stillness was—oh, horrible!"

"And then you went on again?"

"Then I went on again the same as before only worse. I had lost all power of command over myself, and could have yelled at the least thing."

"Was it raining at all?"

"No, there was no rain; I don't think it rained that night. Only a horrid mist over everything quite blinded me. I wouldn't have minded rain."

"Well—and you say you went on the same as before?"

"The same as before—I don't know how long; it seemed a fearful time. Well, I told you I was always running into the fence or into the gutter, or stumbling over stones;—I was going along as usual, when, all of a sudden, I ran up against something hard. I put out my umbrella and felt it; it was a

stone wall. Then I looked about me very closely, and found out that I was near two stone gate-posts. From that I knew where I was."

"And where were you ?"

"I was in a place on the road to St. Laurent, that is called the 'Devil's Hollow.' You know the place, Dr. Thorburn."

"No ; never heard of it," I said ; nor indeed had I. "Why is it called by such a name ?"

"I don't know," she said. "There is some story of some bad men of some sort who are all buried there together ; I think that is how it gets its name. But I don't know much about it. You remember, don't you, that the Roman Catholic cemetery is there, the French burying-ground they call it. It was one of the stone posts of the gate leading into the graveyard, that I had run against. When I found this out, I felt a cold shudder creep over me, and I fell right down on my knees. I don't know how long it lasted, but it was a horrid feeling."

I could sympathize with her ; but I said nothing, letting her continue without interruption.

"After a while, I got the better of this feeling. At first I fancied I could see into the burying-ground, and thought I could distinguish the white grave-stones. But this was mere fancy, I knew it must be, even then, for if I could not see three yards ahead of me in any direction, how could I distinguish something white over a fence and up a hill, a considerable distance off! I determined not to think about the grave-yard at all, and started off

along the road. Do you know I almost felt better then; I had more courage, more spirit, more strength to go on with, wasn't this strange?'

"No," said I, "there is nothing more certain than what is called reaction. After intense fear, comes resolution, after intense grief, a sense of resignation. Your feelings were natural. But go on with your story, you say you started off anew, in better spirits than before."

"I started, but I didn't go far, I couldn't have got more than fifty yards from that gate, when something made me look back. And, looking back, I saw a light!"

"A light: what kind of a light?"

"A lantern; I could tell that much about it, and no more. There was just the glimmer that you would expect to see from a lantern seen through the mist. I saw it and stopped, I couldn't help feeling rather glad to see it, for I was—oh, so lonely; and I knew it must be carried by some one. But one thing made me feel queer; it was just coming out of the gate of the burying-ground. That frightened me; I was half glad and half sorry, and just stood still where I was."

"How very strange!" I could not help the remark, although it was quite unnecessary.

"Strange? You would have thought so, Dr Thorburn, if you had been me, and stood there. It *was* strange. As I said a minute ago, I did not know how to feel about it. It frightened me very much, especially as it was coming out of the grave-

yard. But then I never used to believe in ghosts, and I felt that it must be a man and not a ghost. I had that feeling, and it re-assured me. And then I thought to myself that it couldn't be a bad man; for why would any bad character want to go prowling round in a burying-ground at night with a lantern, there seemed to be no reason for such a thing. Of course I own to being afraid as well; I couldn't help being a little nervous at such a time, and at such a sight; but of the two feelings I think I felt more pleased than not."

"And what did you do?"

"Do? I waited. I waited to see what would happen. I stood still where I was, and watched the light. It came out of the gate, just past the stone post that I had run into; if I had stayed there three minutes longer, it would have passed so close to me that I would have been able to touch the person who carried it. Well, I watched and watched. At first it seemed to stand still outside the gate; it did stand still for about two minutes, then it moved round a little within a small space. I felt sort of nervous all the time. But after a while it began to come slowly in my direction; then my heart began to beat."

"And you called out."

"Yes, I called out. Not just at first; but it came nearer and nearer, I felt my heart beating louder and louder. Then I couldn't help myself, and I called out something. I don't really know what I said; I don't think it was any-

thing coherent. But at the sound of my voice the light stopped and seemed to half disappear" :—

"What do you mean by *half* disappear ?"

"Well—I thought the man who was carrying it put the lantern behind him ; I could see a glimmer, but not a clear light, as I had a minute before."

"And what then ?"

"For a time I stood still and the light stood still —for quite a little while neither it nor I stirred. But at last I felt that I couldn't stand that any longer, and began to advance towards it. I went on very slowly and cautiously, for I was rather afraid. I had taken about half a dozen steps when it began to move back. Well then I simply didn't know what to do. I felt as if I musn't lose sight of it, though, so I followed it. It went on slowly backwards, about a hundred yards from where I saw it first, up the road I had come. I followed. Then it crossed over to the other side of the road ; up to this time, you know, we had both been near the fence on that side of the road on which the cemetery is ; it crossed over, and, when it got nearly to the fence on the opposite side from me, ran quickly past me up the way we had just come. Do you understand me ?"

"Perfectly," I said ; "the light went on again towards the cemetery gate."

"Not exactly that, for it was the other side of the road it was on now. As it passed me I could clearly discern the figure of a man through the mist : but of course I couldn't tell anything about him."

"Did you speak again?"

"Yes, I called out twice, 'stop.' I felt as if I must speak to him. I called out 'stop' twice, but he paid no attention to it at all."

"And what then?"

"Well—you know, Dr. Thorburn, girls are curious. I ran after the light. I was just in such a temper, then, that I could have run after anything alive. I never used to be a coward in the old times before—before this. I never was afraid of things. This night I had been nervous, of course; but it was something new to me to be so. I never used to be afraid of anything."

"And you ran after the light?"

"I ran after it. But it went faster than I did, and I couldn't catch up to it. It went on and on. It was on the side of the road. There the road is pretty high in the middle, and there is a deep ditch on the side of the road we were on then; on the other side, where the cemetery is, there is hardly any. I had to go along carefully to keep from tumbling over into the ditch. We went on and on, down the road, a good piece beyond the cemetery gate. Then, all at once, I saw the light, which was by this time some distance ahead of me, go down the side of the road into the ditch. It didn't seem as if the man had tumbled or slipped, but as if he had run down. I didn't stop to think, but ran on; when I got to the place where I had seen the light go over the side of the road, I went over too."

"And where was the light now?"

"It had disappeared completely; I didn't know

just precisely at what moment I had lost it; but one thing was certain, it was gone. I stopped to think again."

"You had gone down into the ditch?"

"Yes, I had. And the grass there was long and damp, and it made me shiver; and I called out again, and came very near giving way to another crying spell. Now that the light was gone it seemed worse than ever, and I felt like despair."

"And did you search round for any traces of this man with the lantern who had so suddenly disappeared?"

"No, but I must hurry on. I was walking slowly along in this ditch among the long grass when I fell on something. My feet struck wood. I looked down, and what do you think I saw?"

"I cannot tell: what?"

"A long wooden box, lying on the ground."

"Nonsense: is it possible!"

"There it was. Oh my God, shall I ever forget it! But there I stood with my feet touching it, and my dress trailing over it. A long wooden box such as they use to put in graves. My mind at once, a it were, flew to the cemetery, and I imagined that it had been brought out and left there, to be put in a grave on the next day. Dr. Thorburn, I couldn't help myself; I put out my hand, took hold of the lid and raised it"—

"Ah—and inside?"

"As I did so, a hand was raised; a man who had been lying in it started up; and, in another moment, I was thrown helpless on the ground!"

CHAPTER XVI.

I stood up; I was interested beyond measure; had I been reading of such a thing I would have felt a certain stirring of the mind at such a sensational story; but to have it thus brought home to me as the truth in its nakedness, told by a girl like Martha Warne and at such a time;—it was startling, indeed. I stood up in my excitement, but she motioned to me to be seated again. She evidently wished to go on with the recital with as few interruptions as possible. I appreciated her motives, for it was well that she should have, in such a state of body and mind as she then was, no more contradiction or opposition than one felt absolutely necessary, for her own well-being. As soon as I had resumed my seat she went on:—

"At first I was stunned. I had been pushed over very gently, all things being considered, and was much frightened, but not hurt. No wonder that I was frightened, was it? Who ever heard of such a thing happening before! I just fell over like, hardly touched by the man's hand, on the grass. You can fancy how it was. There I lay, as I said, stunned, limp for a while.

"Did the man jump out?" I asked.

"I couldn't tell then, Dr. Thorburn; but half a

minute afterwards, I turned my head over, for the grass was long and wet; and there was the man standing with his back to me; and he held the lantern in his hand!"

"Martha Warne!—Martha Warne!"

"It flashed across my mind, sir, that I must escape. As frightened as I was, I knew that I hadn't a moment to spare. I started up as quick as lightning, and turned round in the direction of St. Laurent. I dont know what kept me; but just for a second I paused to get my breath—and in that second he turned—and it was Dr. Hoegel!"

I was prepared to hear as much. All along I had had vague premonitions that Dr. Hoegel was destined to figure in her extraordinary story in one way or another; and I was not surprised to find that it had been he who had been carrying the light up and down the road. I guessed even at his motive, as one will fly from one idea to another, for being in such a place at such a time. But of course I left everything for her to tell me, herself; and besought her to proceed with her narrative as calmly as she was able.

She did proceed, though not as calmly as before, to tell me all she said to him, and all he had said to her, Henceforward she was more nervous than before, her sentences were less clear and concise, and she omitted saying many things that she obviously intended to say, while repeating much that was unnecessary.

"All your exclamations of astonishment, surprise,

and satisfaction that it should happen to be he and not a stranger, I can picture to myself," I said, drawing my chair a little further away so as to rest my elbow on the table. "I can imagine it all. It must have been an unspeakable relief to you—and to him, too, in fact; for if it had been a perfect stranger, he would hardly have known how to act."

She blushed. "Oh, Dr. Thorburn, if it only *had* been some one else! Yes, at the time, I felt so relieved when I saw that it was he, that I sat right down on the grass and began to cry. I couldn't help it. Everything had seemed so horrible, and I felt so safe all of a sudden; you can't understand how I felt."

"I think I can," I said; "the feeling was a natural one, and inevitable under the circumstances. What did you do next?"

"For a while, nothing. I sat there, and he stood and looked at me. Then he asked me how on earth I had happened to be there."

"And you told him?"

"Yes, I told him.—And then he told me how he had happened to be there, too. And—and—Oh, Dr. Thorburn, I cant tell you all—"

"But you must, if possible. Try, my dear girl, to be calm. Take some more of the brandy and go on with your story as quietly as possible. Here."

I gave her some brandy and she resumed.

"Well—Dr. Thorburn—I can't repeat his words, but he was telling me how he happened to be on the St. Laurent road, and what the box was for.

It was for—for—for a dead man whom they wanted to carry off from the cemetery—"

"'They'—who?—were there two of them?"

"Not then; but there had been. Dr. Hoegel and another student had come out together, but the other man had gone back to Montreal."

"Why?"

"Well; I think this was the way of it; they had come out together and brought the box; they put it in the ditch because they knew it would be safe; and Dr. Hoegel was to stay and watch while the other man was to come again with a third man about two o'clock in the morning, and the three of them were to go to work. But he had got tired of waiting so long, and he thought that no one would discover him in the mist, so he lit his lantern and went up into the cemetery to look round a bit. He was coming out of the cemetery when I saw him first."

"Yes, I remember; and how did he manage to get into the box?"

"O easily; it was an idea that occurred to him when he found that I was following him; he thought I was a man, and he wanted to frighten me. He said the idea took hold of him, and he couldn't resist trying it. He laughed too, at the fright he had given me. He said I would not go wandering on lonely roads after night any more."

I could well imagine all this. Hoegel was just the man to play some wild, weird trick such as this, on the spur of the moment. I could see it all. "All

this I can understand quite well, I said leaning back in my chair and feeling a little puzzled; "but I don't see what could have happened afterwards. I should have thought that, after finding him, all would have gone well. "What happened when this conversation came to an end?"

At this question she started. Her face became livid, her lips grew white, her eyes seemed to shrink back in her head, her whole frame heaved convulsively. When she spoke, her voice was low and hoarse.

—"When this talk of ours ended?—Dr. Thorburn, it never ended! While I was talking to him —we were standing say three feet apart—all at once—a heavy blow fell on his head, on his poor innocent head—he was just then opening his mouth to speak to me—and down he fell to the ground—poor Dr. Hoegel! oh God, oh God, how cruel!"

As she spoke, she fell over in bed in a sort of fit. I rushed to the bedside and endeavoured to soothe her. Uttering a low plaintive cry, she rocked herself backward and forward on the bed, her long brown hair falling over the pillows. It was a most pitiful scene, and one that will remain pictured on my mind forever. If ever saw I remorse in any human soul it was in hers. And yet there was really no great occasion for remorse on her part; she had been guiltless of the blow, innocent of the intent. But the effect of it had been too strong for her, too much for her nervous system to bear; and so I think she had gone on until she at last actually imagined her-

self to be the perpetrator of the deed itself, instead of an innocent witness of the crime. This is my only explanation of such remorse and acute anguish of mind as she exhibited that night; I can think of no other.

"John Logan."—It was the first word she pronounced distinctly, after the hysterical fit from which she was suffering began to subside. I needed, however, no telling to convince me that it was he who had dealt the blow. John Logan—yes, it was John Logan. He had stolen up noiselessly from behind, attracted by the sound of voices; and, seeing his betrothed in conversation with, as he believed, his hated rival, had, in a moment of sudden passion, raised his stick and dealt the fatal blow.

"He did not mean it!—Dr. Thorburn, he never meant it—hate John Logan as I do and ever shall, I do him this justice—he never meant to kill him, never! It was so quick, so sudden; he stole up, not knowing who we were; and he thought—oh, such terrible things of me—and just to vent his passion for the moment—Oh Heaven, how do I live to think of it!".

Again I begged her to be calm, and urged her to take a little rest. She asked me what hour it was, and I looked at my watch; it was about a quarter to twelve. She leaned back on the pillow, saying she would rest for a few minutes, and turned her head away. While she rested I took a short walk into the hall, and looked out of the window. It was a beautiful starlight night, the ground was frozen hard,

and the street shone in the frosty air with a sort of hazy brightness. I looked for the form of the policeman, but he was not visible; John Logan the murderer, the criminal—what a tale of horror could those cold lips have told, those lips that I had seen lying stiff in death, had they been able to speak!—what a man—powerful, resolute, self-contained—and what a history!—and how little the world had guessed it!

But I must go on with the story as told by Martha Warne. After about ten minutes I returned to her room, and sat down on my chair as before. I saw at once that she was calmer, and able to proceed with her narrative.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Did you ever kill a man, Dr. Thorburn?"

It was a rather singular question. I suppose, being a doctor, if I had looked at it from the point of American comic fiction, I should have answered that it was my daily practice to extinguish human life. But I did not look at it from that point; I said no.

"Of course you never did! But I say that, Dr. Thorburn, because you couldn't imagine the feeling at seeing a man dead whom you have killed yourself.—Yes, I know; I didn't do it myself, not with my own hands—I know what you would say;—but I was there!—Well, do you think you would be overcome with feelings of remorse and fear and pity and such as these?—Not a bit. I never felt less inclined for all such feelings than just then. It sounds strange, but it is true. And John Logan—oh, he was just as calm as you are now. You? calmer, a great deal. He never moved a muscle, never said a word. I spoke first, and I spoke of the necessity of hiding the body and doing it immediately. I told him of the other student who was coming out to the burying-ground later on in the night, and warned him that the body must be hidden and we must be out of the way before the young man appeared on the scene. He agreed with me."

"One moment," I said;" did you not take any measures to see whether poor Hoegel was not possibly still alive and only stunned? Was that not possibly the case?"

A horrified look came over her face.---"Oh yes, yes! For a long time we hoped—or, at least, *I* hoped, John didn't seem to. But he got cold before long. Oh yes, he was quite dead. We listened for his heart to beat for a long time, but it had stopped. Oh it was a fearful blow, a fearful blow; it was too much to hope for that he wasn't dead. We knew he must be. And after looking anxiously for every possible sign of life, we began to make preparations for hiding our crime."

"Say Logan's crime," I said; "I hate to hear you identifying yourself with him. Yes, no doubt the blow killed him; a blow on the head will kill a man, if only it is heavy and dealt in the right place. Where was he struck?"

"On the side of his head, about four inches from his left eye. Don't ask me to say more about it, please, doctor! I can't think of it even. Oh Heaven!"

I shook my head several times to signify that I would ask no more questions of the kind; and motioned her to proceed with the story. She continued.

"There we stood, the two of us, Dr. Thorburn, with the body beside us. As I told you a minute ago, the first thing that we thought of was how we should save yourselves. I didn't feel nervous. I hoped now that the mist would last all night and the next day. It would conceal our crime as nothing else could."

"I am impatient beyond measure," I said, "to know what you did. It was never discovered."

"Never! Why? Because we made discovery too easy. Well, let me tell you what we did. John said first it would be madness to leave him there in the ditch, seeing that we were going on to Montreal and his friend was coming to join him. We must therefore move him somewhere, if only to baffle the pursuit of justice for a few hours.

"First John looked one side of the road and then the other. On one side, that is on the opposite side, was the cemetery. The cemetery was not to be thought of; it was the first place the friend would go to. The other side of the road, that is the side we were, was a field. We couldn't see far into it, but John jumped the fence to go and spy, while I sat down on the ground and waited. We both felt that our lives were in danger, and we kept cool and made the most of our time. Dr. Thorburn, you cannot imagine it!"

"I cannot," I said. "Go on."

"In two minutes—it seemed a long time, but it couldn't have been longer than that—John came back. He had been in the field, and said that there was a dense clump of bushes and trees the other side of it. He had made up his mind to take the body there.

"I didn't know what to say; it seemed to me that it couldn't be done. But it was done. First—can you believe it?—he took up the body of Hoegel in his arms and carried it over there."

"I remember John Logan," I said. "He was a man of immense physical strength; I can believe that he was able to do it. But how about the box; what did he do with it?"

"He took it too. He didn't carry it, at least not further than the fence. I had to help him. I thought it would kill me. I staggered under it, although I only had to steady it. And just after we got over the fence we heard the sound of wheels."

"A carriage was coming."

"Yes, and we heard men's voices."

"And what did you do?"

"We cowered down behind the fence, the two of us. John held me by the hand. It came nearer and nearer, and we knew that, if it was the other student, we were lost. John was ready to make a desperate fight."

"And you?"

"I fainted. I felt as if I must scream out; but I didn't scream; I fainted away. When I came to my senses again I found that the men had driven on. We were saved."

"And then you went on with your labour of dragging the box along?"

"Yes, but it was not hard work; I did nothing, the ground there was hard; it had been a pasture land I think in summer, and was firm; the box left no mark. John would tip it up on end and then let it down gently again, and kept on doing so until we got to the clump of trees. When we got

there he put the body of Dr. Hoegel inside, and began to fill the box with earth."

"Where was it placed?"

"Under a big maple tree that has small bushes growing densely all round it. You can see it from the road. It is quite a small cluster of trees, but so conspicuous that no one would suspect it of hiding anything."

"But weren't all those premises thoroughly searched afterwards? How was it that this was never discovered?"

"We never knew; but I think it was too easily seen, and people could look right round the trees and bushes and never thought of there being anything there."

"And did it take John Logan long to complete his work?"

"A long time. And, while he was doing it, I did a dreadful thing. I knelt down on the grass, on the wet grass, in all the mist and rain, and said a prayer. Oh, it seemed so awful! Dr. Thorburn, when that night comes back to me I feel thankful that I have not long to live!"

I knew not what to say. It were a mercy, I felt, if her life were indeed a short one. She seemed anxious to finish the story of this fearful crime, and, to help her, I asked a number of questions.

"After your work was completed—what then? Did you return by the St. Laurent road to Montreal?"

"No. We returned to Montreal, but not by the

St. Laurent road. John made me walk away round by a road five miles out of our way. I had to do it—and the first part of the way we ran. We got home at five in the morning; and since that day I have never known a moment's peace!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Poor girl! I had heard of many a melancholy tale; but none so sad as this. As I looked at her lying back on the pillows, her long hair flowing round her shoulders, and her dark eyes gazing wistfully up at me, I felt a sinking at the heart. A wild, rebellious feeling took possession of me. All the old questions of the sceptic and the philosopher, as to the unjustifiableness of unmerited suffering rushed upon my mind in a storm. It seemed hard; hard was no word for it; it was cruel, for she, herself, had done no wrong. I was anxious, however, to know what the relations between her and John Logan had been after this night of terror. I asked her the question.

"John Logan?" she said, fixing her eyes upon me. "I never saw him again—never! When he left me that night I said to him at the door, and these were the last words that ever passed between us—'John, you have killed him; you are a murderer! I will keep your secret, in life and in death, so help me God! But never, never, so long as you live in this world, come near me or speak to me again. If ever you do, remember this, that my oath will be broken that day, and I will deliver you into

the hands of justice.' And he never answered me."

"And you saw him no more from that hour?"

"No more."

"And he never wrote nor held any communication with you?"

"Never. And I kept my oath until this hour. I heard of his death; people said, the papers said 'heart disease.' Ah, the same heart disease as I have had to struggle with ever since that night, only, perhaps, ten times more horrible—for he was a murderer; I am not. Yes, I kept my oath to John Logan until to-night; I told nobody. But it had to be; I had to tell my story; otherwise I could not die—and oh, I have so wished to die!"

"You wish to die—and yet you are innocent?"

"It is not that I am innocent or guilty, not that, no. If I were guilty it would be the same thing, perhaps; perhaps far worse; yet how could it be worse!"

"Tell me what you mean," I said, "I don't understand you."

"You did not see him, Dr. Thorburn?"

"See whom?"

"Dr. Hoegel."

"When?"

"Last night."

"Ah!" I said, standing up and looking around; it was he, then, that came into this house last night, while I was waiting in the hall?"

"It was."

A look of triumph came over her wan face. I, the

sceptic, the pitying physician, with his half contemptuous compassion, was at last convinced. "Do the dead ever come back?" she had asked me; I had answered by a vain smile of incredulity. Henceforward I would refrain from answering such a question. I would be silent.

"Then you *did* see him?"

"No, I did not see him; but I knew, I felt—I do not know what"—

"I know! Dr. Thorburn, every night—every night—not once, or twice, or three times, since that terrible evening, I have seen him. Every night he comes; only for a moment—but he is there! I have hoped for an end of this, I have done everything I could to escape it, but in vain. And my lodgers have gone, everything is gone; people say the house is haunted. I have slept in other houses; but it is still with me. People say I am mad; perhaps I am. I went to you, Dr. Thorburn, one night some time ago—you wont remember now—to tell you all about it, and to ask you for your advice; but my heart failed me, and, before you came downstairs, I ran away. Another time I went to another doctor; but when I saw him coming, I left him, too, in the same fashion. At last I went to you again, and you know what happened then. You did not understand me, and could not help me. I don't know what brought you here to me, last night; but I thank God for it, whatever did. You have come, and you have heard my story. That was all I wished for—nothing more. I am innocent of his

death, but I cannot escape from him, he comes and haunts me, and there is nothing left for me but to die. Now that I have told all I can die in peace."

To die! How calmly she said it! And she spoke with so much certainty that it seemed well-nigh ridiculous for me to answer her. In a case like hers, what could *I* do—I, who had never until this night believed that such a case could exist in the world, that such things could befall any human being—what could *I* do! I did not tell her how I came to enter the house, I thought it better not to mention my having seen the form of policeman Logan at the street corner. She, it was evident, was not in the habit of seeing him. His victim, she had told me, haunted her. So great and so firmly fixed is my disbelief in ghosts and apparitions that I could never have believed the latter part of her story if it had not been for my own experience of the night before. When I could explain that or laugh at it, I felt that I would have a right to question her tale; not till then.

"Your story," I said, "is the most wonderful and also the saddest I think I ever heard of. You have indeed suffered everything; and, worst of all, it is hard for me to say how I can help you."

"Help me, Dr. Thorburn? You have heard my story, that is enough of itself. Tell me, do you think it was wrong for me to break my oath to John?"

"No," I said, "I am sure you have done right. I do not know that I can reason the matter out, but I

feel that you have done right in this thing; you have done your duty. But"—

"Hush!"

"What is it?" I cried.

"Listen."

I listened. The street door was opening below. My eyes sought Martha Warne's. One look was enough; I knew what was coming. Not a word passed between us. I felt my heart beating. A cold tremor seized hold of me—no, I could not look on him, I must not see him. With a wild, half childish instinct of self-preservation, I pulled my chair close to the bed and buried my face in the clothes, shutting my eyes tight.

Then I waited—I am almost ashamed to tell it—but I waited with my head buried in the clothes, for the form of the dead man to come and go. I felt the same cold sense of horror that I had felt before when I first saw the figure of the dead policeman. Now that it is all past and over, I regret extreemly that I did not look up. I knew Dr. Hoegel well when he was alive, and I would have given much afterwards to have felt that I could as it were, identify him. But at the moment I was powerless to move, powerless to look up. It is a terrible sensation to experience, and I pray that I may never have to pass through it again. I sat there, my eyes tightly closed, my ear intent to catch the slightest sound, my brain in a state of feverish expectancy.

I had not long to wait. Many people know the

peculiar feeling that causes one to be conscious of something being present in the room, although it is not seen or heard. I knew when the apparition came into the room as well as if I had seen it come. I saw nothing; I heard nothing; yet I was conscious of a strange presence. At that moment I think my senses failed me. I heard a wild cry, the same cry that had startled me the night before, ringing in my ears, and breaking the silence with an awful abruptness—and then all was dark, for a while I must have lost my senses.

When I came to myself I looked up. I could see nothing. For a moment I forgot what had happened, and then, like a flash of lightning, it came back to my mind. I looked around, but I was in total darkness; I spoke, but received no answer.

The strangeness of the thing quite paralysed me. I had passed through enough, Heaven knows, but it seemed that I was only to escape from one terrible experience to be compelled to enter upon another. However, I determined not to be daunted; I was in darkness, and darkness has its terrors only for the ignorant; I must find a light and see what had happened.

I am a smoker, and of course carry matches. I found a match in my pocket and lighted it. As the flame lighted up the room, I looked around. All was as it had been; the chair, the table, the bed with the girl lying upon it were all as I had last seen them. The candle had burned down to the socket and then gone out; that was all. I had seen

others lying in the drawer, and I immediately proceeded to light one.

As soon as the room was lighted up again, I turned round to speak to the girl. I spoke to her several times, but she did not answer. Thinking she was asleep, I crossed the room to the bed. Taking her wrist in my hand to feel her pulse, I found it cold and lifeless. I leaned over close to her face; her head was thrown back, her long brown hair lying on the pillow, her eyes half shut, a smile of sad contentment closing her thin lips. I touched her three or four times, and put my head down to listen for the beating of her heart. But there was no sound, no life; I was alone with the dead!

CHAPTER XIX.

I need not relate what followed; enough has been told. Of the funeral of Martha Warne, at which two sisters from the convent and myself were the only mourners; of the sale of her house; of the enquiries subsequently made for her by old acquaintances, I need not speak; after her death nothing of interest happened in connection with her which any one need care to know. I will relate simply what I have done with respect to the strange story which she told me, and bring my tale to a close.

It is hardly necessary for me to say that almost the first thing I did was to go out the St. Laurent road as far as the gate of the burying ground, to see for myself the scene of the murder. It was not difficult to identify the spot. It was a fine bright day in May, and the snow had disappeared. The ground was not dry, but was rapidly drying. I saw the little clump of trees and bushes of which she had spoken, on the further side of the field, and shuddered as I reflected what a grim secret was concealed under them. The field was marshy, almost a lake in some places; it was not possible to cross it, nor do I think I would have gone across, if it had been practicable. I saw few people around, and the place had a weird aspect, even while the spring sun was shining on it.

Then I began to reflect upon what it was best to do next. To tell the story to anyone seemed to me impossible. I felt that I ought, in justice to myself and the world in general, to do so, but the more I tried the less I was able to do it. Two or three times I left my home, intending to make a formal declaration as to the truth of what I have related, and leave the matter in the hands of the authorities; but every time I failed to summon the necessary courage. It haunted me night and day, and I felt all the agonies of an accessory to crime; but day after day passed, and yet I had done and said nothing.

At last I wrote to the newspapers. Under an assumed name and a disguised hand, I notified the editor of a leading newspaper that the body of the lost Dr. Hoegel would be discovered, if sought for, on the St. Laurent road, under a number of bushes the other side of a field opposite the Roman Catholic cemetery. I described the place carefully, but gave no further information as to how the body came there orwhence the knowledge of the writer as to its existence there had come.

Everyone knows what followed. People went wild with curiosity, immediate search was made, and for days the city talked of nothing else. The body was found, and an inquest was held. *I was present at the inquest*;—but nothing was elicited of importance. The body was identified as that of poor Hoegel, and the verdict of the Coroner's jury was "murdered by some person or persons un-

If the publisher of this book
wishes to make a success of the
publishing [illegible] he should not
issue until he receives [illegible]

THE ROWAN TREE

known." A reward of one thousand dollars was offered, and no effort was spared to discover the guilty parties. All in vain. I saw, with peculiar emotions, the very letter I had written to the newspaper in my disguised hand-writing passed round the table at which we sat. I examined it closely, my hand shook and there was a mist before my eyes, but no one noticed that, they were far too intent on other things. As I looked on what was left of the young student of medicine, I had a vision of Martha Warne and her terrible tale; and the wild, weird cry that had twice rung through the room in my hearing seemed to sound in my ears. Outwardly, no doubt, I was calm, as cool and as critical as anyone in the room; in fact much more so, for while the others were everyone of them animated by a feverish curiosity, all the more intense because there was no chance of its immediate gratification, I was merely pretending to be anxious about the discovery of the murderers, and took no real interest in the discussion. I answered all the questions put to me, and gave my opinion when it was necessary, and no more. When the inquest was over I felt that my duty was done as far as I was able to do it.

CHAPTER XX.

I have told the story of Martha Warne. It was absolutely necessary for me to tell it. I could not keep it to myself. I had tried, and I could not do it; it haunted me night and day. I could not tell it to a friend because I could trust no one to believe it; and I cannot bear to be disbelieved.—So I write it; and the world may believe or disbelieve as it pleases. Two things that I have wished to discover, I have discovered; who the other student was, who was going out to meet poor Hoegel the night he was killed; and whether the ghost of Logan was ever seen by anyone but myself. I have found out who the student was; as he is a young man of good character, rising in the world, I do not betray him. The other question I must also leave unanswered, as I cannot name the person without divulging his secret; but I am satisfied that one other man besides myself saw a part of what I saw. I can tell no more.

So I give my story to the world: names are changed, and, as everyone will understand, anything calculated to betray any of the persons connected with the incidents therein, has been left out. Enough, however, has been told to place the whole of each circumstance before my readers, precisely as it occurred. I affirm this as absolute truth. Those who do not wish to believe it, need not. To all, believing and unbelieving, I say farewell.

THE ROWAN TREE.

CHAPTER I.

It was many years ago, yet it seems like a few days. I was young—twenty-five. I am not very old now. Twenty years have passed; I am forty-five Yet I feel old. Though it seems like yesterday, the years have been very long, and very dreary. I have not felt that I lived; I have been as good as dead to the world this nineteen years or more.

The evenings are long. It is Summer. I sit out on the balcony in front of my bedroom window at night, and breathe the evening air. It it calm and cool at night. I can smell the moist air of the marshes, mingled with the odour of the Autumn flowers in the garden. I sit there and dream of the past. As I look down the garden, I can see far away at the other end, if it be moonlight, the red berries of a rowan tree. Every night my eye seeks this spot. Every night, my eyes, resting on it, grow dim and misty, and my heart dies within me. Even when it is not moonlight, I can see the dark leaves of the rowan, I can tell the red berries and count the clusters. It is always present to my mind. I can see it standing there, in its still beauty, to me the only remaining relic of a glorious dream which has long since faded into nothingness.

This house and its garden are mine. Here I live

from one year to another—in solitude, I have tried to live in the world; I have tried to love the world, to laugh when it laughs, to sorrow when it sorrows, to join in its sports, its merrymakings, its joys. But these things are not for me. I have tried them all, and I have left them all forever, to come back to my lonely retreat in the country. When I was a boy, I was never happy long, away from the excitement of city life. I loved the noise, the tumult, the company. Now all is changed; I care for nothing as I once did; it matters little to me what is going on in the world; here in my little cottage, with its old time garden at the back, I feel at home. Here, if I have no one near akin, none to love me, no one to love, at least I have peace. One day here is much like another. The years come and the year go. The wind blows wild in the early Spring, the flowers bloom in Summer, and decay in Autumn, the snow lies thick upon the ground in Winter: the year, coming and going, the seasons, as they bloom and die, find me, leave me the same. I ride, I walk, I shoot, I read. When the wind passes over the chimnies in the long nights of Winter, I am sad; when the Summer sun sets, far away behind the purple hills, and the long blue shadows creep over the green marshes, I am glad;—for I love the beauties of the natural world. But these things do not content me; I am not, cannot be, fully satisfied with them. There is always present with me a sense of something wanting; Winter, Summer, night and morning, I am alone. I am alone in my walks and my rides,

always alone; alone in my life. In the moonlit evenings of Autumn, I sit out on the balcony in front of my window and dream, watching the smoke from my pipe, curling away into the night air. Here I dream long, long hours, living over again the golden days of youth, and yearning for the hour which shall set my soul free from the bondage of earth and earthly things. And my eye wearily seeks the far corner of the garden, where the red berries of the rowan tree are hanging, indistinct in the moonlight; and my thoughts wander back to the long ago, and my heart is young once more.

Twenty years ago; twenty years it will be this very night—before which time I must have finished this brief account of a wasted and ruined life;—twenty years to-night, since the evening that I love to dream of, day after day. It was in the early evening, in August, and I sat within a few yards of this very rowan tree, in a rustic chair. The red berries were there, hanging in clusters as they are now, the peculiar leaves were there, standing out, motionless and graceful as to-day. The air was calm then as now. The moon shone, soft and serene, away low in the West. The tall white lilies stood up, down near the hedge, among the dark amaranthus, with beautiful effect. Unnoticed, the long spikes of fox glove waved majestic to and fro. The damp air from the marshes mingled with the smell of the clover fields, as it will to-night.

I sat in a rustic chair, down near the end of the garden. Beside me, sat my young love, Zaidie. I

had come to see her—for this was then her house, not mine—late in the afternoon; and we had wandered up and down the garden for two hours or more. We had much to say to each other. We loved passionately, but our love was still young; we had not known each other long. I was a stranger in the neighbourhood, visiting a friend in the village two miles away. Our acquaintance was but of one month's duration; but, from the beginning, we had loved each other.

This was to be my last night. The next morning I was to leave for home. Those who have lived as I lived then, and loved as I loved, only will be able to understand how precious seemed the few hours that were left to us. After walking up and down the garden until the sun was set we sat down on the rustic bench which I have mentioned, and watched the new moon as it slowly descended towards the dim blue mountains. We could see it behind the stately elms that stood at the back of the garden. The outline of the branches, the small leaves, sometimes dense, sometimes parting in the soft breeze, the dark blue sky, the stars here and there, the moon's figure gradually lowering behind; I remember them all well. I remember everything that night as distinctly as if it were yesterday—much more distinctly, for every day since has been dim and unreal in comparison. We were silent for a long time, I remember, each probably waiting for the other to speak first. I think it was Zaidie who broke the silence.

She asked me about a ring. I had wished to give

her a ring, and she had tried to dissuade me from it. Unknown to her I had sent and obtained one from the city, and was very anxious to produce it. This ring I had in my pocket. I remember that I observed in a wise way that engagement rings were happy inventions;—"at least," I said, "they are in cases like ours where the thing is settled for good."

"Yes," said Zaidie, mischievously, "the man who first thought of giving his *fiancée* an engagement ring was afraid that if he did not give her something to remember him by she would forget him."

"You are altogether wrong," said I; "you are obstinate. Just out of mere caprice, you said a week ago, that I should not give you a ring. And you still stick to it; not because you have a reason, for you have none; but simply because you said it. I do not admire such persistency."

Zaidie laughed. When she laughed she was very beautiful. Her features in repose were good, but a smile changed her face wonderfully. She had bright cheeks, curly brown hair, and eyes of the deepest blue. Her eyebrows were singularly fine; and, when she laughed, her eyes brightened and sparkled. I have seen eyes as beautiful, but never any that could change from grave to gay as hers used to, and yet remain the same. If eyes are an index to the soul, her soul was serene and true.

"You have yet to learn, Mr. Frank," she said, "that I never say anything without meaning it. And I *have* a reason, a good reason. You, like all men, jump at the idea that girls never have a reason.

for anything, and so you do not condescend to ask for one. I have a reason, and a good one, too."

"What is it? Will you tell me what it is?"

"Yes; perhaps I will; but I shall consider the matter a little first as I know you will not be pleased."

"Now, Zaidie, you are going to tell me, surely; I never thought you would act like this."

"You never thought I would act like this, Frank that is just it; you have hit the point. You never thought I would be like this—exactly! You have answered your own question. You thought I would always be the same serene, smiling, placid, yielding mortal, that I am these hot afternoons. You thought I would always be so sweet, so nice—yes, I know But you were much mistaken; I have a temper; I have a will."

"I don't doubt it, Zaidie," I said. "I am glad you have. If you had not you would not please me at all."

"No—that is true, Frank," she said, smiling. "But I don't think you understand me. You have only seen me twelve times—I have counted—twelve times. You have only seen me twelve times since we knew each other. We met once or twice before we were introduced; do you remember?"

"Of course. I remember," I said, interrupting; "what can it matter? Twelve times, or twelve hundred it is all the same."

"That is not the point at all," Zaidie continued. "I am not going to be romantic, Frank; understand

that once for all. Listen. Every time I have seen you I have been on my best behaviour. You may laugh; but it is so. I have been awfully nice."

"Yes, you have."

"Don't interrupt me, Frank, or I will go in and lock the door behind me. I have just been doing the agreeable, every time; and—we are engaged! Think of that."

I thought of it with delight, and said so.

"You are foolish," said Zaidie; "you are not a wise man at all, Frank. How do you know what I am like when I do not get my own way, for instance? You know next to nothing of my disposition; how can you? We have known each other for so short a time."

"I do not think it matters," I said. "Of course we cannot always be having jolly times like those of the last few weeks; but I guess we will always manage to endure each other."

"You think so?—perhaps."

Zaidie had never talked in this manner before. I did not like it; I said so.

"O, you foolish boy," she said, pulling at the long leaves of the rowan above her head as she spoke; don't you see I am in real solemn earnest? I am, Frank; indeed I am. I am speaking seriously indeed. We have been too hasty, far too hasty."

"What, Zaidie!" I cried, starting to my feet in surprise and alarm;—"what is it you say? Too hasty—too hasty—in what?—in our engagement? Oh, Zaidie."

"No, Frank," she said, rising and placing her hand on my arm; "I don't mean that, at least, not exactly that. I love you just as much as I said I did, or rather a great deal more; I do, indeed. I will marry you, Frank, and never anybody else, that is settled. But—"

"But what?"

"But we have been in too much of a hurry, Frank, all the same. I do not want to displease you but I must say it. I have been thinking a great deal last night and to-day. It was your wanting to get me a ring that started me thinking;—and I have made up my mind."

"What about?"

"Well—we have known each other such a short time, you see; and we are both young; and you intend going away from home for a while before you settle down; I suggest that, for a year—one year—we do not see each other again."

"Zaidie!"

"I mean it!"

"You cannot!" The words burst from me, for I was quite overcome with astonishment. We had planned to be married in six months, the last time we had met, and this was a most unpleasant surprise. I could hardly believe my ears.

"Do you mean it, Zaidie?"

"Yes, Frank, I do mean it. I do more than mean it; I insist upon it. I have made up my mind about it. You will go away and travel, in Europe, or some place far removed from here. I shall stay

here. Then, after a year has passed, you will come back—that is, if you want to come back."

"Zaidie!"

"Yes, Frank, really; I do mean it. I do mean it. It will be better for us both. We will come back to each other, I feel sure, I feel certain. But let us part for a while. Let us part, each free; let there be no engagement between us, but an understanding"—

"But Zaidie, I have brought you the ring! Here it is." I held it up in the light and showed it to her, a plain gold ring, with one solitary diamond in it, the prettiest ring I thought, that I had ever seen.

Zaidie threw back her head, stepped a little back, and laughed at me in a most exasperating manner, her eyes flashing with merriment.

"Aha, Mr. Masterful, you brought the ring did you, after my telling you I wouldn't take it; just so. Well, you will be properly served, you can take it away again with you, and bring it back next August, when you come again."

"That I will never do," I said; "I will never do that. If you really mean what you say, that we must part for a year, I suppose it must be. I did not think it of you, Zaidie; but, if you say so, it must be, I suppose."

"Yes, it must be."

"But I shall have my way in one thing," I said; "you shall wear my ring, you must, at least, do that, I will not take 'no' for an answer."

"No," she said, defiantly;" take your ring away

with you, and bring it back with you when you come, and I will wear it;—not till then."

"That I will never do, I said, "and I too have a will of my own. You must wear this ring, Zaidie, my love, my life, will you take it from me."

"No, Frank, I won't; not for a year. Come back then, with it, and I will."

I made a spring forward, and seized her hand. She darted away from me; I followed her. I had the ring in my right hand, and I grasped her hand with my left, I intended, half in fun, and half in earnest, to place the ring on her finger. Of course, afterwards, she could take it off if she chose; but there I intended to place it, and so assert my right as her affianced husband.

"Ah, you naughty boy, that is what you would be at is it!" Zaidie laughed, and kept turning first one way and then another to get away from me. I kept her near the tree, however, beside the fence, and it was all she could do to keep her hand free of me.

"I will do it," I said, "I will do it. You can take it off if you like, but I will put it on. Now"—

I had seized her hand, and was holding it up in the air. She stepped back, and I followed. As it happened she had placed herself squarely against the rowan tree, and could move no further. I held up the ring and tried to put it on her third finger. She resisted, and we struggled. All at once, up went the ring, flying out of my hand into the tree. I could not see where. At the same moment I let go my hold of her hand.

"There!"

We both spoke together. Zaidie was smiling, half in sorrow and half in anger at what she had done. I felt, and no doubt looked, beaten. For a minute or two we said no more. Then Zaidie spoke.

"The ring, Frank; it is gone."

"I know it, it is your fault, you wouldn't wear it and now it is lost."

"We must look for it at once, Frank, if we are to find it to-night. You go away early to-morrow."

"If we find if, will you wear it?"

"No, certainly not."

"Then I shall not look for it." I had grown quite sulky, and felt myself discomforted on all hands. Zaidie *was* showing an unusual force of will, while I seemed to have nothing to oppose to it but a loss of temper, which evidently was only serving to strengthen her purpose. I therefore gave in.

"Let us look," said I; "I will get a lamp and some matches. Wait for me. We will find it in ten minutes."

I left her standing under the tree, and went into the house. I found her, when I returned, still in the same place. I lighted the lamp.

"Now, Frank, look on the ground first. There are no bushes, and we must find it in a minute. I will hold the light."

So she held the light for me, and I went down on my knees feeling and examining every square foot of ground as carefully as possible. Zaidie's face

looked rather anxious, and I am sure now that she took the loss of the ring more to heart than I did. Over and over the ground I went, feeling every inch of it. We looked round under the tree, close to the trunk, then further out for about a yard behind the branches, every side of it.

"It is no use, Zaidie; it is not on the ground. What are we to do?

"But it must be somewhere, Frank; what are we to do?"

"Shake the tree." And I shook it. Red berries, and bits of faded leaves came down on us, and several insects which had carefully settled themselves in its leaves were thus violently robbed of a home. But no ring fell.

"Frank, what *are* we to do? We have been half an hour or more here, looking for it. What shall we do?"

"Leave it," I said. "Since you refuse to wear it, it might as well be on the ground as anywhere. Let it be. If you find it, keep it; keep it to remember me by, if you won't wear it. You will at least do that; won't you, Zaidie?"

"Yes—but I would rather that we found it," said Zaidie.

"So would I. But what can't be helped, can't be."

"No—wise youth. Well, Frank, a diamond is a diamond. It is worth hunting for, and I will hunt for it to-morrow. It will serve to keep you in my mind anyway, the search for it. And when I find it, I shall bury it under the tree, and you, when you

CHAPTER II.

A year;—man proposes, God disposes; we plan our lives; and we are but tiny leaves blown about by the mighty wind of destiny. A year, and we were to meet again, and marry and settle down to spend our lives together; and that year has come and gone, and has lengthened into twenty years;—and the meeting is not yet!

But to go back. It had been my intention to travel, before I had met Zaidie at all. I had completed my law studies, and passed my examination; and I had intended, before settling down, to see something of the world. I would willingly have changed my plans, and have settled down to practice at the bar, with Zaidie as my wife. However, as this was not to be, I thought it as well to carry out my original plans.

I went first to Mexico. It was a country I had long wished to visit, and the Winter season was the proper time to go; so I started. I enjoyed the journey and was interested in the country; I have written several articles on Mexican life and habits since, and they have been well spoken of by the critics; so I may say that my visit was a success.

I got back home in April. I felt as if I would have given everything I possessed to have gone to

see Zaidie, if only for a few hours; but I was forbidden. To occupy my mind for the intervening months I must go somewhere else.

April to August—three months, and time to spare on both sides—what should I do. Almost by mere chance, something suggested itself. I heard of a ship that was to sail from Portland, Maine, over to Bristol, wait from two to four weeks, and then sail back again. A friend of mine who was suffering from weakness of the lungs had made the voyage the year before, and offered me a letter to the captain, if I cared to go.

I accepted. I had never been to sea in a ship, and wanted something new in the way of experience. Zaidie, too, when written to, thought the idea a good one. So I started, promising her, both for her amusement and my own, to keep a report of my adventures day by day.

That record, written for her, I have with me still. I can see it by looking up from my desk, as I write. The paper is yellow with age; the handwriting is uneven, according as to the difficulties experienced in writing on board ship one day and another. There it lies. I look at it with amazement, and wonder how I could ever have been as happy as I was when it was written. It stops abruptly—but I will not anticipate my story.

I sailed over to Bristol, and, during the three weeks that the ship remained there, travelled hastily up to London and back. The ship was to remain in Bristol only three weeks; and it started at

come back, shall dig it up, and put it on my finger. Is it a bargain ?"

"I suppose so," I said rather gloomily.

"Very well. Then here is my hand without a ring. I give it to you, for better for worse ; take it."

I took it, and kissed her ; then we moved towards the house. It was getting very dark. The moon had gone down behind a cloud, and the leaves of the rose-bushes were wet with dew. Night had fully come. Here and there in the sky a star shone out ; but the darkness was getting deeper every moment.

"I cannot ask you in, Frank ; propriety is propriety ; I had hoped aunt Helen would have come down to-night ; but she didn't. So we must say good-bye."

"Good-bye, Zaidie, and for a year ?—how can we ? Don't you relent a little ; can't you withdraw your resolution ? Let us marry each other, and then go away."

She was standing in the doorway, with the lamp in her hand. She held it inside the door, a little to one side of her, so that the light shone full upon her face, while the lamp, itself, could not be seen. A more lovely picture, contrasted, as it was, with the blackness of darkness around, cannot be imagined. Her cheeks were faintly flushed, and there were tears of real sorrow in her eyes, at our parting. The hand which she held out to me trembled a little ; but she was firm.

"Frank, dear—it is for the best—believe me. We shall both of us be the better for it. Write

whenever you like, and tell me everything; and I will write to you every week at the least. More I cannot promise. Dear Frank, believe me, it is for the best.—Good-bye."

"Good-bye." I did not know how I said it; but it was said. For one brief moment I held her in my arms; three times I kissed her; and then the door closed, and I saw her no more. It was over; she had had her way For a year we were parted.

the time appointed; but, contrary to my expectations, it was to spend a week at Bordeaux, before again crossing the Atlantic.

I did not cavil at this. I thought that there would still be time enough for me to return before August, and I had never been anywhere in France except in Paris for a week or two some years previous to the time of which I am writing.

To Bordeaux we went. We stayed there three weeks instead of one. I had an exceedingly pleasant time, went for a walking tour fifty miles into the interior of the country, and enjoyed myself generally. But I felt that I was going to be late in getting back; that, after all, the time would be up, and I would not be there. As far as Zaidie was concerned, she knew where I was; and would readily understand why I did not put in my appearance at the appointed hour. But I felt annoyed nevertheless.

It was the twenty-ninth of July when we set sail for America. The sixteenth of August was the day, in the evening of which I was at liberty to rejoin my love. Ships have made the voyage across the Atlantic in fifteen days, with weather and winds in their favour. But I had no hope of our ship doing it; and it was just as well I had not, for I would have been greatly disappointed. On the sixteenth of August we were still nine hundred miles from the American shore.

Shall I ever forget that day? Could I ever forget it, if I lived a thousand years? It was a calm.

All day long, as if in mockery of my dreams and hopes, the ship lay simply rising and falling on the blue water, the sails filling and then flapping idly against the mast. I sat out on the poop all the afternoon, and dreamed of Zaidie, looking over the blue waste of waters, towards the far off shore, with the sunshine beating down on me, and the noise made by the sails ringing in my ears. The sunshine was gorgeous, overpowering; the water was like a sea of silver, with thin blue streaks in it, here and there, where the rising and falling of the waves cast some portions into a faint shadow.

So passed the afternoon; when the sun declined, there came a change. A wind sprang up, a fair wind; clouds began to show themselves on the far horizon. The water began to darken; the silver light took a bluish tinge, and the shadows of the waves became greener and deeper, as the sun descended in the heavens.

I had not eaten anything during the day, feeling too depressed in spirits; now, however, that there seemed to be a change for the better, I began to feel the pangs of hunger. I went down and had some tea with the captain. I congratulated him on the turn things had taken, but he seemed in no mind to receive my congratulations. I observed that at last, after lying so long in a perfect calm, we were fortunate in getting a fair wind; and would no doubt make good speed through the night and on the morrow.

To this the captain demurred. Signs of a storm,

he said, were not wanting; and the storm, when it came, would probably be a severe one. He did not alarm me, for I am not naturally timid; but it was with no small curiosity and anxiety that I went up on deck, to watch the set of the sun and the rise of the storm, if storm there was to be.

CHAPTER III.

To those who have never been to sea, the setting of the sun that night would be impossible. A purple sunset—dense clouds, behind which the sun shone; dense clouds of blue, behind which the red glare of sunset became a rich purple—dense masses of purplish cloud mingling with a dark sea, so that the line between sea and sky grew indistinct—wild masses of cloud, of a serenely beautiful gray colour, far up in the heavens, lightened ever so little by the setting sun, lightened only so as to make their darkness visible and show their weird, fantastic form against the sky—sea of a deepest green with purple depths of shadow, and white flashes of foam—and the ship with all sail set, driving on before a fair wind;—such was the scene when I went on deck at sundown.

I walked up and down on the poop, with new emotions. It was as level as the floor of a room; and the sensation, with the wind blowing round one, and the bright lurid sky before one's eyes, thrilling in the extreme. I watched the setting sun. I could not distinguish its form; but the glowing colour in the sky showed me its position. Lower and lower blazed the purplish glare, and the far-away water caught the reflection, and glistened in its dark

depths. I never before saw anything so wonderful. At last the light began to die out, and only the blackness of darkness soon was visible. The sun had set.

I kept on walking up and down. On we went and on. The wind blew stronger and stronger. The sky grew blacker and blacker. The sea seemed alive. It was as though uncounted myriads of living things were out sporting in a wild unfathomable sense of joy. The waves seemed full of infinite laughter. The white foam gleamed near and far, and streaks of phosphorescent light played in the hollows of each successive wave. Never had I seen anything so beautiful. The sailors on board the ship were rushing to and fro, getting ready for the storm, when it should break with all its fury. I prepared, a place for myself where I could see and not be seen a retired spot, where I would not interfere with the men; and got ready for the night.

When, or how, or why I went to sleep, I never knew; but I must have been sound asleep by ten o'clock, or, at the latest, eleven. In my dreams I could hear the whistling of the wind, the roar of the sea, and the voices of the sailors, indistinct, mingling together in a strange medley. About midnight I awoke.

I am not a timid man, nor was I then keenly alive to first impressions. But when I awoke that night it was as if I had never lived before.

The storm was at its height. The wind sounded in the rigging like the shrieks of some army of lost

souls, with a pathos and a despair indescribable. Th ship was driving on but under little sail. The captain stood at the door of the wheel-house, shouting lustily, and the mate was shouting also from the poop, and the sailors were singing amid the gusts of wind. The sea was high, and was breaking; never before had I seen it so. People have often talked of waves that are mountains high; but it is the size of the waves, and not their height, that really fills one with awe. And they seemed conscious of their own existence and of their power, as they rose and rose, again and again, and broke with a rapidity that caused one's heart to stand still. Mine stood still again and again. It seemed impossible that our poor ship could stand in the face of such majestic destroyers; and I felt, as I gazed at the white foam, as if I could throw myself into the whirling water, and die, battling with the wild waves.

For a long time I gazed, fascinated. I gazed at the mast-head, dim in the darkness above; at the water, surging and boiling, and seemingly full of life; at the sky, where nothing was visible but masses of cloud. Now and again a flash of lightning would illumine the wide waste of water and play among the white waves, darting out of the black sky overhead; and a roll of thunder would still, for a moment, the wierd whistling of the wind aloft. Then darkness and silence would supervene; and the noise of wind and water would rise again. So passed the time, I forgetting all things in the contemplation of the storm.

"Frank!"

What was it? A voice seemed to be calling me. Some one had spoken, had called me by name; who? It could not have been anyone aboard ship, for no one on board knew my name; and the very idea seemed preposterous. But I had certainly heard a voice.

and I recognized; it was the ring!

I looked around. A brilliant flash of lightning lit up the waves, and the foam gleamed blue and unearthly for a moment; then all was plunged in thick darkness as the thunder began to rumble around us. The ship would go down, down, down, until one would have thought that she was about to be submerged; when, suddenly, she would turn in her downward course and begin to go up, up, to the top of the next wave. Another moment and down she would go again. And the wind kept whistling without ceasing, and moaning aloft among the ropes.

"Frank!"

Again—could I be dreaming? Could I be in a dream? I looked up above and around. What was it; who had called? It was strange. I felt a sense of extreme fear oppress me. I shivered as I listened to the wind. The waves seemed to reach over me, and I seemed about to perish in their embrace. Again and again I shivered, and drew my great coat closer around me, and held my head down under my ulster to protect it. The lightning flashed again over the waves and I closed my eyes to shut it out.

"Frank!"

What?—that voice—that voice—I knew it. Amid

the roar of the tempest and the roll of thunder I recognized that voice. I knew that voice, a thousand miles away, mayhap, a thousand miles away, over the wild stormy sea. I knew it. Falling back unconscious of all that was passing around me, I cried out, in fond and glad recognition,—"Zaidie!"

wind. The sea was high, and was breaking [illegible] before had I [illegible] often [illegible]

Zaidie—it was Zaidie's own voice. Was I in a trance or dream, or did I indeed behold my far-off love? I fell back where I was lying and became utterly unconscious of what was going on around me. Zaidie—I had heard the call; I was conscious no more of aught save her presence.

She stood in the garden beneath the rowan tree. Instead of standing alone she seemed to be supported by two other people. These people were indistinct, mere shadows. Zaidie, herself, was like life before me. But I could have cried aloud had it been in my power to do so, at her wan and wasted appearance. Her cheeks were thin and sunken and their colour was gone. Her brown hair fell, unhindered by plait or comb, over her shoulders. Tears were in her eyes and she looked at me with a mournful tenderness. "Zaidie," I cried, "Zaidie—let me come to you. Let me come to you;—Zaidie, my love, my love—Zaidie."

She seemed to repel me, to shake her head mournfully. Several times I seemed to put out my arms to take her in them;—but in vain; I could not reach her. Then I cried aloud again, "Zaidie, my own love, my own love, let me come to you";—and again she seemed to shake her head sadly as if to say how impossible it was, how futile to wish it.

Then a strange thing happened. She seemed to raise her hand. It held something. I strained my eyes to see what it was. I looked and looked, but, for a time, could not discover; and her face appeared troubled at the thought that I was not conscious of what she said. Then I saw the flash of a diamond, and I recognized; it was the ring!

The ring that I had bought for her, the ring that we had lost, the ring that I had searched for, that night of nights;—she held it in her hand. I could see it and recognize it. When she saw that I recognized it she looked me again in the face and smiled. Beside he smiled I felt a tremor pass over me. I When s[illegible] have passed the gates of Heaven. Again seemed to [illegible] clasp her in my arms; and once I rushed forward to [illegible]her; and seemed to be cut off from her by an invisible gulf.

Oh, the mingled joy and sorrow of that meeting! I seemed to have lost all sense of earthly things,—to be transported to an unknown world. Yet I knew the spot very well. There were the dark long leaves and the red berries of the rowan; there was my love, in a long white gown, standing underneath, smiling a sweet smile, with her eyes full of tears the while. There she seemed to stand and I could see the ring gleaming on her hand. But all around was shadows; above, below, and on either side, there seemed to be an end of the scene.

I feasted my eyes, and yet I was not satisfied. Could I only touch her with my hand just for one brief moment! How sweet the thought But no;

she was far off; and I sank back again, powerless.

But I *must* do it. Was she on earth or in Heaven I must kiss her once again. I must feel her breath mingle with mine and press her lips once more. I *must* do it. So I gathered up all my courage and strength and rushed forward. But as I did so the vision melted into air; and a voice ringing through the darkness, in tones I knew so well, said: "Twenty years, Frank, not for twenty years."

CHAPTER IV.

I awoke. I was in my berth, and it was broad day. I looked around me. For a moment I forgot what had happened. Then it all rushed upon my mind at once. I sat up. Yes, on the floor lay my ulster, my great coat, my ring, all of them still wet. Beside me lay my clothes.

I recollected everything. The whole scene flashed across my mind. I could see Zaidie as she stood before me, under the rowan tree, lifting her hand and showing me the ring. I could hear her calling to me, "Frank, Frank," and the last low cry, "not for twenty years, Frank; not for twenty years." What could it have all meant? Was it merely a dream? No, I had been awake, when first I heard the cry. What *did* it mean?

A horrible fear came over me. I had read of second sight, of people seeing things happening in a different part of the world at the self-same hour at which they had actually taken place. As I thought of this, cold drops formed on my forehead, and my mouth grew dry with fear. There came over me something like a dread certainty that Zaidie was dead. With a cry of pain I jumped from my berth. Then I realized how futile were my lamentations. Days must pass before we could see land; and I

must wait, though every moment be an agony of suspense, for news of my loved one. I sat for some time on the floor, thinking over every possible explanation of the occurrence; I was willing to reason it out in every way but one; it could not, could not be that what I had seen had actually happened. No —no—it was a dream, an evil dream, produced by the wild storm and the thought that the day preceding had been our day of meeting, had I but been home. But so great was my anxiety that I felt as if I could throw myself into the water and swim the rest of the way, rather than wait in suspense.

When I went on deck, I found that it was about eleven o'clock in the morning. The wind had subsided, and the sea, though still high, was not nearly so much agitated as it had been during the past night. The captain and the mate smiled at me, as I approached them, and inquired how I felt. I asked them what they meant. They enquired in turn what I remembered of the night before. I felt myself turn pale at the question, and at that they both burst into a laugh. I asked again the meaning of what they said, and why they smiled. Then they told me that I had been discovered in a fainting fit, and carried below, about midnight. The supposition had been that I was afraid of the storm.

I was rather puzzled how to account for this fainting fit. To tell the truth it was impossible; and I knew also, that, had I told it, I would have received no comfort from either of them; as there are no more superstitious people in the world than

sailors. So I held my tongue; and, if they wondered at my cowardice, what did I care? My mind was too much preoccupied with a graver matter to busy itself over the opinion, good or ill, which my fellows might entertain of me.

CHAPTER V.

Hope, without hope—fear that tries to hide itself, and make believe that it does not exist;—fear for those whom we love best of all, shrinking fear, lest, when we come, they shall have gone for evermore;—tell me of nothing more trying to the heart than this!

Oh my God! What hours did I spend, looking over the sea, and waiting in mute expectancy; hours in which every minute seemed as if it would never, never end, as if every second waited and waited to torture me with keener anguish.

I cannot speak, I cannot write, I cannot even bear to think, of those long, long days. Let me tell all at once.

She was dead.

She had died that night. Shortly after eight in the evening, she had expressed a desire to go out into the garden, to rest beneath the rowan tree. She had been ill for two months, and during her illness had repeatedly expressed a wish that she might live until I returned. That she should live to recover her health and strength she knew was impossible. Her lungs had suddenly given way; she was doomed; she knew it. But she hoped to live until I got home.

This evening, the sixteenth of August, I was to

have come. She knew that I was at sea, and did not expect to see me; but she expressed a strange longing to be taken out, to stand, if only for a moment, under the rowan tree, where we were to have met.

Her wish was gratified. An aunt, who was staying with her, and her nurse, carried her out, and held her for a moment under the tree. Standing there she had put my ring upon her finger, saying as she did so—"if I don't live till he comes, tell him that I put his ring on my finger, as I promised, to-night."

I cannot proceed. Had I but been at the spot, as I had promised to be, had I but remained near at hand and not wandered away over the broad Atlantic—but how vain are all regrets—I shall utter none—silence alone is possible when I think of what I lost.

She had died that night. My name was the last word on her lips, my happiness her last thought. This has been the one joy of my life; that she loved me and that I loved her to the end. Her young life went out; the joy of mine went with it; but as we knew each other, and as we loved each other, so have we ever been linked together in my inmost heart and soul.

CHAPTER VI.

I have told my story. But a little of life is left to me. A few short hours and I shall be numbered with the dead. This I know. Every year, when the day comes, strange fatal day, the sixteenth of August, I have again the same vision, and dream the same dream. I bought this house where she lived, and where the happiest hours of my life, too, were spent; and have lived here for nineteen years. Every August I have had the same dream, have seen my love as she appeared to me that night, and have heard her voice, calling to me amid the darkness. Every year, one year has been taken from the sum of my life, and to-day is the sixteenth of August, and the twentieth year is all but complete. I neither exult nor despair. I have waited patiently; the years have been long; but it is over now and done with. My life, as I look back upon it, seems wasted. But what of that? Life, at the best, is but a passing dream; if mine has been more empty and vain than others, at least I have wronged no one. I have allowed my great sorrow to cloud my whole existence; but was that my fault? Shall I not say with Shakespeare—

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends.
Rough hew them as we will."

For good or for evil, it is done. Doctors have told me to be careful of myself, and have shaken their heads over a certain fluttering of my heart, which attacks me at times. Perhaps that is how I am to die. But I do not know; one thing I do know—that it is surely coming, and that I am ready.

I will stop, for I have something to do yet. I would take a last look at my home—and Zaidie's. The August sun is getting low in the sky; it is the late afternoon. Once more I shall take a run on the marshes, to smell the brown hay, and breathe the warm air and pluck the ox-eyed daisies, as we did, Zaidie and I, the first day we ever knew each other;—yes, once more. Then I shall go and take leave of my little brown mare in the stable, give her the last feed of oats and new made hay that she shall ever get from me;—and I shall pat my dog, and feed him, and stroke him, for the last time. And then, when evening falls, when the August sun goes down and the August moon rises in the dark blue sky, and the glories of the Summer night unfold themselves to view—I shall lay myself down in silence, to await the messenger who comes to summon me to the unseen world!

THE END.