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THE
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OF
MAJOR MOLINEUX.

BY

Marcus Clarke

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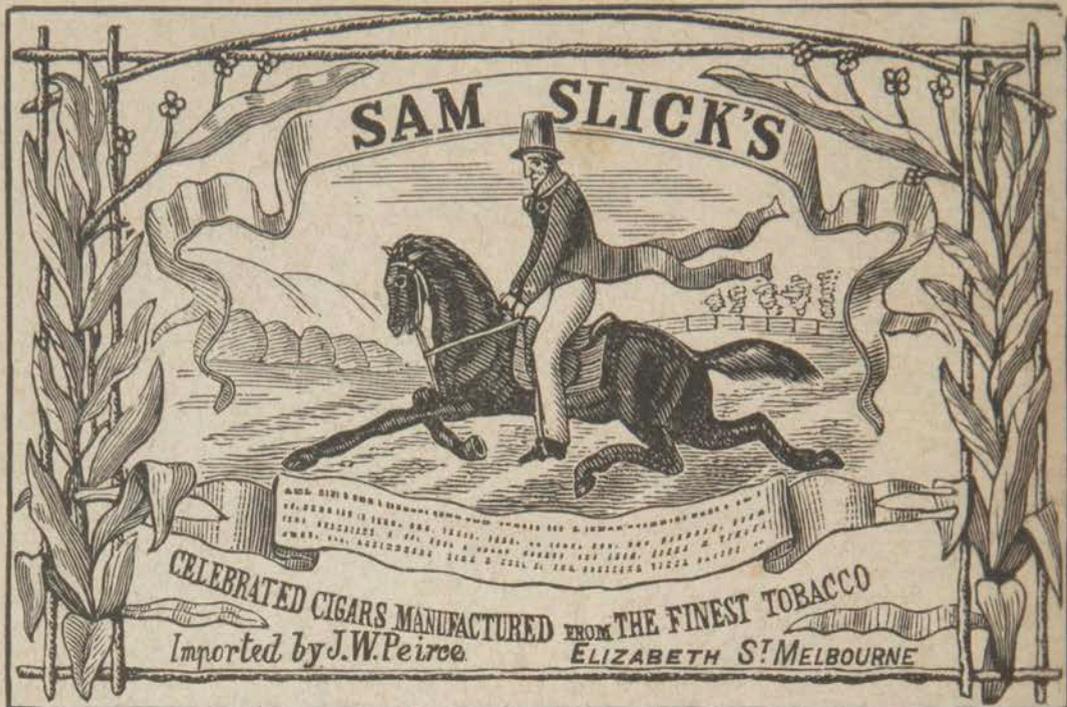
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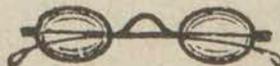
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of the late MARCUS CLARKE.*

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THE MYSTERY

OF

MAJOR MOLINEUX,

AND

HUMAN REPETENDS.

By MARCUS CLARKE.

MELBOURNE:

CAMERON, LAING & CO., 30 SWANSTON STREET.

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MDCCLXXXI.

M 6/12/37



MARCUS CLARKE,

OB. AUGUST II., MDCCCLXXXI.,

ÆT. XXXIV.

THIS BOOK

IS DEDICATED, BY THE EXPRESS WISH OF THE LATE

MARCUS CLARKE,

TO

DR. PATRICK MOLONEY,

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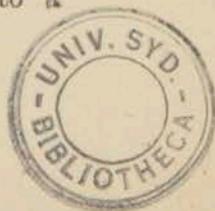
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P R E F A C E .

It is with melancholy pleasure that I sit down to the sad task of writing a preface to this, the last emanation of the genius of one whom I am proud to have known, not the less as a dear friend than as a co-worker in the not always pleasant fields of literature. Obituaries of the deceased gentleman have been so numerous of late that it is unnecessary to refer to the incidents of his life further than to say that he was a native of England, and that after a short experience, first in banking, and then in station life in Australia, he commenced his literary career by joining the Melbourne *Argus*, in 1867. It was here that I had first the honour and pleasure of his close association and friendship—a friendship which, I am proud to say, existed ever after up to the very day of his death, and one which enables me to speak authoritatively, to some extent, of the singular and contradictory elements in the character of this gifted man.

To the outside world Marcus Clarke seemed cold, caustic, cynical, unapproachable, ever ready with a biting remark or a stinging repartee, more ready to make and to keep enemies than friends, reckless in his habits, and Bohemian in his proclivities. Those within the pale of his intimate friendship knew him better caustic he was sometimes, and cynical always; but beneath all there beat a heart of gold—a heart tender and pitiful as a woman's. Impatient of wrong, a thorough and inveterate hater of sham and pretentiousness, a fearless and outspoken advocate of what he thought was right and true, and generous—yes, generous to a



fault, as some of those who, perchance, would be ready enough to cast a stone at his memory know well enough. Bohemian, perhaps, but a gentleman by birth and instinct. Improvident it may be—ah, well-a-day, he had a long, sore battle to fight, and improvidence is a very easy charge to make, particularly against one to whom “business” was a mathematical x —an unknown quantity.

His conversational powers were unbounded, and founded on an innate knowledge of the inner workings of human nature, remarkable alike for their perspicuity and brilliancy. It was not the meretricious glitter of fireworks, but keen and incisive lightning that flashed around you. Of his talents as a man of letters it is hardly necessary to speak, inasmuch as he was recognised as *facile princeps* amongst the *litterateurs* of Australia. His works are numerous and varied, embracing pretty well all classes of writing, except the heavy, ponderous, matter-of-fact style. Sooth to say, his forte was lightness, elegance, point, brilliancy. He did not work his way up the ladder rung by rung, but stepped boldly into the arena, and reached one of the highest at a single bound. His “Peripatetic Philosopher” papers, which appeared in the *Australasian* in 1867-8, and which were the best reflex of men and manners in Victoria ever written, proclaimed at once “A Daniel come to judgment—yea, a very Daniel.” Besides the ordinary newspaper work, most of which is, of course, not credited to him, in quick succession has appeared, from his never-wearying pen, sketch, story, poem, cantata, novel, drama, *et hoc genus omne*, in unflagging succession. His *magnum opus*, the work which may fairly be said to have placed him on the topmost rung of the Australian ladder of fame, was his wonderful story of convict life in Tasmania, “His Natural Life,” a novel which, besides being reproduced in England and America, has been translated into some European languages. Other works are “Long Odds,” “Holiday Peak,” “Shadow and Shine,” and

many others, together with dramas, extravaganzas, poems, and other miscellaneous works.

Dying at the early age of 34, it is questionable whether his judgment and extraordinary talent had arrived at their full-maturity—whether, in fact, the works he would, in all probability, have written, had he been spared to live, would not, with the elegance and polish of style so peculiarly his own, have combined still more of the wisdom gained by experience, and especially a deeper insight into the occult processes of metaphysics, a subject to which he, of late years, seemed to have devoted much attention. But it was not to be. In the words of Garnet Walch—

“For thee, dear friend,
No golden harvest and no aftermath,
No ripened vintage of the full-globed grape;
No luscious wine of Life—no fruited Fame,
No flowers, save those pale blooms that deck thy grave.”

His last effort in the literature of fiction is the first story in this book, “The Mystery of Major Molineux,” a story of which it has been well said: “As a psychological study it approaches in subtlety to some of the most successful efforts of the author of ‘Adam Bede;’ while, for intensity of sustained interest and soul-thrilling excitement, it is only surpassed by Edgar Allan Poe, in the ‘Mystery of Marie Roget,’ and the ‘Murders in the Rue Morgue.’ We shudder while we read, but we read that we may shudder. That the story is based upon a fact does not detract from its interest, but rather lends an air of *vraisemblance* to a story which would otherwise be too appalling. It is an introspective study, a physiological romance, a social drama—worthy of the author of ‘His Natural Life.’”

The second story, “Human Repetends,” although a shorter and less pretentious story, is one of somewhat kindred character, having a vein of weird, physiological and psychological interest running through what, even without that, would be a remarkable

tale. It deals with one of those mysteries of the human mind which have engrossed the attention of the best intellects since the days of the earliest sages to the present, and which yet remains, and in all human probability will remain, to be solved. At the time this story appeared in the columns of the *Australasian*, some years since, it attracted much attention, as much for the forcible style in which it was written as for the daring and speculative ideality with which it was invested.

Reader, the book is open before you. In it you may perchance find, vaguely, some key to the strange mental conformation of one whom to know was to love—Marcus Clarke.

R. P. WHITWORTH.

August 19th, 1881.

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THE MYSTERY OF MAJOR MOLINEUX.

Extracted from the Diary of an Army-Surgeon.

HOBART TOWN, 6th August, 1839.

“I HAVE come to the conclusion to-day that the strange behaviour of Major Molineux has something in it which is quite beyond ordinary eccentricity. I think that I have found in him a case worth studying.

When I arrived here, ten weeks ago, from Calcutta, I was insufferably bored with the place, and cursed Grosscot for inducing me to visit it. An officer of Irregular Horse may find some enjoyment in playing billiards at the Ship, or in drinking brandy and water at the barracks, but for a man of forty, compelled to take compulsory leave of a profession in which he delights, Hobart Town possesses few charms. When I prescribed a dose of quietness and pure air for myself, I did not intend to live utterly without intellectual society; but the old Major has given me something to think about.

Let me first describe him. He is a tall, thin, muscular man, of commanding presence and military bearing. He has white hair, a white moustache, and a

very red face. He is always tightly buttoned and braced. He carries a thick stick, and wears buff gloves—a common sort of fashion enough for retired officers. But with all this there is something more. His blue eyes are always withdrawing themselves from you to furtively glance behind you. I have turned round a dozen times, when playing whist with him, to see if anybody was overlooking my hand. His large, long, white fingers are perpetually twitching and working, and he has a habit of drawing one hand through the other, as though to disencumber himself of a glove. His voice is singularly low and soft for so large a man. You expect, from his manner of walking and sitting, that he will presently roar out at you, but he speaks in a singularly apologetic sort of way, in an undertone, and without any assertion of authority.

The most curious idiosyncrasy of Major Molineux, however, is this : He ceases to be on each Thursday in the week.

A constant visitor to the Union Club, I have observed that the Major never makes his appearance on that day. Suggesting to McBride (manager of the Derwent Bank) that perhaps the old gentleman was unwell, I was told that he never appears on Thursdays. Debating with Johnstone (of the —1st) if it would be well to ride over and visit the invalid, I was told that the Major never receives visitors on Thursdays, and being anxious to send a small cheque for a night's losings at whist, on Wednesday, I was told by the postmaster that I might as well wait until Friday, as no letters were taken in at Castle Stuart on Thursday morning.

Castle Stuart is a huge, colonial-built, red brick house on the road to New Norfolk. It is sunk in a spacious bush-park, not unadorned with shrubs and trees planted at some expense. The stables are

unusually large, and the out-houses almost like barracks. In former days the Major kept a large household, but since the sudden death of an orphan niece, to whom he was much attached, he has persistently refused to entertain company, and contented himself with the humblest retinue. An old man, and a woman still older who acts as cook, are, with their master, the sole inmates of Castle Stuart.

It can readily be understood that this condition of affairs has given rise to some comment. Hobart Town is not a large place, and, as the society consists almost entirely of military officers and the civil service, the strange conduct of the Major has been food for scandal during many a day. He, however, appears to busy himself but little with the conjectures concerning him. He rides into town twice a week for his rubber of whist, and, apart from his day of seclusion, comports himself like every other half-pay officer in similar circumstances. Bagally, the man, and Mary Pennithorne, the maid, are deaf to all hints and persuasions. Indeed, the old woman is almost imbecile, and the man, a queer, wizened old rascal—a manumitted convict—who walks lame and has a trick of talking to himself—professes to know nothing whatever concerning his master's eccentricity.

Now, there is nothing very remarkable in an old bachelor, who has lost the only person for whom he may be presumed to care, keeping a sparse table and living an inexpensive life. But this weekly seclusion is a puzzle to the whole community. No one seems to think that the Major has had any event of importance happen to him on a Thursday, nor that it is necessary or proper for him to shut out, at that particular time, the world and its surroundings. The death of Miss Tremayne occurred on a Monday, and, moreover, it was noticed—so they tell me—that the Major had begun

to avoid society on Thursdays before that sad event took place.

The first time that this remarkable dislike to be seen abroad on the fifth day of the week openly manifested itself was—I am informed at the club—at a *levée* given by Governor Arthur on the occasion of his arrival. Everybody in the city who had any pretensions to social rank attended as a matter of course, and no military or naval officer could have absented himself without causing the gravest scandal. Major Molineux attended, but his behaviour was said to be most extraordinary.

His carriage drove up to Government House with the blinds closely drawn. After some seconds, the door was opened and the Major, dressed in full uniform, and leaning on the arm of Miss Tremayne, appeared. His face was, in strong contrast to its customary hue, of a death-like paleness, and a clammy perspiration beaded his brow. On stepping out into the light he placed his hand before his eyes, as though to shade them from the sun, and then drew himself up with an effort, as though nerving himself for some dreadful task. He pressed his niece's hand with the air of one who might take an eternal farewell, and then tottered, rather than walked, through the corridor. He passed through the special door set apart for those having official cards of entry, and, making his way straight for the dais, attempted to tender his respects to the representative of his Sovereign. His Excellency, who had heard of Major Molineux's services, would have detained him with some words of kindly recognition, but, at the moment he stretched out his hand, the Major paused, and fixing his eyes on the group behind the Governor, seemed as though about to utter some startling announcement. His mouth remained open, but no sound issued from it, while the convulsive working of

his features betrayed some powerful emotion. One of Colonel Arthur's staff stepped forward and took the unfortunate gentleman by the arm. The contact seemed to recall him to himself, and, stammering some incoherent excuse, he allowed himself to be led to his carriage, where his niece waited for him in an evident condition of anxiety.

The next morning he called on the Governor and explained that a sudden indisposition, for which he could not account, had prostrated for the moment his physical powers. His excuses were, of course, accepted, with many expressions of regret for his illness, but since that day he has never quitted his house on a Thursday. Some months afterwards Miss Tremayne died, and the Major then dismissed his servants and commenced to lead the solitary and strange existence in which I found him."

* * * * *

CHAPTER I.

I HAVE just read the above, which was written nearly forty years ago, when I was on a visit to Hobart Town to recruit my health, which a long residence in India with the regiment to which I had been attached as surgeon had considerably impaired. For reasons which will, in the course of this narrative, be apparent to the reader, I found it inconvenient to continue any daily record of one of the most remarkable cases which ever came under my experience. Indeed, it became—as will be seen—advisable that there should be no written statement extant of Major Molineux's misfortune, and for half a lifetime I have put away my knowledge of the facts as one puts away some family secret. But the sight of the faded ink of my diary, and the certainty that, ere long, I shall be incapable of narrating the occurrences which influenced the whole

of my subsequent career in life, have induced me to briefly state as much as I may of one of the saddest and most terrible histories ever confided to a professional ear.

JULIUS FAYRE, M.D.,
Late Surgeon-Major.

Apart from the peculiarity which I have recorded in my diary, no man could be more courteous than Major Molineux, and few more entertaining. He did not ask me to Castle Stuart, it is true, but he was good enough to devote many mornings to making me acquainted with the beauties of the country more immediately surrounding Hobart Town, and entertained me by many amusing anecdotes of early colonial days. He, too, had been in India in early manhood, and we passed many a pleasant hour in comparing notes as to our travels and experiences in that wonderful country. Entering the army at an age when most men are fagging in the cricket field, or spelling out their daily modicum of Horace, Major Molineux had seen much service in many countries. His genial manner, soft voice, and dignified bearing added much to the charm of his narratives.

Though for the most part self-educated, as must necessarily be the case when a man enters early on the business of life, he had accumulated more than considerable information on many topics not generally touched upon save by very active minds. In addition to his fund of anecdote, and his acquaintance with what may not inaptly be called the personal history of our more celebrated military campaigns, he was a naturalist of no mean attainments, an accomplished taxidermist, well read in the literature of natural science, and possessed of by no means a contemptible knowledge of physiology. I was agreeably surprised

one day, shortly after our first acquaintance, to find that his response to some casual remark of mine, upon an experiment recorded in a medical journal which I had received from England, betrayed an acquaintance with the subject which would have been notable even in a professional man, but which, coming from a layman, was quite remarkable.

“Yes,” said he, in reply to my query, “I take a great interest in matters of that nature—a very great interest.”

He seemed about to say more, but turned the conversation abruptly, nor could he be afterwards brought to resume the discussion.

One other subject was, as a matter of course, *taboo* between us—the existence of such a day of the week as Thursday. I once purposely mentioned the day, affecting not to be aware of his antipathy to it, but the result forbade me to repeat the experiment. Major Molineux became visibly disturbed. The colour left his face, and he trembled violently. His appearance, in fact, was that of a man who had just received some nervous shock, or who had unexpectedly swallowed some nauseous and poisonous substance. He recovered himself with difficulty, and took occasion to make a hasty departure. He did not wholly resume his friendly relations with me for some days, being apparently fearful lest, by inadvertence, I should again offend, and though my curiosity was piqued almost beyond endurance, I took care not to risk the loss of so polished an acquaintance by impertinent intrusion into that which, after all, was no business of mine.

The time passed pleasantly. Our bi-weekly “rubbers” and our almost daily conversations continued to our common content. My leave had nearly

expired, and I had already begun to make preparations for carrying my reinvigorated liver back to the land of hepatalgia, when one of those accidents which are the providences of romance occurred.

The next neighbour of Major Molineux was a gentleman named Rochford. He, too, had been in the King's service, and, like my friend, had sold out, in order to settle down upon the fine estate which he had acquired under the operation of the colonial land laws. Captain Rochford—for he assumed brevet rank on the sale of his lieutenant's commission—owned a somewhat similar house to that of Major Molineux, for all the houses in that colonial day were built on the same plan, and after the same pattern. But the cheerful residence of Captain Rochford was in marked contrast to the gloomy mansion and overgrown garden of the owner of Castle Stuart. Not only were the grounds of Ashmead Park kept in the completest horticultural condition, but the house was enlivened by a constant gaiety, in which the good magistrate's charming daughter took a conspicuous part.

Miss Beatrice Rochford was, when I first knew her, a beautiful young girl of sixteen, having at once that exquisite complexion and that nobly rounded figure the possession of which makes the native-born of the most delightful of the Australasian colonies a sort of commingling of Devonshire loveliness of face with Spanish splendour of form. She was the only child, and both her father and her mother spoiled her. Allowed to have her own way in everything, she would have grown up without culture, and almost without education, had it not been for the more than sisterly friendship displayed by Miss Tremayne. While Miss Tremayne lived she exercised over the excitable and impetuous nature of Beatrice an influence greater than that of any other person.

From all that I could gather, Agnes Tremayne had been a girl of rare promise. Miss Rochford told me that all she knew of music—and she played brilliantly—had been taught her by her dead friend, and her mother confidentially informed me that, had it not been for the Major's niece insisting that Beatrice should share her studies, the water-colour drawings which decorated the breakfast-room at Ashmead would never have been executed.

One day Miss Rochford showed me a portrait of Agnes Tremayne. It was a miniature, very beautifully painted on ivory by the celebrated Wainwright, and represented a fair girl with lofty forehead and large grey eyes.

"A refined and delicate face," was my comment as I handed back the picture.

"And a good face," said the impetuous Beatrice, kissing the miniature. "No one knows what she endured in that dreadful house."

"You rouse my curiosity," I said. "What is this mystery concerning Major Molineux?"

"I don't know," said Miss Rochford. "I think poor Agnes knew, and the knowledge killed her. You are aware that they say the house is haunted."

"They say that of all houses which are shut up. Pray, what shape does the familiar spirit take?"

"You laugh, of course, Dr. Fayre, but, nevertheless, there is something horrible to me about Castle Stuart. The closed windows, the desolate garden, that horrible old cripple, and Mary Pennithorne, with her toothless mouth—ugh! the thought of it makes me shudder."

"But, my dear young lady, there is nothing horrible in lameness, and though the absence of teeth may render Mrs. Pennithorne unsightly, the poor woman is to be pitied rather than shuddered at."

“Of course. But I cannot help shuddering at ugly things. Even the Major, for all his soft voice and smooth ways, is sometimes repulsive to me. I think of him shut up in that lonely place every Thursday in the week, and wonder what horrible act of wickedness he is committing, or what dreadful penance he is inflicting on himself for some past crime.”

“You have never been to the house, then?”

“Never since poor Agnes’s death. Nor would I go even if I was asked. I rode up once to escape a thunderstorm, and went round to the back of the stables. They were empty; the windows of the rooms were boarded up, and not a creature was about the place, not even a dog. When I turned the corner, I could see the room which had once been Agnes’s bedroom. The curtains had been taken down, and the window was wide open, like a great blankly-staring Eye. It was horrible, and I turned Sultan round, and never drew rein until I was at our own park gates.”

“But this is mere fancy, Miss Rochford. There is no reason to suppose that Major Molineux is anything but the best and kindest of men. I have felt nearly as much interest as you do in the matter, and all my inquiries but serve to show me that your father’s old friend is most honourably esteemed.”

“Then why does he shut himself up for twenty-four hours every week?” persisted the laughing beauty, with that carelessness as to the motives of others, and that inability to understand the unconventional, which is peculiar to the young and happy. “I should dearly like to discover his secret. Would not you, Dr. Fayre?”

“I confess that I should be glad if he would reveal it to me,” I replied, “for, as you say, it is a most puzzling business.”

“Then we will penetrate the mystery together,” said she, flashing a dazzling smile on me from between her red lips. “Here is my hand upon it!” but, ere I could imprison the tiny fingers, she was gone.

I did not dream how sadly and how soon her jest would be realised.

CHAPTER II.

I HAVE said that Miss Rochford was allowed to have her own way by her parents. She did, in fact, as she pleased; stayed at home to paint and read for the best part of one week, and during the next would close the piano, put away her unfinished water-colours, fling her books into a corner, and go scampering over the country upon her Arab horse, Sultan.

I have heard my Indian friends say that, if an Arab horse is not docile, he is more difficult to manage than any other. Sultan was certainly a proof, in some sort, of the truth of this statement. He was awkward in the stable, and even his own groom was not without some little dread of him. When mounted by a stranger, he seemed to lose all control over himself, and though Beatrice Rochford was absolutely without fear, and rejoiced in sitting her plunging and rearing steed, her father was always threatening to exchange the beautiful but unruly creature for a more placid, if less showy, animal.

But the wilful girl pouted and coaxed by turns, until the good Captain pressed his grizzled moustache upon her smooth, young brow and withdrew his determination for that time. He had, indeed, a well-merited admiration for his daughter's skill as a horsewoman, and, during some of our many pleasant

riding parties, I have often reined my steed alongside his more mettlesome hunter to watch Beatrice, as, sitting well back in the saddle, with her hands low on her horse's wither, her veil blown like a streamer from her hat, and her dainty figure swaying like a willow to every bound of the snorting horse, she allowed the delighted beast to take his own course through bush and brake, until, with heightened colour and ringing laugh, she flung him on his haunches not five lengths from where we stood.

She was a feather-weight, and her hand was as light as gossamer, but Sultan had been perfectly bitted, and dropped his head to the curb like a colt. So long as his temper was not crossed he was perfection.

"You shall never sell him, papa!" the lovely girl would cry after one of these daring flights, and the noble horse arched his muscular neck to the caress of the stroking whip-handle, as though to ask pardon for his occasional outbreaks of ill-humour.

One day we were returning from a long ride to New Norfolk, a charming village situated on the banks of the Derwent, which in some places assumes the aspect of an English trout-stream. The day had been chilly, for we were approaching winter, and fires had already made their appearance in the hospitable rooms of Ashmead. The road lay by the side of the stream, which brawled and foamed, some distance below us, over its rocky boulders, and the unwonted coldness of the air, together with the peculiar aspect of the swiftly-flowing brook, brought distant England vividly to my thoughts.

"How like this is to a scene in one of the mountain counties of England, Rochford!" I said.

"It is," he returned. "I wonder if either of us will see them again?"

The question was a pertinent one, and I fell into a reverie of recollection in which all but the existence of home and friends was for the moment forgotten. I was aroused by an exclamation from Captain Rochford, and, raising my head, became conscious that Beatrice was no longer with us. My companion's horse fretted under the restraint of the bridle, and I guessed that, finding us both wrapped in thought, she had, with her customary impulsiveness, galloped off down the rocky road alone.

"Let us push on," I said. "It is getting dark. We shall overtake her soon."

"It is not that," said Rochford. "Look there!" and he pointed to a turn of the road which, visible to us on account of our elevated position, could not be seen by anyone in the gap through which Beatrice was evidently riding.

A bullock team attached to a waggon loaded with timber, apparently cut from the land of Major Molineux, had "camped" in the track. The driver was asleep by the side of the road, and the animals had taken advantage of the absence of his formidable whip to snatch a few moments' respite from their toil. There were eight in all, and they were disposed right across the road, one of the polers and the two leading bullocks lying down.

Rochford shouted at the full strength of his voice, but the man did not stir. He was evidently drunk. I could distinguish, or thought I could distinguish, the rapid ring of Sultan's hoofs in the pass, as he was being urged at the top of his speed to the collision which awaited him. I, too, called out, but the word that rose to my lips was "Beatrice!" I knew in that moment that the liking I—the middle-aged army surgeon—had for this beautiful and wayward girl,

who was almost young enough to be my daughter, was a feeling warmer than mere friendship.

Breathless we awaited that which we knew must come. It was useless, worse than useless, to follow down the gap. We should only encourage the horse to greater speed, and should see nothing of the catastrophe. It came at last. Round the rock at full speed wheeled the flying horse, and simultaneously his rider saw the danger. There was but one chance, and that was balked. Just as she reined Sultan for the desperate leap, the drunkard tried to rise.

A less uncertain-tempered horse might even then have escaped. But the Arab saw the uncouth figure with the hated whip, swerved, fell on the great horns, recovered himself, with a scream of pain, and rolled backwards over his rider twenty feet sheer into the river.

How we reached the spot I never knew. There are some actions which, under great excitement, one performs automatically. I was told afterwards that I had fastened my bridle swiftly to a branch, and, leaping down from crag to crag, had gained a jutting point below the spot where the unhappy girl had fallen, had plunged into the stream, and, dragging her from the dead horse, had drawn her to the bank. I only remember standing, in my wet clothes, beside her, watching some faint colour of life gradually creep back to her white lips, while her father, like a man beside himself, galloped off to Castle Stuart for assistance.

When he returned with old Bagally, I had regained my composure. Nothing steadies the nerves of a surgeon—if he loves his profession—like an immediate necessity for the display of his utmost skill. Beatrice was cold and almost pulseless, her left arm was broken, and, when I raised the eyelids from the

once lovely eyes, nothing remained of those large and liquid pupils but two scarcely perceptible specks.

"I have bad news for you," I said; "I cannot, of course, speak definitely yet as to the full extent of her injuries, but Miss Rochford has broken her arm, and has received severe concussion of the brain."

"I will borrow Molineux's carriage," said Rochford.

"No," said I; "I am not prepared to risk the journey. Miss Rochford must be taken to the house at once."

The lame servitor looked askance, but Captain Rochford made light of all objections. "Molineux would never be so absurdly fanatical as to refuse us his hospitality in such an emergency," he said; "I will answer for him." So, making a litter with saplings and blankets brought from the house, we carried the still unconscious girl through the open door and placed her in a room to which Mrs. Pennithorne directed us.

I set the broken arm at once, and apprehended no danger on that score; but, on examination, I found a comminuted fracture of the skull, with displacement of the external table, and dreaded the result upon so highly sensitive and delicate an organisation as that possessed by my patient. It was clear that she must remain where she was for some days, perhaps for weeks, and I recommended my friend to continue his journey home with all speed and send out Mrs. Rochford to act as nurse.

"I will remain here until you return; and, indeed, if Major Molineux will permit it," I added, "I will stop for the next twenty-four hours, at all events."

Rochford departed, and, in obedience to my summons, Mrs. Pennithorne appeared. She was a

pale woman, with a strangely frightened air, and furtive, light-blue eyes. The misfortune of which poor Beatrice Rochford had spoken was very apparent, and certainly very repulsive.

"Let me have candles and a fire," I said to her. "I must stop here to-night. When do you expect Major Molineux home?"

"He is at home now, sir," replied the old woman, in a low voice, which her imperfect articulation rendered almost unintelligible; "but he cannot see anyone."

For the first time I remembered that it was Thursday evening.

CHAPTER III.

A BRIGHT fire, and homely but plentiful preparations for supper, exercised on me their cheering influence, and I succeeded in shaking off a certain depression of spirits which had seized me so soon as the imperative necessity for attending to my patient left me leisure for reflection.

The old housekeeper had, according to my directions, contrived accommodation for Mrs. Rochford in the same room with her daughter, while I was given a bedroom in the next corridor. Supper was served in a spacious apartment downstairs, which seemed to be used by the master of the house as dining-room and library combined. A portrait of the deceased Miss Tremayne, painted by the same hand which had executed the miniature in the possession of Beatrice Rochford, hung on the wall over the chimney, and beneath it was placed the Major's dress-sword and

some withered branches of cypress. A heavy writing-table of solid fashioning occupied the embrasure of one of the windows, and, lying upon it, were some three or four volumes, evidently freshly imported from London.

A new book has always an irresistible attraction for me, and, moreover, on this occasion I was anxious to see what sort of literature my eccentric friend affected. Judge of my surprise to find that three of the works treated of the higher Mathematics, and the fourth was the last speculation of a physician, whose name had a European fame, upon Insanity !

Taking up the lamp, I examined the shelves. I expected to find there works which a military man of culture would naturally purchase, and I was not mistaken. The Life of Sir David Baird, Orme's Hindostan, and Southey's Peninsular War, elbowed Dubosc's History of the Prince Eugene and Mackenzie's Tippoo Sultan, while Churchill and Harris' Voyages sat pleasantly alongside Barclay's Universal Traveller, and the early volumes of the Despatches of the Duke of Wellington. Oliver's Entomology, and Labillardiere's Plants of New Holland, together with some fragments of Bewick, filled in the spaces between Shaw's Lectures on Zoology, while Audubon's Birds of America, with some few volumes of fiction, enlivened the higher shelves. The best of the collection, however, was almost entirely composed of treatises on mathematics and the latest works on mental disease. Not only were Bayle, Boyle, and La Place in their due place of honour, but the Norwegian Abel sat up beside them, and the latest volume of the Philosophical Transactions had between its leaves a paper covered with calculations made in dispute of Hopkins' statements anent luni-solar precession and nutation.

A row of folios, in sheepskin, bore the honoured names of Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna. The best editions of Harvey, Bichat, and Fothergill lay, with the last number of the Medical and Surgical Transactions, near them, while I could see that the Swiss edition of Tissot bristled with page-markers. But on the table were piled books which seemed strangely out of place in the house of a military officer however cultured. Boehave de Goster, Didier, Cabanis, and Schenck are not authors which one would expect to meet out of the library of a physician, nor are the *Opuscula* of Van Helmont, *le science de l'homme* of Bartletz, or *Lehesätze* of Prochascha, works with which a retired major of the line would be likely to soothe his leisure hours.

I was interrupted at once in my researches and in my reflections by the arrival of the carriage containing Captain Rochford and his wife.

As may be readily imagined, the poor mother was in a condition of great anxiety. Nor was her trouble much alleviated by a visit to the sick-room. Miss Rochford was still unconscious, and though, by the application of wet cloths to the head, I was enabled to keep the inflammation in check, I could as yet offer no decided opinion as to the result of the case. It might, indeed, be even yet necessary to use the trephine, but I did not desire to alarm either of the parents, and I made the best assurances I could of their daughter's ultimate recovery.

"One thing," I said, "is absolutely necessary—perfect quiet. If you move Miss Rochford from this house until I am fully satisfied that she can bear the journey, I will not be responsible for the consequences. To-morrow we will, if you choose, call in the family doctor. To-night the case is under my care."

Captain Rochford was good enough to express his perfect confidence in my skill, and took leave of us in terms which seemed to indicate that his mind was at ease. I pressed him to stop, but he declined.

"I learn from the old man, Bagally," he said, "that Major Molineux has been informed of our presence in the house, and that nothing but the extreme urgency of the case induces him to allow us to remain. I will come back again in the morning."

Although I defended our involuntary host from the grave charge of discourtesy, I felt that, perhaps, it was well to intrude upon his strangely enforced privacy as little as possible. Having paid a last visit to my patient, and given directions for my immediate recall in case of need, I returned to the dining-room, determined to enjoy myself for a few hours by browsing among the scientific pasturage so curiously and so liberally provided.

I found it impossible to fix my attention on the page. Speculations which, at another time, would have enchained me, vaguely glimmered into my consciousness and disappeared again before I could grasp them. Insignificant and forgotten events of my past life suddenly sprang into my memory with startling distinctness, and an apparent importance wholly disproportioned to their true value as factors in the sum of my existence. I recalled faces of my boyhood, and seemed to hear voices, long ago silent, whispering about me. The wind had risen with the moon, and the night foreboded tempest. The rushing of the swollen stream mingled with the lashing of the rain, as it beat faster and faster upon the panes, while the distant flapping of some unhinged shutter gave querulous and doleful token of the desolation which reigned around the mysterious and ill-omened house.

I more than half-repented that I had insisted upon the establishment of Miss Rochford in a place so dismal and so fraught with gloomy recollections. But her removal would have been attended with graver danger, and my better sense informed me that my fears were merely fancies engendered by shaken nerves and mental strain. Resolving to get the poor girl into the more cheerful society of her own domestic circle without delay, I adjusted another log on the fire, and endeavoured to rally my faculties into some more pleasant mood.

Alas! I but succeeded in making myself more uneasy than before. The chink of the falling embers sounded like low, warning cries, the roar of the river became a threatening voice, the scream of the blast was like the last appeal of some wildly parting soul, the indistinctly-heard rustling of the trees seemed to urge flight.

Through this medley of sounds and sensations the intermittent flap of the loose shutter recurred at irregular intervals, like the sound made by one who, with failing strength, and yet passionate persistence, would gain shelter from some pursuing terror. I felt horribly alone. From above me looked down the sad, wild eyes of the dead girl, and about me were only the tokens of the strange, perhaps hideous, speculations of the mysterious recluse.

At that moment I heard a stealthy footfall in the passage.

Without pausing to think, I flung wide the door, and confronted the intruder.

At first I felt inclined to burst into laughter. Old Bagally was creeping towards the staircase with a tray, upon which was spread meat and wine.

“Bringing me something to eat?” I said, ashamed of my abrupt outbursting from the door, and yet glad of this momentary companionship with humanity.

“It is for the Major, sir,” said he, endeavouring to pass, and seeming unaccountably agitated.

“But the Major doesn’t want two forks and two knives, and all that meat,” said I. “Perhaps someone sups with him?”

“What is that to you?” said the old man, with a sudden, savage snarl, making as though, having both hands engaged, he would have bit me sideways in his wolf-like fury. “You have had all you want; if not, I’ll bring you more. Leave us alone. We have our own ways,” and, vouchsafing no further parley, he climbed the stairs which led to his master’s apartments.

More puzzled than ever, I returned to the gloomy dining-room. Had I stumbled into a house of madmen? Was the unreasoning terror of the toothless beldame but a form of idiocy? Was the old convict, with his ape-like skull and his canine rabidity, a maniac?

And the master of this desolated and death-haunted ruin, who shut himself up for one day in the week, and enshrouded that day with such precautions against being taken unawares, that his very food must be conveyed to him at night, and by stealth—what was he? Was he, too, insane? Had he brooded upon madness until he had become mad himself? Was he doing penance, as Beatrice had suggested, for some frightful crime? Did those doors, behind which he lived his forlorn life, conceal some poor relative whose sad calamity was held a misfortune to be bolted in and barred away from men?

Or—most horrible thought of all—did he keep concealed above, and watched by the crazy pair,

some poor wretch upon whose dazed brain and diseased body he might practice devilish experimental arts, if haply he might work out one or other of the wild theories propounded in some of the more speculative of his philosophers? Even as the thought shaped itself, there rang through the house a series of piercing shrieks.

CHAPTER IV.

IN another instant I was at the head of the stairs, but paused in my onward flight, for the sounds issued from the room occupied by Beatrice and her mother.

Mrs. Rochford was lying on the floor senseless. Ringing the bell furiously, I raised her to her bed, and, with the assistance of the old woman, whom the cries of the unhappy lady, not less than my importunate summons, had brought to the spot, I succeeded in restoring her to consciousness. Her first words were :

“Is it gone?”

“What?” I asked.

“The white face at the window!” said Mrs. Rochford.
“That imploring, maddened face!”

“What can she mean?” I asked Mary Pennithorne, but the old woman, moping and mowing, made no reply.

“See, madam,” I said, flinging wide the lattice, “the storm has passed, and with it the cause of your alarm. Some leafy branchlet carried by the wind, perhaps even some more wrathful gust than usual, has, while rousing you from sleep, given form to a passing dream. Look, the sky is almost cloudless.”

And in truth, the tempest had, during the time we had been occupying ourselves with the frightened woman, quite passed away. The scene was one of exquisite peacefulness. The clouds had almost withdrawn, and the wet trees sparkled in the beams of a glorious moon, which rode high in a serene heaven. All felt the influence of the scene. Beatrice, sunk in her stupor, alone was ignorant alike of sounds and sights; but her mother composed herself with a smile at her former fears, and as I sought my comfortable couch, I felt that science and sentiment alike bid me laugh at the ungrateful fancies which an atmosphere surcharged with electricity could breed in a brain usually so cool as mine.

The excitement of the day caused me to sleep longer than my wont, and it was nearly eight o'clock when I awoke. I discovered by the hot water jug, with its carefully placed towel, that the rude valetage of Bagally had already been exercised in my chamber, and, before I had completed my *toilette*, the old servant introduced himself with the compliments of his master, and information that breakfast would be ready for us in half-an-hour.

Captain Rochford had already arrived, and with him I visited the sick room. Beatrice was still insensible, but Mrs. Rochford was up and dressed. Rochford laughed at her story of the ghost, and, gathering courage from my assurance that the patient was progressing favourably, we went down to breakfast in something like good spirits.

Major Molineux received us with more than courtesy. He lamented the accident, but trusted that the skill of a surgeon so well known as myself, and the careful attention of a mother so devoted as Mrs. Rochford, would soon restore his fair guest to her wonted health.

"I'm afraid," he said, as he assisted us to the dish before him, "that my poor house is but a gloomy place for a convalescent, and I trust that Miss Rochford's convalescence may be early. Such as are the resources of the place, however—command them. I regret that I was unable to render you any personal assistance yesterday, but I must compensate for my enforced neglect by devoting myself to all your services during the next few days."

The language was of the politest, but there was no mistaking its meaning. Rochford and I looked at each other. It was quite evident that Major Molineux did not desire that we should pass another Thursday under his roof.

"I trust that Miss Rochford may be able to travel to her own home before this day week," said I, somewhat pointedly. "In the meantime, let me thank you for the courtesy with which we were received, and especially for the hospitality of last night."

The hand with which the Major was lifting the teacup to his lips trembled slightly, but he said, merely, "It was a wild night—a night of storms. I trust you were not disturbed."

"I was most terribly disturbed," said Mrs. Rochford—I think I have said that she was not a woman of much force of character, or quickness of apprehension—"I had the most shocking dreams. A white face at the window—"

"Nonsense, Mary," interrupted Rochford; "you were nervous."

"There is no one in the house but myself and the two servants," said the Major, who had completely regained his composure, "and I am sure neither of them would have the temerity to disturb your

slumbers. Pray," he added, turning in stiff condescension to old Bagally, "have *you* been amusing yourself by terrifying my guests?"

The old man seemed dumb-stricken. He tried to speak, but words failed him. Lifting up his hands with a gesture of terror, he made for the door, and, turning as he went, displayed again that wolf-like savagery of aspect, the which I had observed on the previous night.

"A curious fellow," said Major Molineux," cracking the shell of his egg, "but faithful. An old convict, of course. I have touched some tender chord, perhaps."

Perhaps he had, for Dame Pennithorne waited upon us during the rest of the meal, and even brought the Major his cigar-case, when we found ourselves in the dilapidated but spacious verandah, prepared to seek the solace which, in those days, was supposed to lie in Manilla tobacco.

The conversation, of course, was of the accident and its results. The prospects of the patient's recovery, the punishment to be meted out to the self-indulgent bullock-driver, the quality of Sultan's temper, and the equestrian skill of Miss Rochford, were all debated in turn. A learned discussion was held upon fracture of the skull, and I was compelled to illustrate as best I might the operation of the trephine. At last exhausted with surgery, and convinced that he was thoroughly competent to treat a similar case, should he ever meet with one, Rochford betook himself to visit the scene of the accident, and left me alone with our host.

Major Molineux seemed uneasy. He got up and paced the broken tiles of the piazza floor, talked of twenty things in a breath, and flung away his half-

consumed cigar, only to light another an instant after.

"You are restless this morning," I said, willing to gain, if I could, some information concerning the mysterious seclusion of yesterday. "Did you not sleep well?"

"Oh, yes," returned the Major, indifferently, "I slept well enough," and then he fixed his eyes on the wall behind me with that strange stare of which I have already spoken, and wiped from his brow some large beads of sweat which had suddenly appeared there. "I seldom sleep very soundly."

"Indigestion, I suspect," I continued, in a careless tone. "A man who eats enough for two people at about midnight can scarcely wonder if he suffers from nightmare."

With a visible effort my interlocutor withdrew his gaze from space, and looked me in the eyes.

"Then you saw Bagally with the tray," said he. "I am ashamed of my voracious appetite," he added, with an attempt at a smile, "and try to laugh myself out of my gluttony by demonstrating to my actual vision that I do, in fact, partake of a double portion of food."

"Your notion is ingenious, but I fear that you will never effect a cure by its means. Let me feel your pulse." He gave me his wrist. The hand was hot and dry, the pulse full and bounding. "I will write you a little prescription which may do you good. Give me a sheet of paper," and I led the way to the library. "There," said I, folding the sheet; "though I saw Woodville and Sowerby on your shelves, I doubt if you are fully acquainted with the virtues of the lily tribe."

"You have been among my books, then," said the Major, looking round.

"I have, and am surprised to find so excellent a collection of works in—pardon me for saying it—so unexpected a place."

"Books are my only companions," said Major Molineux, and, as he spoke, he scanned the table a little nervously, as though to see which of the volumes had attracted my attention.

Determined to penetrate the secret which I was now convinced existed, I pressed my advantage. "I see that you study the higher mathematics. This calculation on the variation of parameters is not made by a school-boy, while here"—and I lifted from the table a sheet of paper—"is something headed, '*Probability that an event observed several times in succession depends upon a cause which facilitates its reproduction,*' in which the calculation is made by finding the equation of the logarithmic curve."

Major Molineux changed colour, and took the paper from my hands. "I did not know that I had left the records of my folly thus carelessly exposed," said he. "The fact is that I have always been a lover of anything which approaches an exact science, and the calculation of probabilities is a fascinating subject. I am foolishly fond of it," and, as he spoke, he tore the paper into pieces and flung them into the basket at his feet.

"Some men say that mathematicians are mad," I said. "If this be so, you have the antidote as well as the bane, for seldom have I seen, even in the libraries of my professional brethren, so fine a collection of works on Mental Disease as that which I examined last night."

I had gone too far for his patience.

"Doctor Fayre," said he, "you are my guest, and my house is at your disposal so long as the illness of my old friend's daughter compels you to remain in it;

but let me remind you that an old man who lives by choice a recluse, may have sought such seclusion in order that he might be spared these very comments upon his private tastes which you have just been pleased to make," and, bowing stiffly, he left the room.

CHAPTER V.

HE did not appear that day, nor at breakfast the next morning. I felt that I deserved the reproach which his absence conveyed, and was angry with myself for having so far permitted my curiosity to outrun my discretion. But the more I reflected upon the circumstances of the case, the more convinced did I become that Castle Stuart held within its walls some mystery of mind or body, upon the like of which it was not given to man to frequently look; and, despite the Major's rebuff and my own self-consciousness, I resolved not to abandon my quest. In pursuance of this resolution I sauntered out into the garden the next afternoon, thinking to fall in with the old servant. I was not disappointed. I found him standing in a little glade, or opening in the brushwood, staring with all his might at the upper windows of the house.

"What interests you?" I cried, taking a guinea from my pocket. "Can you not spare time for a little friendly chat?"

He looked nervously about him, pocketed the gold piece, and, pointing to a coarse patch of verdure at his feet, whispered:

"It was here he did it."

"Did what?" I asked.

“Cut his throat,” said the old man, “and they buried him here, with a stake through his heart. But that can’t hold him.”

“What do you mean, man?” I asked, experiencing a fresh access of horror at this hideous and unexpected story. “Who is buried here?”

“Savary, the forger; him as found his wife gone as well as his liberty. This was where he saw them walking. The Captain was a handsome man, and Mrs. Savary had been a beauty, they say. She died mad for all that,” and he laughed the discordant laugh of one whose experience of life has been of the sort to make him rejoice in others’ woe.

“What was the Captain’s name?”

“Tremaine. He was the Major’s brother-in-law. *He’s* dead too, and Savary will soon see them all out.”

“Does his ghost walk, then?” I asked, attempting a laugh; but the day was cloudy, and a cold wind seemed on a sudden to chill me.

“Ask Mrs. Rochford. She saw him last night. Listen. Two years ago I was sitting up with the old hag in the kitchen, when I heard the door-bell. It was blowing a storm like it was last night, and the wind went shrieking round the house as if it wanted to get in and tear us. It was the Major’s Thursday, and I daren’t go near him for my soul. I crept to the door, thinking some traveller had got out of his track, for no one who knew us would come to Castle Stuart; but before I could open it there was an awful screech, and something went whirling round the house like a pack of dogs. I heard them bellowing and grunting at the back, and ran upstairs to look. I looked out of that window”—he pointed to the room where Mrs. Rochford had slept the night before—“and I saw something like a herd of huge swine on

Savary's grave, rooting, and snarling, and slavering in it, and then I slammed to the window, for some awful thing with a white face was there trying to save itself from those hellish beasts. The noise continued for five or six minutes, and then the sky cleared like it did last night, and I saw no more."

"You have a cheerful imagination, my friend," said I; "but, pray, do you couple this delectable story with your master's day of seclusion?"

Once more the ugly look came into his face. "Nay, I know nothing of that; and it's no business of yours either, though you are a doctor. Doctors cannot cure Major Molineux's complaint."

"Then you think that he is ill?"

"Not I; he's well enough."

"Look ye, Bagally," I said, determined to try a last chance, "you are too sensible a man to believe this nonsense about ghosts, and suicides, and hunted souls. I am a doctor; I shall be here some days. I may be able to do your master good. Tell me"—and I exhibited another guinea—"what is the mystery in connection with Major Molineux?"

"He is possessed by a devil," said Bagally; and then, as if he had said too much, made for the house with grotesque, uneven strides, and left me standing on the coarse grass that sprung from the dishonoured grave where the suicide lay with a stake through his heart.

A voice roused me from my reverie. Major Molineux himself was at my side.

"Fayre," said he, "I have overheard the last words of your conversation. I do not expect you to pay attention to the vulgar fancies of an ignorant hind. The story of the wretched being who lies buried at your feet is neither part of my history nor does it concern my family. The romance which was sought

to be woven around his name and that of my dear sister's husband has been long ago proved false, and it was perhaps the gratification of a desire to preserve from derision the last resting-place of a man more sinned against than sinning which caused the report to first obtain circulation. When my niece came to live with me I caused the fence, which formerly surrounded Arthur Savary's grave, to be removed, and, unless some chattering imbecile like old Bagally had informed her of the story, this portion of the park possessed for her no more interest than any other. The fantasies of women are innumerable." He spoke rapidly, and with some heat. It was quite evident that he expected a reply, and a direct one.

"No one, Major Molineux," said I, "is less superstitious than myself, but I have seen so much of what is termed superstition resolve itself into fact, that I am not prepared to pronounce any fantasy of the imagination as wholly baseless. But before we proceed further, let me feel sure of my ground. I came here only in my character as a physician in attendance upon a patient who has been made unavoidably your guest. I find myself face to face with an extraordinary enigma, yourself. Your peculiar studies, your secluded life, above all, your strange disappearance from all society on one day in the week, have combined to raise in me a curiosity which I cannot stifle. What is the mystery which darkens your life?"

Major Molineux planted himself firmly on his feet, and took both my hands in his own. His face was deadly pale, and he seemed to be nerving himself for a great effort. "Do not turn from me. Do not shun me," he said. "Had it not been for your persistence, I had never spoken. Bagally is right. One day in each week I am possessed by a devil."

"Come, come," said I, a little shaken, despite my self-control, as the powerful old man searched my eyes with his, "there are many sorts of devils—devils of wrath, and devils of discontent, and we all are now and then, at the mercy of such."

"Ay," said Major Molineux, "but to be possessed, as I am, by—no, I cannot speak it, I could not repeat, nor could you listen to the tale. Forget what I have said, and"—he pressed my arm with painful violence—"swear to mention to no living soul that which I have unguardedly betrayed."

"A physician's lips are sealed without an oath," said I. "You may rely on me. And now I must see Miss Rochford. Let us go in."

He regained his self-possession before we reached the house, and not during the day was the subject again mentioned between us. I thought it better for the development of the case to permit my patient—for so I now considered him—to begin a confidence which I feared might be withdrawn if I pressed him too closely. Seeing that I touched only on indifferent matters, he presided at dinner with his customary composure, and entertained us all with the stores of a mind acquisitive of information and fastidious in the imparting of it.

"The old gentleman was never more amusing," said Rochford, as I parted from him in the hall. "When we move Beatrice, I'll ask him to come to Ashmead; the change would do him good."

"Ask him, by all means," said I, "and I will second your entreaties. If we can once break the chain of recurring events in his life we may give him another lease of it. Our intrusion, unwelcome though it was at first, has already roused him into something like gaiety. Miss Rochford should be well enough in a

fortnight to be moved, for her case looks in every way favourable."

"How can I ever repay you for your kindness?" said Rochford.

I knew a method by which he could repay me a thousandfold, but I did not think it wise to mention it at that moment. Alas! events soon occurred which rendered it impossible for me to ever ask that favour which I prized so highly.

On Wednesday afternoon, Major Molineux begged to see me alone. He led the way to his library, carefully closed the door, and, after much prelude, began to talk about his malady.

"I wish to ask you," said he, "if it is possible for a man to be mad and know that he is mad?"

"There are different kinds of madness," said I, feeling that I must speak with caution. "An insane man may have lucid intervals during which he reviews acts done during the period of his insanity, and condemns them. A man may have an uncontrollable impulse to commit a certain act—as to jump out of a window, for instance—and yet be quite conscious of the folly, and even wickedness, of his morbid promptings. I knew a case in India of a soldier who was seized with just such a morbid desire. He felt compelled to murder some one very near and dear to him, and at last deserted in order to do it. Arrived in the town where the intended victim lived, he absolutely had himself tied up by the people of the inn, until the proper authorities could be sent for to secure him. Some months afterwards the object of his morbid lust for blood died, and the man at once recovered. He described his sufferings while resisting his impulse as terrible. Surely no devil worse than this could possess a man. And yet he could hardly be called mad."

"You give me a few grains of comfort," said Major Molineux, "though I have no such fearful impulse as that which you describe. Every week, from ten o'clock on Wednesday night until ten o'clock on Friday morning, I am the prey to the most bestial and awful delusion which it has entered into the mind of man to conceive. I know that the fault is in my own brain, and that I am but the dupe of imagination. But where that fault lies I have sought in vain to find. Science brings me no solace, and, though my sense laughs at my imagination, I dare not confront the hideous thing which my imagination has created to mock my sense."

"You are not alone in your misfortune, dear sir," said I. "There have been many men, haunted by phantoms, who have lived to make them but a source of amusement. The operation of ghost seeing is simple enough. We recall a landscape, which we have seen. We will it to return, and it is instantly present. That is to say that we project from us that which we wish to recall, and look at it, and listen to it, as if it were again external to us. An artist draws a dead face from memory, while a musician plays an air forgotten by his hearers—the same effort too, of will, which recalled the lineaments of a corpse, and the notes of the opera, could people a house with ghosts, and fill the darkness with the voices of the dead.

"Ah," said the Major, with a sigh, "mine is no such illusion as those which you have mentioned. No voices of angel or of demon speak to me. No faces, grotesque or enchanting, present themselves to my gaze. My delusion, and delusion it is, though sometimes I am half persuaded of its truth, is so horrible, so damning, so fearful in its naked insistence of the beast in our fallen natures that I have been tempted not once, but a hundred times, to set my

spirit free from the soul-destroying bands which enwrap it."

He spoke with sober vehemence, and appalling earnestness.

"That this feeling is part of the delusion I know, but that does not make it more bearable. For nine years I have endured a weekly agony, compared with which, the keenest torments of man's devising are as naught. In body and in soul I have suffered more than tongue can tell. Save that my reason did not desert me, I should have speedily qualified myself for a place beside the poor wretch over whose grave I confessed my secret; and yet I ask you, can I lay claim to the possession of reason, when I am the sport of an imagining so foul as that which torments me?"

"But," said I, gently, "you have not yet told me the nature of this delusion."

"I dare not," said Major Molineux. "You would quit the house. To no human ear can I speak the history of my unspeakable degradation." He rose suddenly.

"To-morrow is Thursday," he said, "come into my room to-night, and *see* what I dare not speak," and he left me.

Miss Rochford had regained consciousness, and I hoped that the next few days would see her in a fair way of recovery. Mrs. Rochford had laughed off her fears, and attributed, as I did, the visitant's face to a more mortal source than that of the wandering soul of a suicide. Rochford was in high spirits at the approaching departure, and even Mrs. Pennithorne seemed less terrified than usual. I could not have had a more propitious hour for the investigation of the mystery which had baffled me, and I waited with much anxiety for midnight, which—being about

the time I had seen Bagally on the previous week—was, I thought, a customary hour with the Major for taking his oddly-timed meal.

I was not amiss in my calculations. As the time-piece in the hall rang out the hour, the old convict appeared with the tray.

“Your master has desired me to see him,” I said, “and I will go up with you.”

“As you please,” said Bagally, roughly; “but take care.”

He led the way along the great corridor until he came to a double door.

“If he is not waiting on the other side,” said he, “you’ll be lucky,” and, opening a slide in the panel, he pushed in the tray with its burthen, bolting the panel quickly.

I stood uncertain how to act. Bagally turned to descend the stairs.

“Will you not go in?” I asked.

“Not for all the money in Hobart,” said the man, his very hair bristling. “Listen.” I bent my ear to the door, and could distinguish the confused sounds of voices.

“Who is with him?” I asked. But the old servitor had left me. I was alone, and from the other side of the oak panel came a sound which caused my blood to curdle in my veins. In another instant I should have fled.

“Molineux! Major Molineux!” I cried, and rapped at the panel. The door shot back, and I entered. The passage was pitch dark; but in the distance I could see a lighted candle in what appeared to be a bedroom. I advanced towards it. The door shut behind me, and I felt someone place what seemed to be a hand on my shoulder.

Major Molineux was right. Words refuse to lend themselves to the depiction of that which the horror-fixed eye saw in that lonely chamber.

CHAPTER VI.

MRS. ROCHFORD was the only person whom I met at the breakfast-table the morning after my visit to Major Molineux's room. The Major himself, for reasons which I could readily appreciate, desired to postpone, as long as possible, an interview with one who had become possessed of his unhappy secret, and Rochford had intimated his intention of arriving later in the day. Now, that his daughter was out of danger, there was really no real reason for his presence, which, indeed, was a daily element of disturbance in the sick room.

"When do you think that Beatrice can be moved?" asked Mrs. Rochford. "I long to have her at home again under my own roof; for, though Major Molineux is most kind and attentive, I experience a sense of depression in this house which I cannot shake off."

"I quite agree with you that the sooner Miss Rochford is got home the better," I replied, "though the feeling of which you speak is attributable only to your own anxiety, and perhaps in some measure to the unwonted quietude of Castle Stuart after the bustle of Ashmead. Nevertheless, we must be cautious. I never like to disturb a case of fracture, however slight, for at least twenty days, and we have been here but barely seven."

"True," she said; this is Friday. I had forgotten," and her glance at the vacant place at the foot of the table noted to me the circumstance which had escaped her memory.

Some slight confusion in my manner must have betrayed me, for, with a woman's quickness, she said suddenly, "Doctor Fayre; you look worn and ill this morning. Tell me, do you know anything about this mystery of Major Molineux?"

"My dear madam," I said, "I am a doctor, and I cannot speak even indirectly of matters which have come to my knowledge in the exercise of my profession. Major Molineux has been complimentary enough to ask my advice upon certain points connected with his health, but I am as yet but very partially informed as to his case."

"Nay," said she, "I did not mean to put an impertinent query; but it has occurred to me that, in return for the Major's kindness to my daughter, Beatrice might, by-and-bye, rouse him from his melancholy, and even win his confidence as to the secret cause of his malady."

If you have ever chanced, when in conversation, to hear a phrase innocently uttered which conveys to your private ear a world of esoteric meaning, you will comprehend the quick pang I felt at this sudden approximation of two ideas. Beatrice and my patient of last night! That pure girl and that most unhappy being, whose hideous hallucination made him doubtful of his humanity! When a student in Paris, I had seen the body of a beautiful girl exposed on a dissecting-table for some needful demonstrations in anatomy. The sight shocked me then, and as, obedient to the law of association, the picture of that nerveless figure, so passive under the searching knife and exploring eye, rose again before me, I almost saw the pallid features shape themselves into a likeness of those of Beatrice.

"Do not think of such a thing, madam," I cried. "It is quite impossible. Miss Beatrice must never

know aught of the—" and I stopped abruptly. Was I not already committing myself?

Poor Mrs. Rochford quite failed to appreciate my fervour, but I was glad to see that she attributed it more to zeal for her daughter's welfare than to any serious illness affecting Major Molineux.

"I had no intention, of course," she said, "of urging the project now, but by-and-bye, when change of air and scene might be tried on both—"

"Let us defer the consideration until then," I said; and with some difficulty succeeded in retaining my composure sufficiently to sit out the untasted meal.

Left to myself, I began to reflect. Upon what a hideous thing had I stumbled! Far from being, as I had suspected, the melancholic craze of a hypochondriac—who might believe himself a teapot or a wash-hand basin, Tiberius Cæsar, or Alexander the Great—the hallucination of Major Molineux was one which blended itself so inextricably with the affairs of his daily life that he could no more escape from it than he could stay his pulse at will. Bound as I was by the most solemn pledges of personal and professional honour, I had taken upon myself the burden of a frightful secret which I must lock for ever in my own heart, or share, and sicken in the sharing, with the unhappy man whose choking breast was its only other repository. And, having acquired the knowledge of this polluting horror, I must bear it with me for ever; for, did my skill haply succeed in removing from my companion's mind his belief in the absolute entity of it, still the image of it was there stamped upon the brain, and ready to start into grisly life again at any instant.

Nor was it possible to fix the idea in words. Even now, after thirty years, I can recall the agony of mind with which, pacing in the deserted park by the lonely

grave of the suicide, I strove to bring the abstract horror of the thing into some shape, that I might grapple with it and defy it. In vain. It eluded my mental grasp as a jelly-fish slips through the fingers. Formless and void, it yet was there—a foul and filthy thought, profaning the shrine of sense.

And he—the wretched man, in whose brain-cells this more than chimæric growth of shame and horror had been fed and fostered—what was my suffering to his? I saw clearly the line which separated the delusion of the one day from the comparative sanity of the other six. I could trace, far down in the beginnings of mental being, the first growth of the appalling thought which now mounted reason's throne and shook the sceptre of judgment. I was no believer in the damning mystery. Mine was, after all, but the experience of one who, meeting a leper uncovered in the by-way, has to wash in many waters ere he can return to forget that loathsome sight, among men of sound flesh and healthy limb. But the leper—poor ruin—knowing his own bitter fate—cut off for ever from the intimacy of the honest, put away from the sight of the noble, the very manhood which, supporting him in his trial, urges him to retain what semblance to his fellow-men the cankering corruption may have left him, and make an exit from life while he is yet a step removed from rabid putrescence—what far-reaching depths of anguish and of shame has not his soul plumbed in the swift descent of its despair?

One thing was certain. Having thus possessed myself of the knowledge of Major Molineux's terrible story, I was bound, by every tie of honour and humanity, to alleviate his sufferings. Such of my brethren who are read in the literature of insanity will understand me when I say that I shuddered at the task. I am not what the world terms a religious

man, and in those days I was perhaps less so than the experience of a long life has taught me since to be; but, in reviewing the case of this unfortunate gentleman, I found myself involuntarily offering up a petition to a Higher Power on his behalf. I had—during the long vigil of the dread night—mastered all physical symptoms, and arrived at the conclusion that, though science might palliate the tortures of the sufferer, she could not restore him “whole and in his right mind.” “I am possessed by a devil,” the poor man had said to me; and I did not profess to have the power of exorcism. Still, much might be done. The relief to his burdened mind must be already great, and if I could but prevail on him to discuss the theme—and my flesh crept with disgust as the thought thrilled my nerves—in calmness, haply some break in the continuity of the hallucination would be discovered whereby I could prevent the recurrence of the phenomena, or at least destroy the regularity of their appearance. The trial, distasteful as it was, should be made, and I sought the house, to give directions to Bagally to send to Hobart for some drugs with which I had resolved to begin the treatment.

I found the old servant in something of an anxious mood. He was evidently desirous of knowing how I had sped with his master, and I thought it a good opportunity to ascertain how much or how little he himself had learned.

“I had a long conversation with Major Molineux last night, Bagally,” said I; “and I have every hope that I may do him some good. Pray, when did you first observe the symptoms of his illness?”

“I have lived with him for seventeen years,” said the convict, with something approaching to tenderness in his voice, “and for the first eight years he was the same as the rest of us. Then he began to keep to the

house and avoid company, then to his room, and so by degrees to what you know him."

"Have you ever seen him during one of his attacks?" I asked.

"Never, thank God! but I have seen them as have—God help 'em!"

"Whom do you mean?"

"Miss Agnes. She saw him; and she never held up her head after. 'Twas one of them windy nights, like the one I was telling you about. When the screeching began, it seems that Miss Agnes got frightened, and ran out, calling for her Uncle. The old woman there slept next Miss Agnes, and she says she heard the Major's door open, and him come out to her. Then Miss Agnes cried out upon God to save her; and when Pennithorne got to her she was lying, fainted, in the passage. She was took with shivering that night, crying out on names we didn't know for someone to help her. The doctor—'twas old Murchison—said 'twas a cold she took in running out from her warm bed to the passage. We knew better, Pennithorne and I. 'Twas fright she died of."

"I am afraid that Mrs. Pennithorne is as much a romancer as you are," said I, with a most unsuccessful attempt at a smile. "Dr. Murchison was, no doubt, quite correct in his diagnosis. However, I want you to go into the town for these few matters," and I handed him the paper. "The Major has consented to submit to my treatment; but you know how sensitive he is, and I trust to your discretion to make no remarks either to him personally or to others."

"You needn't fear," returned he, unhitching the bridle from its peg. "I've lived too long here not to know how to hold my tongue." He hobbled to the door, and then came quickly back with awkward gesture, meant to indicate self-possession. "Cure

him," he said, and thrust something into my hand. It was one of the guineas I had given him over the suicide's grave.

Pondering over the confirmation of my worst fears, which the manner of the death of poor Miss Tremayne gave me, I resolved to see if I could obtain any information from Dame Pennithorne. The kitchen was a large one, and amply furnished with necessary utensils of all sorts. Our visit had compelled an almost entire change in the domestic policy of the household, and evidences of plenty, and even luxury, abounded. A fat-faced wench, employed in assisting a boy scullion to scour a huge fish-kettle, destined to contain our Friday fare, directed me to a door which led into a sort of stillroom or housekeeper's closet,—the private apartments of the woman to whom Miss Rochford had taken so strong a dislike.

Mrs. Pennithorne was seated before the empty grate, staring, with all her dazed might, into the fuelless fireplace. She did not hear me approach, and, coming close behind her, I tapped her lightly on the shoulder. The effect was curious. She did not start nor scream; she simply trembled violently, turning, as she did so, her head slowly round, until her glassy eyes—round and unspeculative as those of a fish—met mine. Her toothless mouth, open, in the curve of expectation, seemed not unlike that of a cod. Had I taken her hand I should have almost expected to find it cold.

Slowly her senses undazzled, and she recognised me. "I was thinking of you, sir," she mumbled, her wrinkled cheeks flapping together like bellows. "But I daren't speak to you."

"Why not? What mystery can you have to conceal?"

She looked round her again with that frightened air of which I have before spoken, and then suddenly

clutching my arm, with all her choppy fingers distended like the claws of a bird, she whispered to me :

“Take her away, doctor. For God’s sake, take her away.”

“You mean Miss Rochford,” said I. “Now, listen, Mrs. Pennithorne; I want you to tell me what you know of Miss Tremayne’s death. It took place in that very room, did it not? Answer me.”

She stared wildly, gaping and goggling after her unpleasant manner. From the adjacent kitchen came the laughter of the scullion and the cook-maid.

“Come, Mrs. Pennithorne,” I repeated, “recollect yourself. What took place before Miss Tremayne’s death?”

“She met *him*,” said the old woman, nodding at the wall nearest the house. “I know nothing more. But there is a curse upon this house, which brings agony and woe to all who live in it.”

I looked at the crone with aroused curiosity. Was my conjecture right, and was she, too, a victim to some form of mental aberration? It was likely enough. There is contagion in insanity, and it might be that the lonely life led by a woman of her age, whose constant employment was speculation upon a mystery in another’s life, had rendered her also a monomaniac. I felt a sudden repulsion to the house and its belongings. The old woman had no coherent tale to tell; and if she had? The atmosphere seemed hot with the breath of madmen. I paid a hurried visit to Beatrice, saddled my horse myself, and galloped into the town. I felt that I must have a few hours of commonplace life, or I, too, might become the sport of those unseen agencies which take up their abodes in pampered bodies and neglected minds.

CHAPTER VII.

SOOTHED and sustained by a night's rest in the unromantic precincts of the Club, I returned to Castle Stuart with all the cobwebs swept out of my brain, and with a positive professional delight at the prospect of the cure of Major Molineux.

I found my poor friend anxiously awaiting my arrival, and, so soon as lunch was disposed of, he drew me aside.

"I have felt an inexpressible relief," he said, "since I revealed to you my fearful trouble, and something like hope begins to light up the darkness within."

"That is a good symptom," said I; "and now we will have a little physical history to follow upon the mental one."

I asked him a series of questions upon his general health, and found, as I expected, that he had been for years a stranger to anything like regularity of life. He ate when he pleased and what he fancied, walked but little, and would often sit for a day together without moving from the table where he pursued his physiological studies. He was emaciated in body, but of late, and as his malady had progressed, he had become more and more addicted to the use of large quantities of animal food, with which he drank weak brandy and water.

"I find," said he, "that I grow less and less able to eat vegetables or bread without experiencing serious inconvenience, not merely as regards indigestion, but as concerns the extent and pressure of that which I know to be a delusion of the brain."

"Of course," I replied, with that wisdom which doctors affect when they are at fault for a diagnosis;

“the normal condition of things in the body is changed when certain substances are taken into it; and, in certain other conditions of it, moreover, there are produced within it organic products which affect the organs of the senses and interfere with their functions. Indian hemp, opium, and a thousand other substances, have the power to set to sleep some senses and open others, while—and this I suspect is at the bottom of your sorrows—some abnormal condition of things within has set you astray as to your relations to things without.”

“Then you think,” cried the poor man, almost joyfully, “that I am not necessarily diseased in brain?”

“Necessarily? No. The body of a man is a mere bundle of organs for condensing external facts, as says a writer with whom I hope by-and-bye to make you acquainted. The man has a hearing organ, a seeing organ, and so on. In each organ there is a receiving nervous surface; from this surface, leading into the man, is a communicating nervous cord; while, at the end of this cord, is a nervous centre, which takes up the impression conveyed and makes it part of the individual’s experience.”

“And mischief may be present anywhere and in any of these parts?”

“Exactly. But to lay the finger of science on the particular part is often impossible. The surface, the cord, or the centre may be to blame, and we thus pass, at a bound, from the merest physical investigation into a psychological speculation of the most intricate and uncertain nature.”

Major Molineux cast a wistful glance at Val Belmont and the rest.

“But is it not possible for science to reason with something like certainty in such matters? The

universe is governed by fixed laws. Fixed laws rule the bodily and mental health of man. I have twenty times calculated the chances of the periodical return of my malady. An astronomer can as accurately calculate the return of a passing world. Anatomy has laid open to us all the secrets of the human machine. Is there none, then, who can penetrate into this poor body and pluck forth the heart of its mystery?"

He spoke with eagerness, but without passion; and as I saw him there, and recalled his awful doom, I felt my heart throb with a pity which swallowed up, once and for ever, all other feelings.

"Dear Major Molineux, dear friend," I said, "science cannot do what you ask. See, here," and I drew down a chart of the nervous system, which was affixed in its box to the wall. "Here are the nerves which emanate from the brain, and which are under the control of the will. Here are the ganglionic nerves, which are not under the control of the will. See how all the great vital organs depend upon these last for the performance of their functions. And these ganglionic organs tell us nothing. The heart beats, the lungs breathe, the stomach digests, but we take no note of their motions. It is only when these organs are *diseased* that we become conscious of their existence. A reflex action now begins. Sense on soul and soul on sense, discussing, arguing, disputing. The body is slowly informed of the capacities of the mind: the mind gradually takes upon itself the functions of the body. See here, here, here—these myriads of glands, each working under the influence of the nerves distributed to them. Each filament, each follicle participates in the general disorder and a chain of morbid association between mental and corporeal organs, binds mind to body—a chain the woven links of which are inter-twisted beyond human skill to loose. You ask me to

show you the heart of your mystery; as well ask me to show you Thought made visible."

"And yet these men," said the Major, glancing at his shelves, "more than half believed that among the many forces of great nature was one—supreme, eternal—which, in its varying shape, was health, air, gold, love, jealousy and death."

"Others besides your mystics," said I, "have recognised such a force, but they have given it a name. So far as man is concerned, there are in him two distinct manifestations of this force—the Will and the Intellect. Will is instinctive and unwearied; Intellect is reflective and fatigable. But the Intellect is as a bridle to the Will, and sometimes it happens that Will takes the bit in its teeth and runs away. Then takes place something like that of which you complain, and the mere instinctive and animal part of the man assumes sole control of his personality. Is this Madness? If the deliberative faculties cannot regain the mastery over the executive faculties—yes."

"No," said Major Molineux; "if such a force exists, Madness and Sanity are but terms. We are all parts of one great whole, and discord is impossible. Nay, that which seems discord may be harmony, and my awful sufferings a necessary part of the universal joy. Yet why should I bear this burden? I am not a wicked man. Heaven is my witness that I have lived uprightly according to my lights. Why am I singled out from all my fellow-men to be the subject of so fearful an outrage? If my body has sinned, let it be punished; but why make sport of my intellect, and leave God-like reason at the mercy of the basest part of man?"

He walked up and down as he spoke, and I watched him with increased interest. He had evidently thrown off the mask, and was speaking in his real character.

The genial *militaire*, the entertaining host, the learned mathematician, the well-read physiologist—these were mere characters assumed by him as garments of disguise. The real man was before me—no longer calm, courteous, and self-restrained, but fevered with suffering, and wild with undefined anxiety. This man interested in the speculations of Holland or Van Holst, the discoveries of Laplace, and the philosophy of Newton! The wide world held for him but one subject—the maddening speculation on his own madness.

“We have talked long enough this evening,” said I, “and Rochford will be here to bid us goodbye directly. Calm yourself, and receive him with your wonted ease.”

He grasped my hand convulsively, and after a few moments' silence, resumed, in a less high-strung tone, “I will be calm, Doctor. I always try to be so. But is it not terrible, this fight between a strong Will and a flagging Intellect? And each mysteriously helps the other, for I feel that if for an instant I relax my determination to be sane, at that instant I shall become a raging madman. Did we live in olden times one would say that an angel and a devil were fighting for my soul.

He fell back on the sofa with a faint laugh, and, at the same moment, Rochford entered hurriedly. “Major,” he said, “forgive me for disturbing your chat, but Beatrice has given signs of consciousness.”

The young girl's name recalled us both to present surroundings.

“Go to her at once, Fayre,” said Major Molineux; “I am tired, and shall seek rest. Remember, the house is as your own, Rochford, and do not scruple to use it.”

"When did it happen?" I asked, as we ascended the stairs.

"About ten minutes since. Her mother was watching her, when suddenly the child opened her eyes and said, 'Agnes!'"

"The name of Miss Tremayne. I confess you somewhat surprise me. I should have expected that any remark she might have made would have been in reference to the accident. I wonder if she regained consciousness earlier, and unknown to you?"

"I was asleep," said Mrs. Rochford, "nearly all last night, and I certainly fancied when I awoke that Beatrice had slightly changed her position, but there was no other sign of increased vitality, and I dismissed the matter from my mind."

I raised Miss Rochford on her pillows, and took her hand. The fingers closed on mine, and a faint smile passed over her lips.

"You are right," I said; "she is conscious. The greatest care is now required. No noise, no conversation; above all, no sudden excitement. This is the most critical period in a case like hers."

I remained for some time in the apartment, and persuaded Rochford to stop the night. We passed an agreeable *tête-à-tête*, and on the next day had the satisfaction to find that the invalid was growing steadily convalescent. In the afternoon Major Molineux made his appearance. He was in unusually good spirits, and told me that he had felt better than he had done for many a day.

"Whether it is your medicine or your society, doctor, which has so benefited me, I don't know, but I feel a new man."

We expressed our congratulation, and the Major surprised us both by stating that he had determined

to visit the village of Green Ponds, where he had an estate.

"Do you know," said he, "that I have been going through my banker's book and looking up some land valuations, and I find that I am worth more than ninety thousand pounds."

"And what do you intend to do with it?" asked Rochford, lighting his cigar. "Some fortunate relative in England, I suppose."

"By no means," said Major Molineux. "I have left it to your daughter."

There could be, of course, no further discussion after so startling a statement, and I hastened to change the subject by suggesting that a sojourn of two or three days at Green Ponds would assist the cure which had been so happily begun.

"You have lived too long here," I said. "This house is gloomy, and you know every tree and shrub by heart. There is nothing like change of scene. Each object brings with it new associations, and opens up new trains of thought. Take my advice."

"I will," said Major Molineux, cheerily. "I feel benefited already by the mere thoughts of the journey. May I see Miss Beatrice before I go?"

Rochford looked at me for a reply. I had rather that she had not been disturbed, but, after the magnificent avowal of the legacy, it would seem churlish to have refused.

"You may, but for a moment only," I said. "You will forgive me, but it is important that her newly-recovered intelligence should be allowed healthy sleep after its enforced fainting fit."

Together we mounted to the room. Beatrice was breathing regularly, and her eyes were closed in peaceful slumber.

"Poor girl," said Major Molineux. "She was a great favourite with my little Agnes," and, leaning over the bed, he touched the forehead of the sleeper with his lips.

An astonishing, and, to me, unaccountable, change took place in the features and conduct of the invalid. Her face flushed crimson red, she opened her eyes, and, raising herself to a sitting posture, stared wildly about her. At sight of Major Molineux, she fell back as though life had suddenly left her.

"Some ugly dream, perhaps, has disturbed her," said I, "and the touch of your lips brought about the imagined catastrophe. She will soon recover."

In effect, so soon as Rochford and our host had withdrawn from the room, Beatrice revived; tears rolled from beneath her eyelids and she feebly sought for my hand, holding it fast in hers, as though clinging to some saving stay

"I was wrong to have admitted him," I said to Mrs. Rochford. "I should have remembered that your daughter had always a dislike to him." Low as were the tones in which I spoke, Beatrice must have heard and understood them, for she increased the pressure of her slender fingers on mine. "He visits Green Ponds to-day," I continued, "and, at my persuasion, will stay a day or two there; so that he is not likely to alarm us again, however foolish we may be." As I concluded my sentence, Beatrice released my hand with a sigh of relief.

That sigh betokened much that was unpleasant to my self-love. From the moment when I had seen her life in danger I had confessed to myself that I had loved her. It is true that I was almost old enough to be her father, but love is a passion which takes no thought of years, and my affection had sensibly

increased with my prolonged attendance on her. I had saved her life, and it would seem as if that life belonged to me, and I might hope, in the future, to bend it to my will. The glance of her eyes, the smile on her lip, the pressure of her hand, seemed, I thought, to indicate that she, in her inmost heart, owned a feeling for me warmer than friendship. But the instant relaxation of the muscles at the mention of the Major's absence showed me that she had besought my attention merely to shield her against some threatened danger. Her unreasoning dislike to Major Molineux had returned at the sight of him, and she wanted me near her only because she imagined that I would prevent a repetition of his visit.

Nevertheless, I did not despair of winning her, and, taking my hat, went in search of Rochford. He knew my position and my prospects. The island in which he lived, lovely though its climate and scenery might be, was not a place where he would be likely to meet with a better match than myself for his daughter, despite the difference in our ages. Captain Rochford was not rich. He had often told me that his yearly income never amounted to more than £700 a year, and—I suddenly stopped. I had forgotten the statement made by Major Molineux concerning the disposition of his fortune. Beatrice Rochford, with £90,000 dowry, might choose, even in London, among men of rank and estate. It was impossible, moreover, that I should, after hearing the promise concerning the legacy, go to the father of the heiress and ask for her hand. I should appear a mercenary adventurer, whose unblushing conduct was dictated by the meanest motives.

The position was embarrassing. Now that I clearly perceived that Beatrice Rochford was beyond my reach, my love for her grew more intense. I could put away the thought of her so long as I knew that she was near

me, and that there was, at least, a possibility of my being able to win her for closer companionship. But now I realised that I must think of her no more. I began to suffer the pangs of sudden remorseful jealousy. "Why had I not spoken earlier? Why had I not, at least, allowed Rochford to have guessed at my feelings?" And this misfortune had come upon me by the act of the man upon whose behalf I had assumed a responsibility that darkened my waking hours, and bid fair to cause me profound mental disturbance. What could have induced Major Molineux to become generous so abruptly? Angry with myself and circumstances, I resolved to put an end to this state of suspense. I would return at once to India, and, in the meantime, would see Beatrice as little as possible.

"Rochford," I said, after dinner, "I have received letters from Calcutta which I have too long neglected. I must return forthwith."

"You are sudden in your determination," said Rochford, with a slightly wounded air.

"I should have mentioned it before, but the precarious condition of Miss Rochford forbade my inflicting on you any inconvenience. She has now recovered consciousness, and, with careful nursing, needs small medical attendance.

"Well," said Rochford, "we shall be all sorry to lose you—Beatrice, especially, I know—but a man of talent cannot be expected to spend his days in an out-of-the-way nook like this."

It was on the tip of my tongue to say that I should ask nothing better than such a fate under certain conditions; but I thought of the £90,000, and was silent.

The next day I went to Hobart to make preparations for departure, and found that it would be impossible

for me to leave for at least three weeks. I resolved, however, that I would not spend that time in the society of the Rochfords, but make one of a fishing party to the south-west coast of the island.

I was prevented from going by the following circumstance, which I simply record here without any speculation as to how it came about or what induced it.

On Thursday evening, the second day after I had left Castle Stuart, I was playing a rubber of whist in the card-room of the Club, when I felt someone touch me on the left shoulder. I turned round, and saw no one. Somewhat puzzled, I commenced to deal, when I heard a sharp sound, as if produced by the swish of a descending whip, and the cards were—so it seemed—struck from my hands. I raised my eyes, and, over my partner's head, I saw the face of Beatrice Rochford, floating as though in air. The lips were almost blue, and the wildly-sweeping hair framed a face of waxen pallor. The eyes—those wonderful eyes into which I had so often gazed—were alone alive, and they were fixed on me with an expression of imploring agony. Muttering some incoherent excuse, I hurried from the table, ordered out my horse, and galloped down the road to New Norfolk.

I had no doubt whatever then, and I have none now—I have already said that I do not intend to speculate upon the peculiarity of the case—that I was summoned to witness a catastrophe of some kind. I was not prepared for that which awaited me at Castle Stuart. The house was lit in the whole of the upper front, and there were lights moving about the lower rooms. Rochford himself took my horse.

“I had some instinct that you would come. Go upstairs.”

I went straight to Beatrice's room, and found her dead.

But death, in its mercy, usually leaves, for the last look of the sorrowing survivors, composed features and restful eyelids. Miss Rochford's body was rigid. Her hands were clenched and her eyes wide open, while that once lovely face was deformed with an expression of such supernatural horror that I could not glance at it again.

"How did this happen?" said I, to the mumbling and shivering Pennithorne, who had been set by Rochford on guard at the door, with strict orders not to let the bereaved mother see the fearful sight within.

"Why didn't you take her away?" she said, mopping and mowing in her usual fashion. "I told you what would happen. She has seen him."

My blood ran cold.

"Has the Major returned?"

"He returned last night, and kept his room all day as usual. We left Miss Rochford for a few minutes, and when we came back she was like you saw her, and *this* was on the table."

She gave me an unopened letter, addressed to myself, in Major Molineux's handwriting. Without waiting to inspect its contents, I crossed the corridor and made my way direct to the Major's bedroom. He was lying on his face on the floor—dead, and standing on the table was an empty two-ounce phial, and an empty wine-glass.

Hastily I tore open the letter. It was written in a firm, bold hand, and evidently intended to be read by other eyes than mine. It was, in fact, Major Molineux's last effort to keep from the world's knowledge the fact that his mental life had in it anything to conceal.

“Castle Stuart,

“24th Nov., 1835.

“MY DEAR DOCTOR FAYRE,—My mind is so unhinged by long suffering, that I have at length determined on committing suicide. I have left the whole of my property, save some small legacies, to Miss Beatrice Rochford. Turner and Thompson have the will, and I have written to them to come to Castle Stuart so soon as my letter is received. Keep my keys in your possession until their arrival, and then deliver to them my effects. They will settle all my accounts. I wish you health and happiness.

“I am, yours truly,

“J. MOLINEUX.”

CHAPTER VIII.

AN inquest was held the following day and I stated as much of the foregoing history as I thought desirable.

It was clear that, if a verdict of *felo-de-se* was returned, the will would be set aside and the immense fortune forfeited to the Crown.

I repeated in brief the account of the late Major's malady, saying that he was subject to a delusion of a nature which I could not reveal, which seized him on every Thursday, and that during that time I did not consider him responsible for his actions. The whole city was aware of his peculiar conduct in secluding himself on that day, and the jury returned, by direction, a verdict of “temporary insanity.”

Twenty-seven hours after death an examination was held by the doctor of the regiment, a resident surgeon, and myself, the result of which I carefully preserved.

The emaciation was considerable. The deceased having fallen on his face, there were marks of contusion on his left temple. The body exhaled an odour of prussic acid. The eye did not present any particular appearance. The stomach was remarkably capacious, and the contents were set aside for analysis. In some parts of the mucous membrane of this organ, especially near the upper and inferior orifices, there were marks of recent inflammation, particularly in stellated patches, where slight marks of extravasation were visible. In several portions of the small intestines the external hue was dark, almost approaching to livid, and the mucous membrane of these portions was vividly or darkly red, but without extravasation or perceptible injection of the vessels. The large intestines exhibited no marks of disease of any kind, and the liver, spleen, mesentery, kidneys, and abdominal viscera were all perfectly sound.

Before a knife was laid on the body I expressed a wish that the ganglionic centres might be carefully examined, as I conceived that perhaps some irritation of the nerves of organic life played an important part in the phenomena exhibited by the patient. The solar plexus was therefore minutely investigated, but nothing abnormal was perceptible.

In the thorax there was great and varied disease. The lungs were studded with tubercles, especially the superior lobes, and extensive adhesions existed between the pleuræ-costales and the pleuræ-pulmonales. None of the tubercles had broken down so as to discharge their contents through the bronchial tubes.

The heart was not larger than usual, but the pericardium was universally adherent. The organ itself presented one of the finest specimens of "simple hypertrophy" which I have ever seen. The parietes of the left ventricle were an inch and a quarter in

thickness, and the cavity was with difficulty discovered. It could not have contained four drachms of blood, if so much, scarcely a third of that which a healthy left ventricle would be capable of throwing off at each contraction. There was nothing abnormal in the arteries, and the blood in every part of the body was perfectly fluid.

The brain was large and remarkably firm, the vessels rather congested, but there was no visible trace of disease in the head. The skull was of unusual thickness and density.

And now comes the most remarkable part of the pathology. Upon the pneumo-gastric, or *vagus* nerve of the left side, just before the re-current is given off, there was affixed a hard, jagged body, the size of a kidney bean, composed of calcareous matter, and, probably, a diseased bronchial gland, converted into this substance. The union of the nerve and the ragged mass was so intimate that no dissection, without cutting the nerve or the calcareous matter itself, could separate them. The foreign body had, in fact, penetrated, or at least invaded, the nerve, which was thickened at this part. Lower down, and involving the cardiac, pulmonic and œsophageal plexuses in a labyrinth of perplexity, were several diseased bronchial glands, rendering the dissection a tedious and difficult operation.

When we consider that the Vagus nerve rises in the medulla oblongata, and is distributed chiefly to the great organs not under our control, and that it communicates with almost all the ganglionic nerves, we can form some idea of the disturbance produced in the system by a jagged calcareous mass implanted, as it were, in one of the most important nerves of the great vital viscera. It will be noticed that the majority of the organs to which the pneumo-gastric nerve

distributes its functions were found changed in structure or disordered in function. The state of the heart probably accounted for the great emaciation, combined with the incessant craving for animal food, while the fact that it could not circulate more than one-third the usual quantity of blood through the lungs, must have produced deficient sanguification in the pulmonary apparatus whatever was the amount of digestion. Diseases of the heart are very apt to affect the brain, and my colleagues and myself agreed that dissection showed that the mental functions were disturbed by physical changes, and that the monomania in this instance, as probably in many others, was dependent on corporeal rather than moral causes.

I followed to the grave the remains of the lovely girl I had once thought to make my wife, and a few weeks afterwards quitted Hobart Town, and I have never revisited it.

The mystery of Major Molineux has now been told—at least as much as can be told without violating a confidence which I even now hold sacred. There are many points in this strange and dreadful history which I cannot attempt to explain. The periodicity of the attack is one of these; the exact relation which the injury to the nervous system bore to the peculiarly horrible form which the delusion assumed is another. The *Par vagum* are the agents of communication between the mind and matter of a man, between his soul and his body, and their derangement would affect both spirit and flesh. How, I cannot say. Nor dare I speculate on the dread question why Providence permitted a poor wretch to endure tortures incomparable even among the torments of the heathen's fabled hell, and that without a particle of moral guilt.

HUMAN REPETENDS.

HUMAN REPETENDS.

By MARCUS CLARKE.

WE had returned from a "Seance," and were discussing that which every one discusses without being anything the wiser—the future of the soul.

"Come," I cried at last, "our thinly-clad intellects will take cold if we venture so far up the mountain. Let us hasten to take refuge at the fireside of the great DON'T KNOW."

"Ay," said Hylton, the surgeon, "it is best. The secrets of the grave are in safe keeping. Who has held parley with one risen from the dead?"

"You are sure, then, that the spirits of the dead do not re-visit us?" asked the sad voice of Pontifex, from out the gloom.

"Ay, as sure as of anything in this unstable world. But *you* are no convert to the 'spiritualistic' doctrine. You are no believer in the ghost of Benjamin Franklin's small clothes."

"I speak of spirits clad in flesh—ghosts who live and move amongst us—ghosts who, tenants of bodies like our own, mingle in the practical life of a methodical age, fulfilling a destiny, in the accomplishment of which some of us, all unwittingly, may be involved."

"What do you mean, man?" asked Hylton, frowning down an involuntary stare of alarm.

“Did you never meet one of these embodied ghosts?” said Pontifex. “Have you never, when dining in a public room or walking in a crowd, been conscious of the presence of something evil? Have you not known men, whose voice, silence, attitude, gait, feature, gave token of crime undetected? These are the ghosts of our modern day. They are with us, but not of us. We turn to look after them, and yet avoid them, or meeting them, shrink from contact, shuddering we know not why.”

“Pontifex,” I cried, urged to utterance by the tones of the speaker, “we have all known that you have a story. Tell it to us to-night.”

The young man fixed his hollow eyes upon the fire and laughed low.

“I have a story, and I will tell it to you, if you like, for the occasion is a fitting one. Listen.

“Most men, however roughly the world has used them, can recall a period in their lives when they were absolutely happy, when each night closed with the recollection of new pleasures tasted, when the progress of each day was cheered by the experience of unlooked-for novelties, and when the awakening to another dawn was a pure physical delight, unmarred by those cankering anxieties for the fortune of the hour which are the burden of the poor, the ambitious and the intriguing. To most men, also, this golden time comes, when the cares of a mother, or the coquettish attention of sisters, aid to shield the young and eager soul from the blighting influences of worldly debaucheries. Thrice fortunate is he among us who can look back on a youth spent in the innocent enjoyments of the country, or who possesses a mind moulded in its adolescence by the cool fingers of well-mannered and pious women.

“My first initiation into the business of living took place under different auspices. The only son of a rich widower, who lived but for the gratification of a literary and political ambition, I was thrown, when still a boy, into the society of men thrice my age, and was tolerated as a clever impertinent in all those witty and wicked circles in which virtuous women are conspicuous by their absence. My father lived indifferently in Paris, or London, and, patronised by the dandies, artists, and scribblers who form, in both cities, the male world of fashionable idleness, I was suffered at sixteen to ape the vices of sixty. Indeed, so long as I was reported to be moving only in that set to which my father chose to ally himself, he never cared to inquire how I spent the extravagant allowance which his indifference rather than his generosity permitted me to waste. You can guess the result of such a training. The admirer of men whose successes in love and play were the theme of common talk for six months; the worshipper of artists whose genius was to revolutionise Europe—only they died of late hours and tobacco; the pet of women whose daring beauty made their names famous—for three years; I discovered, at twenty years of age, that the pleasurable path I had trodden so gaily led to a hospital or a debtor’s prison, that love meant money, friendship, an endorsement on a bill, and that the rigid exercise of a profound and calculating selfishness alone rendered tolerable a life at once so deceitful and barren. In this view of the world I was supported by those middle-aged Mephistopheles (survivors of the storms which had wrecked so many argosies), those cynical, well-bred worshippers of self, who realise in the nineteenth century that notion of the devil which was invented by the early Christians. With these good gentlemen I lived; emulating their cynicism,

rivalling their sarcasms, and neutralising the superiority which their existence gave them, by the exercise of that potentiality for present enjoyment which is the privilege of youth.

“In this society I was progressing rapidly to destruction, when an event occurred which rudely saved me. My father died suddenly in London, and, to the astonishment of the world, left—nothing. His expenditure had been large, but, as he left no debts, his income must have been proportioned to his expenses. The source of this income, however, was impossible to discover. An examination of his banker’s book showed only that large sums (always in notes or gold) had been lodged and drawn upon, but no record of speculations or of investments could be found among his papers. My relatives stared, shook their heads, and insulted me with their pity. The sale of furniture, books, plate, and horses brought enough to pay the necessary expenses of the funeral, and leave me heir to some £800. My friends of the smoking-room and the supper-table philosophised on Monday, cashed my I.O.U.’s on Tuesday, were satirical on Wednesday, and ‘cut’ me on Thursday. My relatives said that ‘something must be done,’ and invited me to stay at their houses until that vague substantiality should be realised. One suggested a clerkship in the War Office; another a stool in a banking-house; while a third generously offered to use his interest at head-quarters to procure for me a commission in a marching regiment. Their offers were generously made, but, *then*, stunned by the rude shock of sudden poverty, and with a mind debauched by a life of extravagance and selfishness, I was incapable of manly action. To all proposals I replied with sullen disdain; and, desirous only of avoiding those who had known me in my prosperity, I avowed my

resolution of claiming my inheritance and vanishing to America.

“A young man, with money and a taste for *bric-à-brac*, soon gathers about him a strange collection of curiosities, and at the sale of my possessions I was astonished to find how largely I had been preyed upon by the Jews, print-sellers, picture-dealers, and vendors of spurious antiques. The ‘valuable paintings,’ the curious ‘relics,’ the inlaid and be-jewelled ‘arms,’ and the rare ‘impressions’ of old prints were purchased by the ‘trade’ for a third of the price which I had paid for them, doubtless to be re-sold to another man of taste as artless and extravagant as myself. Of the numberless articles which had littered my bachelor-house I retained but three or four of the most portable, which might serve as remembrances of a luxury I never hoped again to enjoy. Among these was a copper-plate engraving, said to be one of the first specimens of that art. The print bore the noted name of Tommaseo Finiguerra, and was dated 1469. It was apparently a copy of a ‘half-length’ portrait of a woman, dressed in the fashion of that age, and holding in her hand a spray of rue. The name of this *grande dame* was not given—indeed, as I need hardly say, the absence of aught but the engraver’s signature constituted the chief value of the print.

“I felt constrained to preserve this purchase, for many reasons. Not only had I, one idle day, ‘discovered’ it, as I imagined, on the back shelves of a print-shop, and regarded it as the prize of my artistic taste; not only had it occupied the place of honour over my mantelshelf, and been a silent witness of many scenes which yet lingered fondly in my memory; not only had I seemed to hold communion with it when, on some lonely evening, I was left to reflect upon the barrenness of my existence, but the face

possessed a charm of expression which, acknowledged by all, had become for me a positive fascination. The original must have been a woman of strange thoughts, and (I fancied) of a strange history. The *posé* of the head was defiant, the compressed lips wore a shadowy smile of disdain, and the eyes—large, full, and shaded by heavy lashes—seemed to look through you, and away from you, with a glance that was at once proud and timid, as though they contemplated and dared some vague terror, of whose superior power they were conscious. We have all, I presume, seen portraits which, by accident or design, bear upon them a startling expression rarely seen upon the face of the original, but which is felt to be a more truthful interpreter of character than is the enforced composure which self-control has rendered habitual. So with the portrait of which I speak. The unknown woman—or girl, for she did not seem to be more than three-and-twenty—revealed, in the wonderful glance with which she had so long looked down upon me, a story of pride, of love, of shame, perhaps of sin. One could imagine that in another instant the horror would fade from those lovely eyes, the smile return to that disdainful lip, and the delicate bosom, which now swelled with that terror which catches the breath and quickens the pulse, would sink into its wonted peacefulness, to rise and fall with accustomed equanimity beneath its concealing laces. But that instant never came. The work of the artist was unchangeable; the soul which looked out of the windows of that lovely body still shuddered with a foreknowledge of the horror which it had expected four hundred years ago.

“I tried in vain to discover the name and history of this strange portrait. The artists or men of taste to whom I applied had neither seen another copy of the print, nor heard of the original painting. It seemed

that the fascinating face had belonged to some nameless one, who had carried with her to the grave the knowledge of whatever mystery had burdened her life on earth. At last, hopeless of discovering the truth, I amused myself by speculating on what might, perchance, have been the history of this unknown beauty. I compared her features with the descriptions left to us of women famous for their sorrows. I invented a thousand wild tales which might account for the look of doom upon her fair face, and at last my excited imagination half induced me to believe that the mysterious print was a forged antique, and represented, in truth, some living woman to whom I had often spoken, and with whom my fortunes were indissolubly connected.

.

“A wickeder lie was never uttered than that favourite statement of colonial politicians—more ignorant or more impudent than others of their class—that in Australia no man need starve who is willing to work. I have been willing to work, and I have absolutely starved for days together. The humiliation through which I passed must, I fancy, be familiar to many. During the first six months of my arrival I was an honorary member of the Melbourne Club, the guest of those officials to whom I brought letters of introduction, the welcomed of South Yarra tea-parties, and the butt of the local *Punch*, on account of the modish cut of my pantaloons. I met men who ‘knew my people,’ and was surprised to find that the mention of a titled friend secured for me considerable attention among the leaders of such second-hand fashion as is boasted by the colony. In this genial atmosphere I recovered my independence.

Indeed, had my social derelictions been worse than those incurred by poverty, I was assured that society would find it in its colonial heart to forgive them all. I was Hugh Pontifex, who had supped with the Marquis of Carabas, and brought letters of introduction from Lord Crabs. Had Judas Iscariot arrived armed with such credentials South Yarra would have auburnised his red hair and had him to dinner. To my surprise, instead of being cast among new faces, and compelled to win for myself an independent reputation, I found that I was among old friends, whom I had long thought dead or in gaol. To walk down Collins-street was like pulling up the Styx. On either side I saw men who had vanished from the Upper World sooner than I. Tomkins was there to explain that queer story of the concealed ace. Jenkins talked to me for an hour concerning the Derby, which ruined him. Hopkins had another wife in addition to the one whom he left at Florence; while Wilkins assured me, on his honour, that he had married the lady with whom he had eloped, and introduced me to her during a dinner party at a trading magnate's. The game was made in the same old fashion, only the stakes were not so high. The porcelain was of the same pattern, only a little cracked.

“For six months life was vastly pleasant. Then my term of honorary membership finally expired, and I left the Club to live at Scott's. By-and-bye my money ran short. I drew a bill on England, and the letter which informed me of its payment contained a stern command to draw no more. I went on a visit to the ‘station’ of an acquaintance, and, on returning to town, found that my hotel bill was presented weekly. I retired into cheaper lodgings, and became affiliated to a less aristocratic club. Forced to associate with men of another set, I felt that my first

friends remembered to forget me. My lampooned trousers began to wear out, and I wondered how I could have been once so reckless in the purchase of boots. I applied to Wilkins for a loan, then to Tomkins and Hopkins. I found that I could not repay them, and so avoided those streets where they were to be met. I discarded gloves, and smoked a short pipe publicly at noon-day. I removed to a public-house, and, talking with my creditor-landlord at night, not unfrequently drank much brandy. I discovered that it is possible to be drunk before dinner. I applied for a clerkship, a messengership, a 'billet' in the Civil Service; I went on the stage as a 'super,' I went up the country as a schoolmaster, I scribbled for the newspapers, I wrote verses for the Full and Plenty eating-house. I starved in 'genteel' poverty until fortune luckily put me in the way of prosperity by suggesting coach-driving and billiard-marking. Thanks to an education at a public school, a licensed youth, a taste for pleasure, and the society of the 'best men about London,' I found myself, at three-and-twenty, master of two professions, driving and billiard-playing. You will understand now that my digression concerning pictures was necessary to convince you that all this time I never sold the mysterious print.

"One Sunday evening, towards the end of August, when the windy winter had not yet begun to melt into sudden and dusty spring, I was walking up Bourke-street. All you folks who have made a study of Melbourne city know what a curious appearance the town presents on a Sunday evening. The deserted road, barren of all vehicles save a passing cab, serves as a promenade for hundreds of servant-maids, shod boys, and idlers, while the pavement is crowded with young men and women of the lower middle class, who, under pretence of 'going to church,' or of 'smoking

a cigar,' contrive to indulge their mutual propensities for social enjoyment, Those sewing-girls who, at six o'clock in the evening, are to be nightly seen debouching from Flinders-lane or Collins-street, frequent these Sunday evening promenades, and, in all the pride of clean petticoats and kid gloves, form fitting companions for the holiday-making barbers or soft-goods clerks, who, daring rakes! seek a weekly intrigue in the *Peacock* on the unsavoury strength of a 'Sunday' cigar. Examining these groups as I walked, I found myself abreast of Nissen's Café, impeding the egress of a lady. I turned with an apology, but the words melted on my lips when, beneath the black bonnet of the stranger, *I found the counterpart of my unknown print.*

"For an instant surprise rendered me incapable of action, and then, with a beating heart and bewildered brain, I followed the fleeting figure. She went down Bourke-street, and turned to the left into Swanston-street. When she reached the corner where the Town Hall now stands, a man suddenly crossed the moonlit street and joined her. This man was wrapped in one of those Inverness cloaks which the slowly travelling fashion of the day had then made imperative to the well-being of the Melbourne dandies. A slouch hat of the operative brigand type shaded his face, but, in the brief glance that I caught of him, I fancied that I recognised those heavy brows, that blunt nose, and that thin and treacherous mouth. The two met, evidently by appointment, and went onward together. It was useless to follow. I turned and went home.

"I passed the next day in a condition of mind which it is impossible to describe. So strange a coincidence as this had surely never happened to man before. A woman has her portrait engraved in the

year 1469; I purchase the engraving, try in vain to discover the original, and meet her face to face in the prosaic Melbourne of 1863. I longed for night to come, that I might wander through the streets in search of her. I felt a terrible yearning tug at my heartstrings. I burned to meet her wild, sad eyes again. I shuddered when I thought that, in my wildest dreams, I had never sunk that pictured face so deep beneath the social waters as this incarnation of it seemed to have been plunged. For two nights I roamed the streets in vain. On the morning of the third day a paragraph in the *Herald* explained why my search had been fruitless. The body of a woman had been 'found in the Yarra.' Society—especially unmarried society—has, as a matter of course, its average of female suicides, and, as a rule, respectable folks don't hear much about them. The case of this unfortunate girl, however, was different. She was presumed to have been murdered, and the police made investigations. The case is sufficiently celebrated in the annals of Melbourne crime to excuse a repetition of details. Suffice it to say that, against the many persons who were presumed to be inculpated in the destruction of the poor girl, no proof was forthcoming. The journals aired Edgar Poe and the 'Mystery of Marie Roget' for a day or so, but no one was sent for trial, and an open verdict left the detectives at liberty to exercise their ingenuity without prejudice. There was some rumour of a foreigner being implicated in the deed, but as the friends of the poor outcast knew of no such person, and as my evidence as to seeing a man of such appearance join the deceased was, in reality, of little value (for I was compelled to admit that I had never seen the woman before in my life, and that my glimpse of her companion was but momentary), the supposition was treated with con-

tempt, and the 'case' dismissed from the memory of the public.

"It did not fade so easily from my mind. To speak the truth, indeed, I was haunted by the hideous thing which I had been sent to 'view' upon the coarse table of that wretched deadhouse which then disgraced our city. The obscure and cruel fate of the unhappy woman, whose portrait had so long looked down upon me, filled me not only with horror but with apprehension. It seemed to me as if I myself was implicated in her fate, and bound to avenge her murder. The fact of my having speculated so long upon her fortunes, and then having found her but to lose her, without a word having passed between us, appeared to give me the right to seek to know more of her. The proud queen of many a fantastic dream-revel: the sad chatelaine of many an air-built castle: had this portrait leapt to life beneath my glances, as bounded to earth the nymph from beneath the chisel of Pygmalion? Had the lost one, who passed me like a ghost in the gloaming, come out of the grave in which they had placed her four hundred years ago? What meant this resurrection of buried beauty? What was the mysterious portent of this living presentment of a dead and forgotten sin? I saw the poor creature buried. I wept—no unmanly tears, I trust—over her nameless grave. And then I learned her history. 'Twas no romance, unless the old story of a broken home and the cold comfort of the stony-hearted streets may be called romantic. She was presumed to have been well born—she had been a wife—her husband had left her—she was beautiful and poor—for the rest, ask Mother Carey, who deals in chickens. She can tell you entertaining histories of fifty such.

“At the inquest I met Warrend—you remember old Tom, Hylton?—and he sought me out and took me home with him. We had been schoolfellows; but although my taste for prints and pictures had now and then brought me into his company, I had seen but little of him. He was—as we know him—kindly, tender, and generous. He offered me his help. He was in good practice, and could afford to give me shelter beneath his bachelor roof. He wrote for the *Argus*; knew the editor, would try and procure work for me. That meeting laid the foundation of such independence as I now claim. Shaken in health by my recent privations, and troubled in mind by the horrible and inexplicable mystery upon which I seemed to have stumbled, I was for some weeks seriously ill. Warrend saw that something preyed upon my spirits, and pressed me to unbosom myself. I told him the story and produced the print.

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“I must beg your grace for what I am about to tell you. You may regard the story as unworthy of credit, or sneer at it as the result of a ‘coincidence.’ It is simply true, for all that.

.

“Warrend became grave.

“‘I have a copy of that print,’ said he, in a tone altogether without the pride usual in a collector. ‘I think a unique copy. It is the portrait of a woman round whose life a mystery spun itself. See here.’

“He opened the portfolio, and took out the engraving. It was an exact copy of mine, but was a proof after letters, and bore, in the quaint characters of the time, the name, *Jehanne La Gaillarde*.

“I fell back upon the sofa as if I had been struck in the face. The name of the poor girl whom I had buried was Jenny Gay.

“‘Warrend,’ said I, ‘there is something unholy about this. I met, a week ago, the living original of that portrait, and now you, a man whose name re-echoes that of the Italian artist who engraved it, tell me that you know the mystery of her life. What is it, then? for, before you speak, I know *I* figure in the scene.’

“Warrend, or Finiguerra, took from the book-shelf a little book, published by Vander Berghen, of Brussels, in 1775, and handed it to me. It was called *Le Coeur de Jehanne La Gaillarde*, and appeared to be a collection of letters. In the advertisement was a brief memoir of the woman whose face had so long puzzled me. I glanced at it, and turned sick with a nameless terror. Jehanne La Gaillarde was a woman whose romantic amours had electrified the Paris of Louis XI. She was murdered by being thrown into the Seine. ‘All attempts to discover the murderer were vain, but, at length, a young man named Hugues Grandprête, who, though he had never seen the celebrated beauty, had fallen in love with her picture, persuaded himself that the murderer was none other than the Sieur De la Forêt (the husband of the beautiful Jehanne), who, being a man of an ill-life, had been compelled to fly from Paris. Grandprête communicated his suspicions to none but his intimate friends, followed De la Forêt to Padua, and killed him.’ As I read this romance of a man who bore a name which reflected my own, I shuddered, for a sudden thrill of recollection lighted up the darkness of the drama as a flash of lightning illumines the darkness of a thunder-cloud. The face of the man in the cloak was recalled to me as that of a certain gambling lieutenant, who

was cashiered by a court-martial, so notorious that the sun of India and the snows of the Crimea have scarce burned out or covered the memory of his regiment's nickname.

"As Jehanne La Gaillarde was the double of Jenny Gay: as Hugues Grandprête lived again in Hugh Pontifex: as the Italian artist was recalled to life in the person of the man at my side, so Bernhard De la Forêt worked once more his wicked will on earth in the person of the cashiered gambler, Bernard Forrester. If this was a 'coincidence,' it was terribly complete."

"But 'twas a mere coincidence after all," said Hylton, gently. "You do not think men's souls return to earth and enact again the crimes which stained them?"

"I know not. But there are in decimal arithmetic repeated 'coincidences' called *repetends*. Continue the generation of numbers through all time, and you have these repetends for ever recurring. Can you explain this mystery of numbers? No. Neither can I explain the mystery of my life. Good-night. I have wearied you."

"Stay," cried I, rashly; "the parallel is not yet complete. You have not yet met Forrester?"

"No," cried Pontifex, his large eyes blazing with no healthy fire; "I have prayed that I might not meet him. I live here in Melbourne at the seat of his crime because it seems the least likely place again to behold him. If, by accident, in the streets I catch sight of one who resembles him, I hurry away. But I *shall* meet him one day, and then my doom will be upon me, and I shall kill him as I killed him in Padua 400 years ago!"



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In connection with the above an Art-Union Drawing, in accordance with Act Vict. DXXXII., of 50 Prizes, 10,000 Tickets at £1 each, will take place at an early date, to be announced as soon as the tickets are all sold. The very high-class works offered in this Art-Union stamps it as most genuine and deserving of patronage, as the pictures are worthy of any gallery or mansion in the world. They are of the full value of £10,000, and are on view to the press and public as a proof of their value. Offers guaranteed after the drawing:—

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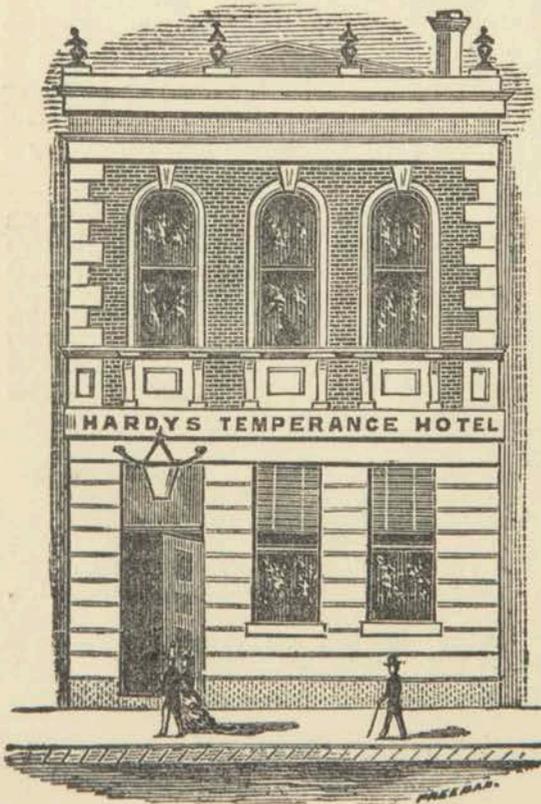
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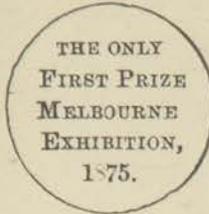
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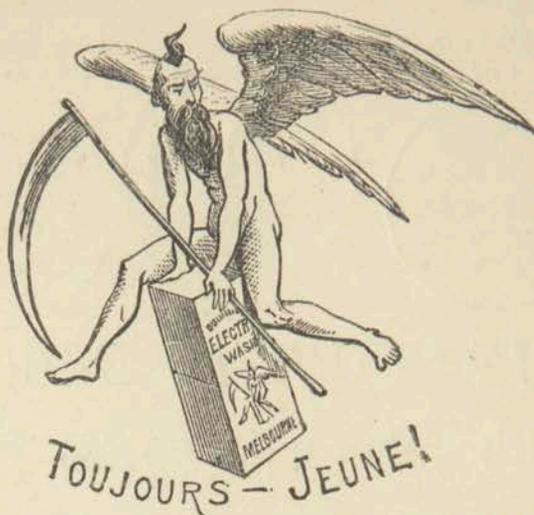
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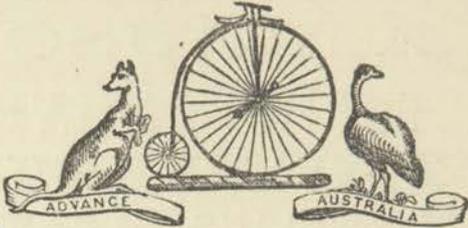
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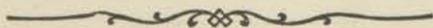
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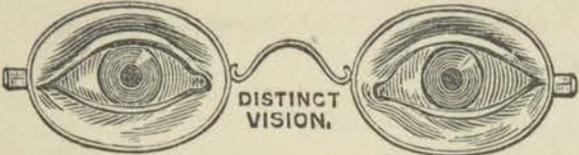


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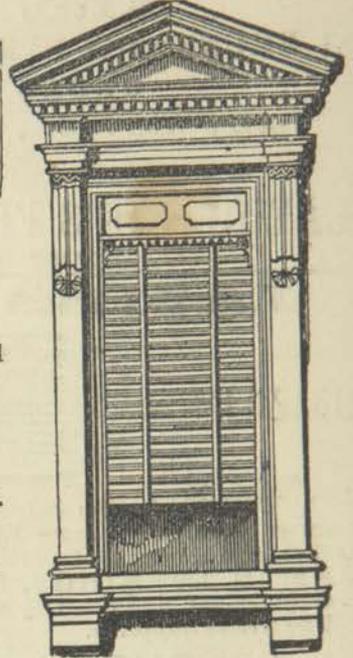
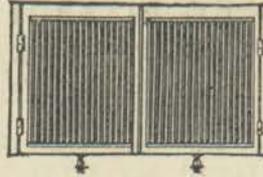
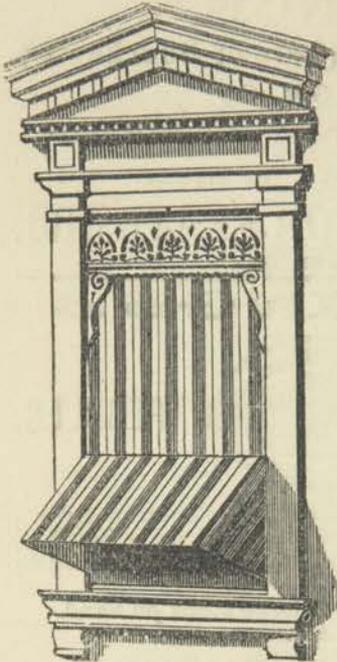
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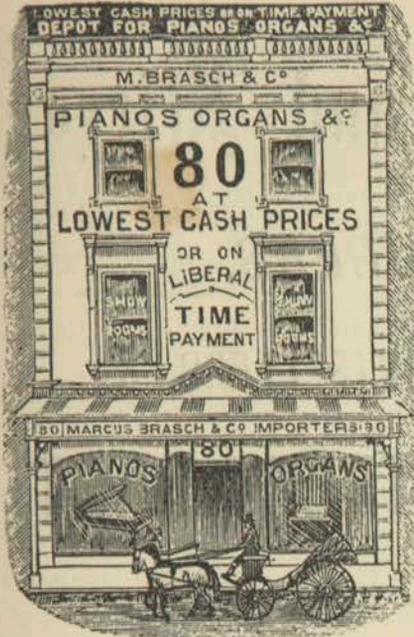
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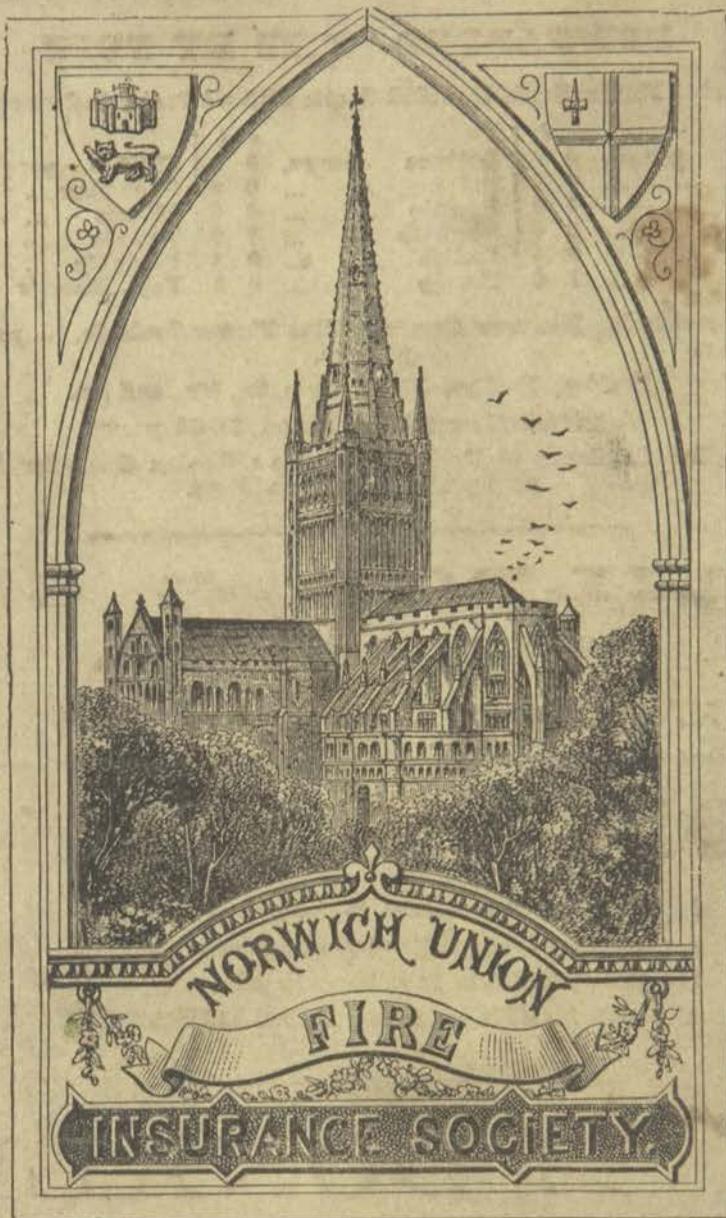
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The SECURITY afforded by this long-established Society is unquestionable, its RATES OF PREMIUM EXCEEDINGLY MODERATE, and its REGULATIONS LIBERAL.

PROMPT SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS.—This Office is distinguished by its Liberality and Promptness in the settlement of Claims, £3,764,000 having been paid to Insurers for losses by fire.

The confidence of the public in the principles and conduct of this establishment is shown by the continuous increase in its business, which now EXCEEDS ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILLIONS STERLING.

OFFICES: 44 QUEEN STREET, MELBOURNE.

E. F. YENCKEN, RESIDENT MANAGER.

