

A STRANGE STORY - VOLUME 5.

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CHAPTER XLI.

The lawyer came the next day, and with something like a smile on his lips. He brought me a few lines in pencil from Mrs. Ashleigh; they were kindly expressed, bade me be of good cheer; "she never for a moment believed in my guilt; Lilian bore up wonderfully under so terrible a trial; it was an unspeakable comfort to both to receive the visits of a friend so attached to me, and so confident of a triumphant refutation of the hideous calumny under which I now suffered as Mr. Margrave!"

The lawyer had seen Margrave again,—seen him in that house. Margrave seemed almost domiciled there!

I remained sullen and taciturn during this visit. I longed again for the night. Night came. I heard the distant clock strike twelve, when again the icy wind passed through my hair, and against the wall stood the luminous Shadow.

"Have you considered?" whispered the voice, still as from afar. "I repeat it,—I alone can save you."

"Is it among the conditions which you ask, in return, that I shall resign to you the woman I love?"

"No."

"Is it one of the conditions that I should commit some crime,—a crime perhaps heinous as that of which I am accused?"

"No."

"With such reservations, I accept the conditions you may name, provided I, in my turn, may demand one condition from yourself."

"Name it."

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"I ask you to quit this town. I ask you, meanwhile, to cease your visits to the house that holds the woman betrothed to me."

"I will cease those visits. And before many days are over, I will quit this town."

"Now, then, say what you ask from me. I am prepared to concede it. And not from fear for myself, but because I fear for the pure and innocent being who is under the spell of your deadly fascination. This is your power over me. You command me through my love for another. Speak."

"My conditions are simple. You will pledge yourself to desist from all charges of insinuation against myself, of what nature soever. You will not, when you meet me in the flesh, refer to what you have known of my likeness in the Shadow. You will be invited to the house at which I may be also a guest; you will come; you will meet and converse with me as guest speaks with guest in the house of a host."

"Is that all?"

"It is all."

"Then I pledge you my faith; keep your own."

"Fear not; sleep secure in the certainty that you will soon be released from these walls."

The Shadow waned and faded. Darkness settled back, and a sleep, profound and calm, fell over me.

The next day Mr. Stanton again visited me. He had received that morning a note from Mr. Margrave, stating that he had left L— to pursue, in person, an investigation which he had already commenced through another, affecting the man who had given evidence against me, and that, if his hope should prove well founded, he trusted to establish my innocence, and convict the real murderer of Sir Philip Derval. In the research he thus volunteered, he had asked for, and obtained, the assistance of the policeman Waby, who, grateful to me for saving the life of his sister, had expressed a strong desire to be employed in my service.

Meanwhile, my most cruel assailant was my old college friend, Richard Strahan. For Jeeves had spread abroad Strahan's charge of purloining the memoir which had been entrusted to me; and that accusation had done me great injury in public opinion, because it seemed to give probability to the only motive which ingenuity could ascribe to the foul deed imputed to me. That motive had been first suggested by Mr. Vigors. Cases are on record of men whose life had been previously blameless, who have committed a crime which seemed to belie their nature, in the monomania of some intense desire. In Spain, a scholar reputed of austere morals murdered

and robbed a traveller for money in order to purchase books,—books written, too, by Fathers of his Church! He was intent on solving some problem of theological casuistry. In France, an antiquary, esteemed not more for his learning than for amiable and gentle qualities, murdered his most intimate friend for the possession of a medal, without which his own collection was incomplete. These, and similar anecdotes, tending to prove how fatally any vehement desire, morbidly cherished, may suspend the normal operations of reason and conscience, were whispered about by Dr. Lloyd's vindictive partisan; and the inference drawn from them and applied to the assumptions against myself was the more credulously received, because of that over-refining speculation on motive and act which the shallow accept, in their eagerness to show how readily they understand the profound.

I was known to be fond of scientific, especially of chemical experiments; to be eager in testing the truth of any novel invention. Strahan, catching hold of the magistrate's fantastic hypothesis, went about repeating anecdotes of the absorbing passion for analysis and discovery which had characterized me in youth as a medical student, and to which, indeed, I owed the precocious reputation I had obtained.

Sir Philip Derval, according not only to report, but to the direct testimony of his servant, had acquired in the course of his travels many secrets in natural science, especially as connected with the healing art,—his servant had deposed to the remarkable cures he had effected by the medicinals stored in the stolen casket. Doubtless Sir Philip, in boasting of these medicinals in the course of our conversation, had excited my curiosity, inflamed my imagination; and thus when I afterwards suddenly met him in a lone spot, a passionate impulse had acted on a brain heated into madness by curiosity and covetous desire.

All these suppositions, reduced into system, were corroborated by Strahan's charge that I had made away with the manuscript supposed to contain the explanations of the medical agencies employed by Sir Philip, and had sought to shelter my theft by a tale so improbable, that a man of my reputed talent could not have hazarded it if in his sound senses. I saw the web that had thus been spread around me by hostile prepossessions and ignorant gossip: how could the arts of Margrave scatter that web to the winds? I knew not, but I felt confidence in his promise and his power. Still, so great had been my alarm for Lilian, that the hope of clearing my own innocence was almost lost in my joy that Margrave, at least, was no longer in her presence, and that I had received his pledge to quit the town in which she lived.

Thus, hours rolled on hours, till, I think, on the third day from that night in which I had last beheld the mysterious Shadow, my door was hastily thrown open, a confused crowd presented itself at the threshold,—the governor of the prison, the police superintendent, Mr. Stanton, and other familiar faces shut out from me since my imprisonment. I knew at the first glance that I was no longer an outlaw beyond the pale

of human friendship. And proudly, sternly, as I had supported myself hitherto in solitude and suspense, when I felt warm hands clasping mine, heard joyous voices proffering congratulations, saw in the eyes of all that my innocence had been cleared, the revulsion of emotion was too strong for me,—the room reeled on my sight, I fainted. I pass, as quickly as I can, over the explanations that crowded on me when I recovered, and that were publicly given in evidence in court next morning. I had owed all to Margrave. It seems that he had construed to my favour the very supposition which had been bruited abroad to my prejudice. "For," said he, "it is conjectured that Fenwick committed the crime of which he is accused in the impulse of a disordered reason. That conjecture is based upon the probability that a madman alone could have committed a crime without adequate motive. But it seems quite clear that the accused is not mad; and I see cause to suspect that the accuser is." Grounding this assumption on the current reports of the witness's manner and bearing since he had been placed under official surveillance, Margrave had commissioned the policeman Waby to make inquiries in the village to which the accuser asserted he had gone in quest of his relations, and Waby had there found persons who remembered to have heard that the two brothers named Walls lived less by the gains of the petty shop which they kept than by the proceeds of some property consigned to them as the nearest of kin to a lunatic who had once been tried for his life. Margrave had then examined the advertisements in the daily newspapers. One of them, warning the public against a dangerous maniac, who had effected his escape from an asylum in the west of England, caught his attention. To that asylum he had repaired.

There he learned that the patient advertised was one whose propensity was homicide, consigned for life to the asylum on account of a murder, for which he had been tried. The description of this person exactly tallied with that of the pretended American. The medical superintendent of the asylum, hearing all particulars from Margrave, expressed a strong persuasion that the witness was his missing patient, and had himself committed the crime of which he had accused another. If so, the superintendent undertook to coax from him the full confession of all the circumstances. Like many other madmen, and not least those whose propensity is to crime, the fugitive maniac was exceedingly cunning, treacherous, secret, and habituated to trick and stratagem,—more subtle than even the astute in possession of all their faculties, whether to achieve his purpose or to conceal it, and fabricate appearances against another. But while, in ordinary conversation, he seemed rational enough to those who were not accustomed to study him, he had one hallucination which, when humoured, led him always, not only to betray himself, but to glory in any crime proposed or committed. He was under the belief that he had made a bargain with Satan, who, in return for implicit obedience, would bear him harmless through all the consequences of such submission, and finally raise him to great power and authority. It is no unfrequent illusion of homicidal maniacs to suppose they are under the influence of the Evil One, or possessed by a Demon. Murderers have assigned as the only reason they themselves could give for their crime, that "the Devil

got into them," and urged the deed. But the insane have, perhaps, no attribute more in common than that of superweening self-esteem. The maniac who has been removed from a garret sticks straws in his hair and calls them a crown. So much does inordinate arrogance characterize mental aberration, that, in the course of my own practice, I have detected, in that infirmity, the certain symptom of insanity, long before the brain had made its disease manifest even to the most familiar kindred.

Morbid self-esteem accordingly pervaded the dreadful illusion by which the man I now speak of was possessed. He was proud to be the protected agent of the Fallen Angel. And if that self-esteem were artfully appealed to, he would exult superbly in the evil he held himself ordered to perform, as if a special prerogative, an official rank and privilege; then, he would be led on to boast gleefully of thoughts which the most cynical of criminals in whom intelligence was not ruined would shrink from owning; then, he would reveal himself in all his deformity with as complacent and frank a self-glorying as some vain good man displays in parading his amiable sentiments and his beneficent deeds.

"If," said the superintendent, "this be the patient who has escaped from me, and if his propensity to homicide has been, in some way, directed towards the person who has been murdered, I shall not be with him a quarter of an hour before he will inform me how it happened, and detail the arts he employed in shifting his crime upon another; all will be told as minutely as a child tells the tale of some school-boy exploit, in which he counts on your sympathy, and feels sure of your applause."

Margrave brought this gentleman back to L—, took him to the mayor, who was one of my warmest supporters: the mayor had sufficient influence to dictate and arrange the rest. The superintendent was introduced to the room in which the pretended American was lodged. At his own desire a select number of witnesses were admitted with him. Margrave excused himself; he said candidly that he was too intimate a friend of mine to be an impartial listener to aught that concerned me so nearly.

The superintendent proved right in his suspicions, and verified his promises. My false accuser was his missing patient; the man recognized Dr. — with no apparent terror, rather with an air of condescension, and in a very few minutes was led to tell his own tale, with a gloating complacency both at the agency by which he deemed himself exalted, and at the dexterous cunning with which he had acquitted himself of the task, that increased the horror of his narrative.

He spoke of the mode of his escape, which was extremely ingenious, but of which the details, long in themselves, did not interest me, and I understood them too imperfectly to repeat. He had encountered a sea-faring traveller on the road, whom he had knocked down with a stone, and robbed of his glazed hat and pea-jacket, as well as of a small sum in coin, which last enabled him to pay his fare in a railway that conveyed him eighty miles away from the asylum. Some trifling remnant of this

money still in his pocket, he then travelled on foot along the high-road till he came to a town about twenty miles distant from L—; there he had stayed a day or two, and there he said "that the Devil had told him to buy a case-knife, which he did." "He knew by that order that the Devil meant him to do something great." "His Master," as he called the fiend, then directed him the road he should take. He came to L—, put up, as he had correctly stated before, at a small inn, wandered at night about the town, was surprised by the sudden storm, took shelter under the convent arch, overheard somewhat more of my conversation with Sir Philip than he had previously deposed,—heard enough to excite his curiosity as to the casket: "While he listened his Master told him he must get possession of that casket." Sir Philip had quitted the archway almost immediately after I had done so, and he would then have attacked him if he had not caught sight of a policeman going his rounds. He had followed Sir Philip to a house (Mr. Jeeves's). "His Master told him to wait and watch." He did so. When Sir Philip came forth, towards the dawn, he followed him, saw him enter a narrow street, came up to him, seized him by the arm, demanded all he had about him. Sir Philip tried to shake him off,—struck at him. What follows I spare the reader. The deed was done. He robbed the dead man both of the casket and the purse that he found in the pockets; had scarcely done so when he heard footsteps. He had just time to get behind the portico of a detached house at angles with the street when I came up. He witnessed, from his hiding-place, the brief conference between myself and the policemen, and when they moved on, bearing the body, stole unobserved away. He was going back towards the inn, when it occurred to him that it would be safer if the casket and purse were not about his person; that he asked his Master to direct him how to dispose of them: that his Master guided him to an open yard (a stone-mason's) at a very little distance from the inn; that in this yard there stood an old wych-elm tree, from the gnarled roots of which the earth was worn away, leaving chinks and hollows, in one of which he placed the casket and purse, taking from the latter only two sovereigns and some silver, and then heaping loose mould over the hiding-place. That he then repaired to his inn, and left it late in the morning, on the pretence of seeking for his relations,—persons, indeed, who really had been related to him, but of whose death years ago he was aware. He returned to L— a few days afterwards, and in the dead of the night went to take up the casket and the money. He found the purse with its contents undisturbed; but the lid of the casket was unclosed. From the hasty glance he had taken of it before burying it, it had seemed to him firmly locked,—he was alarmed lest some one had been to the spot. But his Master whispered to him not to mind, told him that he might now take the casket, and would be guided what to do with it; that he did so, and, opening the lid, found the casket empty—; that he took the rest of the money out of the purse, but that he did not take the purse itself, for it had a crest and initials on it, which might lead to the discovery of what had been done; that he therefore left it in the hollow amongst the roots, heaping the mould over it as before; that in the course of the day he heard the people at the inn talk of the murder, and that his own first impulse was to get out of the town immediately, but that his Master "made him too wise for that," and bade

him stay; that passing through the streets, he saw me come out of the sash-window door, go to a stable-yard on the other side of the house, mount on horseback and ride away; that he observed the sash-door was left partially open; that he walked by it and saw the room empty; there was only a dead wall opposite; the place was solitary, unobserved; that his Master directed him to lift up the sash gently, enter the room, and deposit the knife and the casket in a large walnut-tree bureau which stood unlocked near the window. All that followed—his visit to Mr. Vigors, his accusation against myself, his whole tale—was, he said, dictated by his Master, who was highly pleased with him, and promised to bring him safely through. And here he turned round with a hideous smile, as if for approbation of his notable cleverness and respect for his high employ.

Mr. Jeeves had the curiosity to request the keeper to inquire how, in what form, or in what manner, the Fiend appeared to the narrator, or conveyed his infernal dictates. The man at first refused to say; but it was gradually drawn from him that the Demon had no certain and invariable form: sometimes it appeared to him in the form of a rat; sometimes even of a leaf, or a fragment of wood, or a rusty nail; but that his Master's voice always came to him distinctly, whatever shape he appeared in; only, he said, with an air of great importance, his Master, this time, had graciously condescended, ever since he left the asylum, to communicate with him in a much more pleasing and imposing aspect than he had ever done before,—in the form of a beautiful youth, or, rather, like a bright rose-coloured shadow, in which the features of a young man were visible, and that he had heard the voice more distinctly than usual, though in a milder tone, and seeming to come to him from a great distance.

After these revelations the man became suddenly disturbed. He shook from limb to limb, he seemed convulsed with terror; he cried out that he had betrayed the secret of his Master, who had warned him not to describe his appearance and mode of communication, or he would surrender his servant to the tormentors. Then the maniac's terror gave way to fury; his more direful propensity made itself declared; he sprang into the midst of his frightened listeners, seized Mr. Vigors by the throat, and would have strangled him but for the prompt rush of the superintendent and his satellites. Foaming at the mouth, and horribly raving, he was then manacled, a strait-waistcoat thrust upon him, and the group so left him in charge of his captors. Inquiries were immediately directed towards such circumstantial evidence as might corroborate the details he had so minutely set forth. The purse, recognized as Sir Philip's, by the valet of the deceased, was found buried under the wych-elm. A policeman despatched, express, to the town in which the maniac declared the knife to have been purchased, brought back word that a cutler in the place remembered perfectly to have sold such a knife to a seafaring man, and identified the instrument when it was shown to him. From the chink of a door ajar, in the wall opposite my sash-window, a maid-servant, watching for her sweetheart (a journeyman carpenter, who habitually passed that way on going home to dine), had, though unobserved by the murderer, seen him

come out of my window at a time that corresponded with the dates of his own story, though she had thought nothing of it at the moment. He might be a patient, or have called on business; she did not know that I was from home. The only point of importance not cleared up was that which related to the opening of the casket,—the disappearance of the contents; the lock had been unquestionably forced. No one, however, could suppose that some third person had discovered the hiding-place and forced open the casket to abstract its contents and then rebury it. The only probable supposition was that the man himself had forced it open, and, deeming the contents of no value, had thrown them away before he had hidden the casket and purse, and, in the chaos of his reason, had forgotten that he had so done. Who could expect that every link in a madman's tale would be found integral and perfect? In short, little importance was attached to this solitary doubt. Crowds accompanied me to my door, when I was set free, in open court, stainless; it was a triumphal procession. The popularity I had previously enjoyed, superseded for a moment by so horrible a charge, came back to me tenfold as with the reaction of generous repentance for a momentary doubt. One man shared the public favour,—the young man whose acuteness had delivered me from the peril, and cleared the truth from so awful a mystery; but Margrave had escaped from congratulation and compliment; he had gone on a visit to Strahan, at Derval Court.

Alone, at last, in the welcome sanctuary of my own home, what were my thoughts? Prominent amongst them all was that assertion of the madman, which had made me shudder when repeated to me: he had been guided to the murder and to all the subsequent proceedings by the luminous shadow of the beautiful youth,—the Scin-Laeca to which I had pledged myself. If Sir Philip Derval could be believed, Margrave was possessed of powers, derived from fragmentary recollections of a knowledge acquired in a former state of being, which would render his remorseless intelligence infinitely dire and frustrate the endeavours of a reason, unassisted by similar powers, to thwart his designs or bring the law against his crimes. Had he then the arts that could thus influence the minds of others to serve his fell purposes, and achieve securely his own evil ends through agencies that could not be traced home to himself?

But for what conceivable purpose had I been subjected as a victim to influences as much beyond my control as the Fate or Demoniac Necessity of a Greek Myth? In the legends of the classic world some august sufferer is oppressed by powers more than mortal, but with an ethical if gloomy vindication of his chastisement,—he pays the penalty of crime committed by his ancestors or himself, or he has braved, by arrogating equality with the gods, the mysterious calamity which the gods alone can inflict. But I, no descendant of Pelops, no OEdipus boastful of a wisdom which could interpret the enigmas of the Sphynx, while ignorant even of his own birth—what had I done to be singled out from the herd of men for trials and visitations from the Shadowland of ghosts and sorcerers? It would be ludicrously absurd to suppose that Dr. Lloyd's dying imprecation could have had a prophetic effect upon my destiny; to believe that the pretences of mesmerizers were specially favoured by Providence, and that to question

their assumptions was an offence of profanation to be punished by exposure to preternatural agencies. There was not even that congruity between cause and effect which fable seeks in excuse for its inventions. Of all men living, I, unimaginative disciple of austere science, should be the last to become the sport of that witchcraft which even imagination reluctantly allows to the machinery of poets, and science casts aside into the mouldy lumber-room of obsolete superstition.

Rousing my mind from enigmas impossible to solve, it was with intense and yet most melancholy satisfaction that I turned to the image of Lilian, rejoicing, though with a thrill of awe, that the promise so mysteriously conveyed to my senses had, hereto, been already fulfilled,—Margrave had left the town; Lilian was no longer subjected to his evil fascination. But an instinct told me that that fascination had already produced an effect adverse to all hope of happiness for me. Lilian's love for myself was gone. Impossible otherwise that she—in whose nature I had always admired that generous devotion which is more or less inseparable from the romance of youth—should have never conveyed to me one word of consolation in the hour of my agony and trial; that she, who, till the last evening we had met, had ever been so docile, in the sweetness of a nature femininely subinissive to my slightest wish, should have disregarded my solemn injunction, and admitted Margrave to acquaintance, nay, to familiar intimacy,—at the very time, too, when to disobey my injunctions was to embitter my ordeal, and add her own contempt to the degradation imposed upon my honour! No, her heart must be wholly gone from me; her very nature wholly warped. A union between us had become impossible. My love for her remained unshattered; the more tender, perhaps, for a sentiment of compassion. But my pride was shocked, my heart was wounded. My love was not mean and servile. Enough for me to think that she would be at least saved from Margrave. Her life associated with his!—contemplation horrible and ghastly!—from that fate she was saved. Later, she would recover the effect of an influence happily so brief. She might form some new attachment, some new tie; but love once withdrawn is never to be restored—and her love was withdrawn from me. I had but to release her, with my own lips, from our engagement,—she would welcome that release. Mournful but firm in these thoughts and these resolutions, I sought Mrs. Ashleigh's house.

CHAPTER XLII.

It was twilight when I entered, unannounced (as had been my wont in our familiar intercourse), the quiet sitting-room in which I expected to find mother and child. But Lilian was there alone, seated by the open window, her hands crossed and drooping on her knee, her eye fixed upon the darkening summer skies, in which the evening star had just stolen forth, bright and steadfast, near the pale sickle of a half-moon that was dimly

visible, but gave as yet no light.

Let any lover imagine the reception he would expect to meet from his betrothed coming into her presence after he had passed triumphant through a terrible peril to life and fame—and conceive what ice froze my blood, what anguish weighed down my heart, when Lilian, turning towards me, rose not, spoke not, gazed at me heedlessly as if at some indifferent stranger—and—and—But no matter. I cannot bear to recall it even now, at the distance of years! I sat down beside her, and took her hand, without pressing it; it rested languidly, passively in mine, one moment; I dropped it then, with a bitter sigh.

”Lilian,” I said quietly, ”you love me no longer. Is it not so?”

She raised her eyes to mine, looked at me wistfully, and pressed her hand on her forehead; then said, in a strange voice, ”Did I ever love you? What do you mean?”

”Lilian, Lilian, rouse yourself; are you not, while you speak, under some spell, some influence which you cannot describe nor account for?”

She paused a moment before she answered, calmly, ”No! Again I ask what do you mean?”

”What do I mean? Do you forget that we are betrothed? Do you forget how often, and how recently, our vows of affection and constancy have been exchanged?”

”No, I do not forget; but I must have deceived you and myself—”

”It is true, then, that you love me no more?”

”I suppose so.”

”But, oh, Lilian, is it that your heart is only closed to me; or is it—oh, answer truthfully—is it given to another,—to him—to him—against whom I warned you, whom I implored you not to receive? Tell me, at least, that your love is not gone to Margrave—”

”To him! love to him! Oh, no—no—”

”What, then, is your feeling towards him?”

Lilian’s face grew visibly paler, even in that dim light. ”I know not,” she said, almost in a whisper; ”but it is partly awe—partly—”

”What?”

"Abhorrence!" she said almost fiercely, and rose to her feet, with a wild defying start.

"If that be so," I said gently, "you would not grieve were you never again to see him—"

"But I shall see him again," she murmured in a tone of weary sadness, and sank back once more into her chair.

"I think not," said I, "and I hope not. And now hear me and heed me, Lilian. It is enough for me, no matter what your feelings towards another, to learn from yourself that the affection you once professed for me is gone. I release you from your troth. If folks ask why we two henceforth separate the lives we had agreed to join, you may say, if you please, that you could not give your hand to a man who had known the taint of a felon's prison, even on a false charge. If that seems to you an ungenerous reason, we will leave it to your mother to find a better. Farewell! For your own sake I can yet feel happiness,—happiness to hear that you do not love the man against whom I warn you still more solemnly than before! Will you not give me your hand in parting—and have I not spoken your own wish?"

She turned away her face, and resigned her hand to me in silence. Silently I held it in mine, and my emotions nearly stifled me. One symptom of regret, of reluctance, on her part, and I should have fallen at her feet, and cried, "Do not let us break a tie which our vows should have made indissoluble; heed not my offers, wrung from a tortured heart! You cannot have ceased to love me!" But no such symptom of relenting showed itself in her, and with a groan I left the room.

CHAPTER XLIII.

I was just outside the garden door, when I felt an arm thrown round me, my cheek kissed and wetted with tears. Could it be Lilian? Alas, no! It was her mother's voice, that, between laughing and crying, exclaimed hysterically: "This is joy, to see you again, and on these thresholds. I have just come from your house; I went there on purpose to congratulate you, and to talk to you about Lilian. But you have seen her?"

"Yes; I have but this moment left her. Come this way." I drew Mrs. Ashleigh back into the garden, along the old winding walk, which the shrubs concealed from view of the house. We sat down on a rustic seat where I had often sat with Lilian, midway between the house and the Monks' Well. I told the mother what had passed between me and her daughter; I made no complaint of Lilian's coldness and change; I did not hint at its cause. "Girls of her age will change," said I, "and all that now remains

is for us two to agree on such a tale to our curious neighbours as may rest the whole blame on me. Man's name is of robust fibre; it could not push its way to a place in the world, if it could not bear, without sinking, the load idle tongues may lay on it. Not so Woman's Name: what is but gossip against Man, is scandal against Woman."

"Do not be rash, my dear Allen," said Mrs. Ashleigh, in great distress. "I feel for you, I understand you; in your case I might act as you do. I cannot blame you. Lilian is changed,—changed unaccountably. Yet sure I am that the change is only on the surface, that her heart is really yours, as entirely and as faithfully as ever it was; and that later, when she recovers from the strange, dreamy kind of torpor which appears to have come over all her faculties and all her affections, she would awake with a despair which you cannot conjecture to the knowledge that you had renounced her."

"I have not renounced her," said I, impatiently; "I did but restore her freedom of choice. But pass by this now, and explain to me more fully the change in your daughter, which I gather from your words is not confined to me."

"I wished to speak of it before you saw her, and for that reason came to your house. It was on the morning in which we left her aunt's to return hither that I first noticed some thing peculiar in her look and manner. She seemed absorbed and absent, so much so that I asked her several times to tell me what made her so grave; but I could only get from her that she had had a confused dream which she could not recall distinctly enough to relate, but that she was sure it boded evil. During the journey she became gradually more herself, and began to look forward with delight to the idea of seeing you again. Well, you came that evening. What passed between you and her you know best. You complained that she slighted your request to shun all acquaintance with Mr. Margrave. I was surprised that, whether your wish were reasonable or not, she could have hesitated to comply with it. I spoke to her about it after you had gone, and she wept bitterly at thinking she had displeased you."

"She wept! You amaze me. Yet the next day what a note she returned to mine!"

"The next day the change in her became very visible to me. She told me, in an excited manner, that she was convinced she ought not to marry you. Then came, the following day, the news of your committal. I heard of it, but dared not break it to her. I went to our friend the mayor, to consult with him what to say, what to do; and to learn more distinctly than I had done from terrified, incoherent servants, the rights of so dreadful a story. When I returned, I found, to my amazement, a young stranger in the drawing-room; it was Mr. Margrave,—Miss Brabazon had brought him at his request. Lilian was in the room, too, and my astonishment was increased, when she said to me with a singular smile, vague but tranquil: 'I know all about Allen Fenwick; Mr. Margrave has told me all. He is a friend of

Allen's. He says there is no cause for fear.' Mr. Margrave then apologized to me for his intrusion in a caressing, kindly manner, as if one of the family. He said he was so intimate with you that he felt that he could best break to Miss Ashleigh information she might receive elsewhere, for that he was the only man in the town who treated the charge with ridicule. You know the wonderful charm of this young man's manner. I cannot explain to you how it was, but in a few moments I was as much at home with him as if he had been your brother. To be brief, having once come, he came constantly. He had moved, two days before you went to Derval Court, from his hotel to apartments in Mr. —'s house, just opposite. We could see him on his balcony from our terrace; he would smile to us and come across. I did wrong in slighting your injunction, and suffering Lilian to do so. I could not help it, he was such a comfort to me,—to her, too—in her tribulation. He alone had no doleful words, wore no long face; he alone was invariably cheerful. 'Everything,' he said, 'would come right in a day or two.'"

"And Lilian could not but admire this young man, he is so beautiful."

"Beautiful? Well, perhaps. But if you have a jealous feeling, you were never more mistaken. Lilian, I am convinced, does more than dislike him; he has inspired her with repugnance, with terror. And much as I own I like him, in his wild, joyous, careless, harmless way, do not think I flatter you if I say that Mr. Margrave is not the man to make any girl untrue to you,—untrue to a lover with infinitely less advantages than you may pretend to. He would be a universal favourite, I grant; but there is something in him, or a something wanting in him, which makes liking and admiration stop short of love. I know not why; perhaps, because, with all his good humour, he is so absorbed in himself, so intensely egotistical, so light; were he less clever, I should say so frivolous. He could not make love, he could not say in the serious tone of a man in earnest, 'I love you.' He owned as much to me, and owned, too, that he knew not even what love was. As to myself, Mr. Margrave appears rich; no whisper against his character or his honour ever reached me. Yet were you out of the question, and were there no stain on his birth, nay, were he as high in rank and wealth as he is favoured by Nature in personal advantages, I confess I could never consent to trust him with my daughter's fate. A voice at my heart would cry, 'No!' It may be an unreasonable prejudice, but I could not bear to see him touch Lilian's hand!"

"Did she never, then—never suffer him even to take her hand?"

"Never. Do not think so meanly of her as to suppose that she could be caught by a fair face, a graceful manner. Reflect: just before she had refused, for your sake, Ashleigh Sumner, whom Lady Haughton said 'no girl in her senses could refuse;' and this change in Lilian really began before we returned to L—,—before she had even seen Mr. Margrave. I am convinced it is something in the reach of your skill as physician,—it is on the nerves, the system. I will give you a proof of what I say, only do not betray me to her. It was during your imprisonment, the night

before your release, that I was awakened by her coming to my bedside. She was sobbing as if her heart would break. 'O mother, mother!' she cried, 'pity me, help me! I am so wretched.' 'What is the matter, darling?' 'I have been so cruel to Allen, and I know I shall be so again. I cannot help it. Do not question me; only if we are separated, if he cast me off, or I reject him, tell him some day perhaps when I am in my grave—not to believe appearances; and that I, in my heart of hearts, never ceased to love him!'"

"She said that! You are not deceiving me?"

"Oh, no! how can you think so?"

"There is hope still," I murmured; and I bowed my head upon my hands, hot tears forcing their way through the clasped fingers.

"One word more," said I; "you tell me that Lilian has a repugnance to this Margrave, and yet that she found comfort in his visits,—a comfort that could not be wholly ascribed to cheering words he might say about myself, since it is all but certain that I was not, at that time, uppermost in her mind. Can you explain this apparent contradiction?"

"I cannot, otherwise than by a conjecture which you would ridicule."

"I can ridicule nothing now. What is your conjecture?"

"I know how much you disbelieve in the stories one hears of animal magnetism and electro-biology, otherwise—"

"You think that Margrave exercises some power of that kind over Lilian? Has he spoken of such a power?"

"Not exactly; but he said that he was sure Lilian possessed a faculty that he called by some hard name, not clairvoyance, but a faculty, which he said, when I asked him to explain, was akin to prevision,—to second sight. Then he talked of the Priestesses who had administered the ancient oracles. Lilian, he said, reminded him of them, with her deep eyes and mysterious smile."

"And Lilian heard him? What said she?"

"Nothing; she seemed in fear while she listened."

"He did not offer to try any of those arts practised by professional mesmerists and other charlatans?"

"I thought he was about to do so, but I forestalled him, saying I never would consent to any experiment of that kind, either on myself or my

daughter.”

”And he replied—”

”With his gay laugh, ’that I was very foolish; that a person possessed of such a faculty as he attributed to Lilian would, if the faculty were developed, be an invaluable adviser.’ He would have said more, but I begged him to desist. Still I fancy at times—do not be angry—that he does somehow or other bewitch her, unconsciously to herself; for she always knows when he is coming. Indeed, I am not sure that he does not bewitch myself, for I by no means justify my conduct in admitting him to an intimacy so familiar, and in spite of your wish; I have reproached myself, resolved to shut my door on him, or to show by my manner that his visits were unwelcome; yet when Lilian has said, in the drowsy lethargic tone which has come into her voice (her voice naturally earnest and impressive, though always low), ’Mother, he will be here in two minutes; I wish to leave the room and cannot,’ I, too, have felt as if something constrained me against my will; as if, in short, I were under that influence which Mr. Vigors—whom I will never forgive for his conduct to you—would ascribe to mesmerism. But will you not come in and see Lilian again?”

”No, not to-night; but watch and heed her, and if you see aught to make you honestly believe that she regrets the rupture of the old tic from which I have released her—why, you know, Mrs. Ashleigh, that—that—” My voice failed; I wrung the good woman’s hand, and went my way.

I had always till then considered Mrs. Ashleigh—if not as Mrs. Poyntz described her—”commonplace weak”—still of an intelligence somewhat below mediocrity. I now regarded her with respect as well as grateful tenderness; her plain sense had divined what all my boasted knowledge had failed to detect in my earlier intimacy with Margrave,—namely, that in him there was a something present, or a something wanting, which forbade love and excited fear. Young, beautiful, wealthy, seemingly blameless in life as he was, she would not have given her daughter’s hand to him!

CHAPTER XLIV.

The next day my house was filled with visitors. I had no notion that I had so many friends. Mr. Vigors wrote me a generous and handsome letter, owning his prejudices against me on account of his sympathy with poor Dr. Lloyd, and begging my pardon for what he now felt to have been harshness, if not distorted justice. But what most moved me was the entrance of Strahan, who rushed up to me with the heartiness of old college days. ”Oh, my dear Allen, can you ever forgive me; that I should have disbelieved your word,—should have suspected you of abstracting my poor

cousin's memoir?"

"Is it found, then?"

"Oh, yes; you must thank Margrave. He, clever fellow, you know, came to me on a visit yesterday. He put me at once on the right scent. Only guess; but you never can! It was that wretched old housekeeper who purloined the manuscript. You remember she came into the room while you were looking at the memoir. She heard us talk about it; her curiosity was roused; she longed to know the history of her old master, under his own hand; she could not sleep; she heard me go up to bed; she thought you might leave the book on the table when you, too, went to rest. She stole downstairs, peeped through the keyhole of the library, saw you asleep, the book lying before you, entered, took away the book softly, meant to glance at its contents and to return it. You were sleeping so soundly she thought you would not wake for an hour; she carried it into the library, leaving the door open, and there began to pore over it. She stumbled first on one of the passages in Latin; she hoped to find some part in plain English, turned over the leaves, putting her candle close to them, for the old woman's eyes were dim, when she heard you make some sound in your sleep. Alarmed, she looked round; you were moving uneasily in your seat, and muttering to yourself. From watching you she was soon diverted by the consequences of her own confounded curiosity and folly. In moving, she had unconsciously brought the poor manuscript close to the candle; the leaves caught the flame; her own cap and hand burning first made her aware of the mischief done. She threw down the book; her sleeve was in flames; she had first to tear off the sleeve, which was, luckily for her, not sewn to her dress. By the time she recovered presence of mind to attend to the book, half its leaves were reduced to tinder. She did not dare then to replace what was left of the manuscript on your table; returned with it to her room, hid it, and resolved to keep her own secret. I should never have guessed it; I had never even spoken to her of the occurrence; but when I talked over the disappearance of the book to Margrave last night, and expressed my disbelief of your story, he said, in his merry way: 'But do you think that Fenwick is the only person curious about your cousin's odd ways and strange history? Why, every servant in the household would have been equally curious. You have examined your servants, of course?' 'No, I never thought of it.' 'Examine them now, then. Examine especially that old housekeeper. I observe a great change in her manner since I came here, weeks ago, to look over the house. She has something on her mind,—I see it in her eyes.' Then it occurred to me, too, that the woman's manner had altered, and that she seemed always in a tremble and a fidget. I went at once to her room, and charged her with stealing the book. She fell on her knees, and told the whole story as I have told it to you, and as I shall take care to tell it to all to whom I have so foolishly blabbed my yet more foolish suspicions of yourself. But can you forgive me, old friend?"

"Heartily, heartily! And the book is burned?"

"See;" and he produced a mutilated manuscript. Strange, the part burned—reduced, indeed, to tinder—was the concluding part that related to Haroun,—to Grayle: no vestige of that part was left; the earlier portions were scorched and mutilated, though in some places still decipherable; but as my eye hastily ran over those places, I saw only mangled sentences of the experimental problems which the writer had so minutely elaborated.

"Will you keep the manuscript as it is, and as long as you like?" said Strahan.

"No, no; I will have nothing more to do with it. Consult some other man of science. And so this is the old woman's whole story? No accomplice,—none? No one else shared her curiosity and her task?"

"No. Oddly enough, though, she made much the same excuse for her pitiful folly that the madman made for his terrible crime; she said, 'the Devil put it into her head.' Of course he did, as he puts everything wrong into any one's head. That does not mend the matter."

"How! did she, too, say she saw a Shadow and heard a voice?"

"No; not such a liar as that, and not mad enough for such a lie. But she said that when she was in bed, thinking over the book, something irresistible urged her to get up and go down into the study; swore she felt something lead her by the hand; swore, too, that when she first discovered the manuscript was not in English, something whispered in her ear to turn over the leaves and approach them to the candle. But I had no patience to listen to all this rubbish. I sent her out of the house, bag and baggage. But, alas! is this to be the end of all my wise cousin's grand discoveries?"

True, of labours that aspired to bring into the chart of science new worlds, of which even the traditionary rumour was but a voice from the land of fable—nought left but broken vestiges of a daring footstep! The hope of a name imperishable amidst the loftiest hierarchy of Nature's secret temple, with all the pomp of recorded experiment, that applied to the mysteries of Egypt and Chaldaea the inductions of Bacon, the tests of Liebig—was there nothing left of this but what, here and there, some puzzled student might extract, garbled, mutilated, perhaps unintelligible, from shreds of sentences, wrecks of problems! O mind of man, can the works, on which thou wouldst found immortality below, be annulled into smoke and tinder by an inch of candle in the hand of an old woman!

When Strahan left me, I went out, but not yet to visit patients. I stole through by-paths into the fields; I needed solitude to bring my thoughts into shape and order. What was delusion, and what not? Was I right or the Public? Was Margrave really the most innocent and serviceable of human beings, kindly affectionate, employing a wonderful acuteness for benignant ends? Was I, in truth, indebted to him for the greatest boon

one man can bestow on another,—for life rescued, for fair name justified? Or had he, by some demoniac sorcery, guided the hand of the murderer against the life of the person who alone could imperil his own? Had he, by the same dark spells, urged the woman to the act that had destroyed the only record of his monstrous being,—the only evidence that I was not the sport of an illusion in the horror with which he inspired me?

But if the latter supposition could be admissible, did he use his agents only to betray them afterwards to exposure, and that, without any possible clew to his own detection as the instigator? Then, there came over me confused recollections of tales of mediaeval witchcraft, which I had read in boyhood. Were there not on judicial record attestation and evidence, solemn and circumstantial, of powers analogous to those now exercised by Margrave,—of sorcerers instigating to sin through influences ascribed to Demons; making their apparitions glide through guarded walls, their voices heard from afar in the solitude of dungeons or monastic cells; subjugating victims to their will, by means which no vigilance could have detected, if the victims themselves had not confessed the witchcraft that had ensnared, courting a sure and infamous death in that confession, preferring such death to a life so haunted? Were stories so gravely set forth in the pomp of judicial evidence, and in the history of times comparatively recent, indeed to be massed, pell-mell together, as a moles indigesta of senseless superstition,—all the witnesses to be deemed liars; all the victims and tools of the sorcerers, lunatics; all the examiners or judges, with their solemn gradations—lay and clerical—from Commissions of Inquiry to Courts of Appeal,—to be despised for credulity, loathed for cruelty; or, amidst records so numerous, so imposingly attested, were there the fragments of a terrible truth? And had our ancestors been so unwise in those laws we now deem so savage, by which the world was rid of scourges more awful and more potent than the felon with his candid dagger? Fell instigators of the evil in men's secret hearts, shaping into action the vague, half-formed desire, and guiding with agencies impalpable, unseen, their spell-bound instruments of calamity and death.

Such were the gloomy questions that I—by repute, the sternest advocate of common-sense against fantastic errors; by profession, the searcher into flesh and blood, and tissue and nerve and sinew, for the causes of all that disease the mechanism of the universal human frame; I, self-boasting physician, sceptic, philosopher, materialist—revolved, not amidst gloomy pines, under grim winter skies, but as I paced slow through laughing meadows, and by the banks of merry streams, in the ripeness of the golden August: the hum of insects in the fragrant grass, the flutter of birds amid the delicate green of boughs checkered by playful sunbeams and gentle shadows, and ever in sight of the resorts of busy workday man,—walls, roof-tops, church-spires rising high; there, white and modern, the handwriting of our race, in this practical nineteenth century, on its square plain masonry and Doric shafts, the Town-Hall, central in the animated marketplace. And I—I—prying into long-neglected corners and dust-holes of memory for what my reason had flung there as worthless

rubbish; reviving the jargon of French law, in the proces verbal, against a Gille de Retz, or an Urbain Grandier, and sifting the equity of sentences on witchcraft!

Bursting the links of this ghastly soliloquy with a laugh at my own folly, I struck into a narrow path that led back towards the city, by a quiet and rural suburb; the path wound on through a wide and solitary churchyard, at the base of the Abbey-hill. Many of the former dwellers on that eminence now slept in the lowly burial-ground at its foot; and the place, mournfully decorated with the tombs which still jealously mark distinctions of rank amidst the levelling democracy of the grave, was kept trim with the care which comes half from piety, and half from pride.

I seated myself on a bench, placed between the clipped yew-trees that bordered the path from the entrance to the church porch, deeming vaguely that my own perplexing thoughts might imbibe a quiet from the quiet of the place.

"And oh," I murmured to myself, "oh that I had one bosom friend to whom I might freely confide all these torturing riddles which I cannot solve,—one who could read my heart, light up its darkness, exorcise its spectres; one in whose wisdom I could welcome a guide through the Nature which now suddenly changes her aspect, opening out from the walls with which I had fenced and enclosed her as mine own formal garden;—all her pathways, therein, trimmed to my footstep; all her blooms grouped and harmonized to my own taste in colour; all her groves, all her caverns, but the soothing retreats of a Muse or a Science; opening out—opening out, desert on desert, into clewless and measureless space! Gone is the garden! Were its confines too narrow for Nature? Be it so! The Desert replaces the garden, but where ends the Desert? Reft from my senses are the laws which gave order and place to their old questionless realm. I stand lost and appalled amidst Chaos. Did my Mind misconstrue the laws it deemed fixed and immutable? Be it so! But still Nature cannot be lawless; Creation is not a Chaos. If my senses deceive me in some things, they are still unerring in others; if thus, in some things, fallacious, still, in other things, truthful. Are there within me senses finer than those I have cultured, or without me vistas of knowledge which instincts, apart from my senses, divine? So long as I deal with the Finite alone, my senses suffice me; but when the Infinite is obtruded upon me there, are my senses faithless deserters? If so, is there aught else in my royal resources of Man—whose ambition it is, from the first dawn of his glory as Thinker, to invade and to subjugate Nature,—is there aught else to supply the place of those traitors, the senses, who report to my Reason, their judge and their sovereign, as truths seen and heard tales which my Reason forfeits her sceptre if she does not disdain as lies? Oh, for a friend! oh, for a guide!"

And as I so murmured, my eye fell upon the form of a kneeling child,—at the farther end of the burial-ground, beside a grave with its new

headstone gleaming white amidst the older moss-grown tombs, a female child, her head bowed, her hands clasped. I could see but the outline of her small form in its sable dress,—an infant beside the dead. My eye and my thoughts were turned from that silent figure, too absorbed in my own restless tumult of doubt and dread, for sympathy with the grief or the consolation of a kneeling child. And yet I should have remembered that tomb! Again I murmured with a fierce impatience, "Oh, for a friend! oh, for a guide!"

I heard steps on the walk under the yews; and an old man came in sight, slightly bent, with long gray hair, but still with enough of vigour for years to come, in his tread, firm, though slow, in the unshrunk muscle of his limbs and the steady light of his clear blue eye. I started. Was it possible? That countenance, marked, indeed, with the lines of laborious thought, but sweet in the mildness of humanity, and serene in the peace of conscience! I could not be mistaken. Julius Faber was before me,—the profound pathologist, to whom my own proud self-esteem acknowledged inferiority, without humiliation; the generous benefactor to whom I owed my own smooth entrance into the arduous road of fame and fortune. I had longed for a friend, a guide; what I sought stood suddenly at my side.

CHAPTER XLV.

Explanation on Faber's part was short and simple. The nephew whom he designed as the heir to his wealth had largely outstripped the liberal allowance made to him, had incurred heavy debts; and in order to extricate himself from the debts, had plunged into ruinous speculations. Faber had come back to England to save his heir from prison or outlawry, at the expense of more than three-fourths of the destined inheritance. To add to all, the young man had married a young lady without fortune; the uncle only heard of this marriage on arriving in England. The spendthrift was hiding from his creditors in the house of his father-in-law, in one of the western counties. Faber there sought him; and on becoming acquainted with his wife, grew reconciled to the marriage, and formed hopes of his nephew's future redemption. He spoke, indeed, of the young wife with great affection. She was good and sensible; willing and anxious to encounter any privation by which her husband might reprieve the effects of his folly. "So," said Faber, "on consultation with this excellent creature—for my poor nephew is so broken down by repentance, that others must think for him how to exalt repentance into reform—my plans were determined. I shall remove my prodigal from all scenes of temptation. He has youth, strength, plenty of energy, hitherto misdirected. I shall take him from the Old World into the New. I have decided on Australia. The fortune still left to me, small here, will be ample capital there. It is not enough to maintain us separately, so we must all live together.

Besides, I feel that, though I have neither the strength or the experience which could best serve a young settler on a strange soil, still, under my eye, my poor boy will be at once more prudent and more persevering. We sail next week."

Faber spoke so cheerfully that I knew not how to express compassion; yet, at his age, after a career of such prolonged and distinguished labour, to resign the ease and comforts of the civilized state for the hardships and rudeness of an infant colony, seemed to me a dreary prospect; and, as delicately, as tenderly as I could to one whom I loved and honoured as a father, I placed at his disposal the fortune which, in great part, I owed to him,—pressing him at least to take from it enough to secure to himself, in his own country, a home suited to his years and worthy of his station. He rejected all my offers, however earnestly urged on him, with his usual modest and gentle dignity; and assuring me that he looked forward with great interest to a residence in lands new to his experience, and affording ample scope for the hardy enjoyments which had always most allured his tastes, he hastened to change the subject.

"And who, think you, is the admirable helpmate my scape-grace has had the saving good luck to find? A daughter of the worthy man who undertook the care of poor Dr. Lloyd's orphans,—the orphans who owed so much to your generous exertions to secure a provision for them; and that child, now just risen from her father's grave, is my pet companion, my darling ewe lamb,—Dr. Lloyd's daughter Amy."

Here the child joined us, quickening her pace as she recognized the old man, and nestling to his side as she glanced wistfully towards myself. A winning, candid, lovable child's face, somewhat melancholy, somewhat more thoughtful than is common to the face of childhood, but calm, intelligent, and ineffably mild. Presently she stole from the old man, and put her hand in mine.

"Are you not the kind gentleman who came to see him that night when he passed away from us, and who, they all say at home, was so good to my brothers and me? Yes, I recollect you now." And she put her pure face to mine, wooing me to kiss it.

I kind! I good! I—I! Alas! she little knew, little guessed, the wrathful imprecation her father had bequeathed to me that fatal night!

I did not dare to kiss Dr. Lloyd's orphan daughter, but my tears fell over her hand. She took them as signs of pity, and, in her infant thankfulness, silently kissed me.

"Oh, my friend!" I murmured to Faber, "I have much that I yearn to say to you—alone—alone! Come to my house with me, be at least my guest as long as you stay in this town."

"Willingly," said Faber, looking at me more intently than he had done before, and with the true eye of the practised Healer, at once soft and penetrating.

He rose, took my arm, and whispering a word in the ear of the little girl, she went on before us, turning her head, as she gained the gate, for another look at her father's grave. As we walked to my house, Julius Faber spoke to me much of this child. Her brothers were all at school; she was greatly attached to his nephew's wife; she had become yet more attached to Faber himself, though on so short an acquaintance; it had been settled that she was to accompany the emigrants to Australia.

"There," said he, "the sum, that some munificent, but unknown friend of her father has settled on her, will provide her no mean dower for a colonist's wife, when the time comes for her to bring a blessing to some other hearth than ours." He went on to say that she had wished to accompany him to L—, in order to visit her father's grave before crossing the wide seas; "and she has taken such fond care of me all the way, that you might fancy I were the child of the two. I come back to this town, partly to dispose of a few poor houses in it which still belong to me, principally to bid you farewell before quitting the Old World, no doubt forever. So, on arriving to-day, I left Amy by herself in the churchyard while I went to your house, but you were from home. And now I must congratulate you on the reputation you have so rapidly acquired, which has even surpassed my predictions."

"You are aware," said I, falteringly, "of the extraordinary charge from which that part of my reputation dearest to all men has just emerged!"

He had but seen a short account in a weekly journal, written after my release. He asked details, which I postponed.

Reaching my home, I hastened to provide for the comfort of my two unexpected guests; strove to rally myself, to be cheerful. Not till night, when Julius Faber and I were alone together, did I touch on what was weighing at my heart. Then, drawing to his side, I told him all,—all of which the substance is herein written, from the deathscene in Dr. Lloyd's chamber to the hour in which I had seen Dr. Lloyd's child at her father's grave. Some of the incidents and conversations which had most impressed me I had already committed to writing, in the fear that, otherwise, my fancy might forge for its own thralldom the links of reminiscence which my memory might let fall from its chain. Faber listened with a silence only interrupted by short pertinent questions; and when I had done, he remained thoughtful for some moments; then the great physician replied thus:—

"I take for granted your conviction of the reality of all you tell me, even of the Luminous Shadow, of the bodiless Voice; but, before admitting the reality itself, we must abide by the old maxim, not to accept as cause to effect those agencies which belong to the Marvellous, when causes less

improbable for the effect can be rationally conjectured. In this case are there not such causes? Certainly there are—”

”There are?”

”Listen; you are one of those men who attempt to stifle their own imagination. But in all completed intellect, imagination exists, and will force its way; deny it healthful vents, and it may stray into morbid channels. The death-room of Dr. Lloyd deeply impressed your heart, far more than your pride would own. This is clear from the pains you took to exonerate your conscience, in your generosity to the orphans. As the heart was moved, so was the imagination stirred; and, unaware to yourself, prepared for much that subsequently appealed to it. Your sudden love, conceived in the very grounds of the house so associated with recollections in themselves strange and romantic; the peculiar temperament and nature of the girl to whom your love was attracted; her own visionary beliefs, and the keen anxiety which infused into your love a deeper poetry of sentiment,—all insensibly tended to induce the imagination to dwell on the Wonderful; and, in overstriving to reconcile each rarer phenomenon to the most positive laws of Nature, your very intellect could discover no solution but in the Preternatural.

”You visit a man who tells you he has seen Sir Philip Derval’s ghost; on that very evening, you hear a strange story, in which Sir Philip’s name is mixed up with a tale of murder, implicating two mysterious pretenders to magic,—Louis Grayle and the Sage of Aleppo. The tale so interests your fancy that even the glaring impossibility of a not unimportant part of it escapes your notice,—namely, the account of a criminal trial in which the circumstantial evidence was more easily attainable than in all the rest of the narrative, but which could not legally have taken place as told. Thus it is whenever the mind begins, unconsciously, to admit the shadow of the Supernatural; the Obvious is lost to the eye that plunges its gaze into the Obscure. Almost immediately afterwards you become acquainted with a young stranger, whose traits of character interest and perplex, attract yet revolt you. All this time you are engaged in a physiological work which severely tasks the brain, and in which you examine the intricate question of soul distinct from mind.

”And, here, I can conceive a cause deep-hid amongst what metaphysicians would call latent associations, for a train of thought which disposed you to accept the fantastic impressions afterwards made on you by the scene in the Museum and the visionary talk of Sir Philip Derval. Doubtless, when at college you first studied metaphysical speculation you would have glanced over Beattie’s ‘Essay on Truth’ as one of the works written in opposition to your favourite, David Hume.”

”Yes, I read the book, but I have long since forgotten its arguments.”

”Well in that essay, Beattie[1] cites the extraordinary instance of Simon Browne, a learned and pious clergyman, who seriously disbelieved the

existence of his own soul; and imagined that, by interposition of Divine power, his soul was annulled, and nothing left but a principle of animal life, which he held in common with the brutes! When, years ago, a thoughtful imaginative student, you came on that story, probably enough you would have paused, revolved in your own mind and fancy what kind of a creature a man might be, if, retaining human life and merely human understanding, he was deprived of the powers and properties which reasoners have ascribed to the existence of soul. Something in this young man, unconsciously to yourself, revives that forgotten train of meditative ideas. His dread of death as the final cessation of being, his brute-like want of sympathy with his kind, his incapacity to comprehend the motives which carry man on to scheme and to build for a future that extends beyond his grave,—all start up before you at the very moment your reason is overtaken, your imagination fevered, in seeking the solution of problems which, to a philosophy based upon your system, must always remain insoluble. The young man's conversation not only thus excites your fancies,—it disturbs your affections. He speaks not only of drugs that renew youth, but of charms that secure love. You tremble for your Lilian while you hear him! And the brain thus tasked, the imagination thus inflamed, the heart thus agitated, you are presented to Sir Philip Derval, whose ghost your patient had supposed he saw weeks ago.

”This person, a seeker after an occult philosophy, which had possibly acquainted him with some secrets in nature beyond the pale of our conventional experience, though, when analyzed, they might prove to be quite reconcilable with sober science, startles you with an undefined mysterious charge against the young man who had previously seemed to you different from ordinary mortals. In a room stored with the dead things of the brute soulless world, your brain becomes intoxicated with the fumes of some vapour which produces effects not uncommon in the superstitious practices of the East; your brain, thus excited, brings distinctly before you the vague impressions it had before received. Margrave becomes identified with the Louis Grayle of whom you had previously heard an obscure and, legendary tale, and all the anomalies in his character are explained by his being that which you had contended, in your physiological work, it was quite possible for man to be,—namely, mind and body without soul! You were startled by the monster which man would be were your own theory possible; and in order to reconcile the contradictions in this very monster, you account for knowledge, and for powers that mind without soul could not have attained, by ascribing to this prodigy broken memories of a former existence, demon attributes from former proficiency in evil magic. My friend, there is nothing here which your own study of morbid idiosyncracies should not suffice to solve.”

”So, then,” said I, ”you would reduce all that have affected my senses as realities into the deceit of illusions? But,” I added, in a whisper, terrified by my own question, ”do not physiologists agree in this: namely, that though illusory phantasms may haunt the sane as well as the insane, the sane know that they are only illusions, and the insane do not.”

"Such a distinction," answered Faber, "is far too arbitrary and rigid for more than a very general and qualified acceptance. Muller, indeed, who is perhaps the highest authority on such a subject, says, with prudent reserve, 'When a person who is not insane sees spectres and believes, them to be real, his intellect must be imperfectly exercised.'^[2] He would, indeed, be a bold physician who maintained that every man who believed he had really seen a ghost was of unsound mind. In Dr. Abercrombie's interesting account of spectral illusions, he tells us of a servant-girl who believed she saw, at the foot of her bed, the apparition of Curran, in a sailor's jacket and an immense pair of whiskers.^[3] No doubt the spectre was an illusion, and Dr. Abercrombie very ingeniously suggests the association of ideas by which the apparition was conjured up with the grotesque adjuncts of the jacket and the whiskers; but the servant-girl, in believing the reality of the apparition, was certainly not insane. When I read in the American public journals^[4] of 'spirit manifestations,' in which large numbers of persons, of at least the average degree of education, declare that they have actually witnessed various phantasms, much more extraordinary than all which you have confided to me, and arrive, at once, at the conclusion that they are thus put into direct communication with departed souls, I must assume that they are under an illusion; but I should be utterly unwarranted in supposing that, because they credited that illusion, they were insane. I should only say with Muller, that in their reasoning on the phenomena presented to them, 'their intellect was imperfectly exercised.' And an impression made on the senses, being in itself sufficiently rare to excite our wonder, may be strengthened till it takes the form of a positive fact, by various coincidences which are accepted as corroborative testimony, yet which are, nevertheless, nothing more than coincidences found in every day matters of business, but only emphatically noticed when we can exclaim, 'How astonishing!' In your case such coincidences have been, indeed, very signal, and might well aggravate the perplexities into which your reason was thrown. Sir Philip Derval's murder, the missing casket, the exciting nature of the manuscript, in which a superstitious interest is already enlisted by your expectation to find in it the key to the narrator's boasted powers, and his reasons for the astounding denunciation of the man whom you suspect to be his murderer,—in all this there is much to confirm, nay, to cause, an illusion; and for that very reason, when examined by strict laws of evidence, in all this there is but additional proof that the illusion was—only illusion. Your affections contribute to strengthen your fancy in its war on your reason. The girl you so passionately love develops, to your disquietude and terror, the visionary temperament which, at her age, is ever liable to fantastic caprices. She hears Margrave's song, which you say has a wildness of charm that affects and thrills even you. Who does not know the power of music? and of all music, there is none so potential as that of the human voice. Thus, in some languages, charm and song are identical expressions; and even when a critic, in our own sober newspapers, extols a Malibran or a Grisi, you may be sure that he will call her 'enchantress.' Well, this lady, your betrothed, in whom the nervous system is extremely impressionable, hears a voice which, even to your ear, is strangely melodious, and sees a form and

face which, even to your eye, are endowed with a singular character of beauty. Her fancy is impressed by what she thus hears and sees; and impressed the more because, by a coincidence not very uncommon, a face like that which she beholds has before been presented to her in a dream or a reverie. In the nobleness of genuine, confiding, reverential love, rather than impute to your beloved a levity of sentiment that would seem to you a treason, you accept the chimera of 'magical fascination.' In this frame of mind you sit down to read the memoir of a mystical enthusiast. Do you begin now to account for the Luminous Shadow? A dream! And a dream no less because your eyes were open and you believed yourself awake. The diseased imagination resembles those mirrors which, being themselves distorted, represent distorted pictures as correct.

"And even this Memoir of Sir Philip Derval's—can you be quite sure that you actually read the part which relates to Haroun and Louis Grayle? You say that, while perusing the manuscript, you saw the Luminous Shadow, and became insensible. The old woman says you were fast asleep. May you not really have fallen into a slumber, and in that slumber have dreamed the parts of the tale that relate to Grayle,—dreamed that you beheld the Shadow? Do you remember what is said so well by Dr. Abercrombie, to authorize the explanation I suggest to you: 'A person under the influence of some strong mental impression falls asleep for a few seconds, perhaps without being sensible of it: some scene or person appears in a dream, and he starts up under the conviction that it was a spectral appearance.'" [5]

"But," said I, "the apparition was seen by me again, and when, certainly, I was not sleeping."

"True; and who should know better than a physician so well read as yourself that a spectral illusion once beheld is always apt to return again in the same form? Thus, Goethe was long haunted by one image,—the phantom of a flower unfolding itself, and developing new flowers.[6] Thus, one of our most distinguished philosophers tells us of a lady known to himself, who would see her husband, hear him move and speak, when he was not even in the house.[7] But instances of the facility with which phantasms, once admitted, repeat themselves to the senses, are numberless. Many are recorded by Hibbert and Abercrombie, and every physician in extensive practice can add largely, from his own experience, to the list. Intense self-concentration is, in itself, a mighty magician. The magicians of the East inculcate the necessity of fast, solitude, and meditation for the due development of their imaginary powers. And I have no doubt with effect; because fast, solitude, and meditation—in other words, thought or fancy intensely concentrated—will both raise apparitions and produce the invoker's belief in them. Spinello, striving to conceive the image of Lucifer for his picture of the Fallen Angels, was at last actually haunted by the Shadow of the Fiend. Newton himself has been subjected to a phantom, though to him, Son of Light, the spectre presented was that of the sun! You remember the account that Newton gives to Locke of this visionary appearance. He says that 'though he had looked at the

sun with his right eye only, and not with the left, yet his fancy began to make an impression upon his left eye as well as his right; for if he shut his right and looked upon the clouds, or a book, or any bright object with his left eye, he could see the sun almost as plain as with the right, if he did but intend his fancy a little while on it;’ nay, ’for some months after, as often as he began to meditate on the phenomena, the spectrum of the sun began to return, even though he lay in bed at midnight, with his curtains drawn!’ Seeing, then, how any vivid impression once made will recur, what wonder that you should behold in your prison the Shining Shadow that had first startled you in a wizard’s chamber when poring over the records of a murdered visionary? The more minutely you analyze your own hallucinations—pardon me the word—the more they assume the usual characteristics of a dream; contradictory, illogical, even in the marvels they represent. Can any two persons be more totally unlike each other, not merely as to form and years, but as to all the elements of character, than the Grayle of whom you read, or believe you read, and the Margrave in whom you evidently think that Grayle is existent still? The one represented, you say, as gloomy, saturnine, with vehement passions, but with an original grandeur of thought and will, consumed by an internal remorse; the other you paint to me as a joyous and wayward darling of Nature, acute yet frivolous, free from even the ordinary passions of youth, taking delight in innocent amusements, incapable of continuous study, without a single pang of repentance for the crimes you so fancifully impute to him. And now, when your suspicions, so romantically conceived, are dispelled by positive facts, now, when it is clear that Margrave neither murdered Sir Philip Derval nor abstracted the memoir, you still, unconsciously to yourself, draw on your imagination in order to excuse the suspicion your pride of intellect declines to banish, and suppose that this youthful sorcerer tempted the madman to the murder, the woman to the theft—”

”But you forget the madman said ’that he was led on by the Luminous Shadow of a beautiful youth,’ that the woman said also that she was impelled by some mysterious agency.”

”I do not forget those coincidences; but how your learning would dismiss them as nugatory were your imagination not disposed to exaggerate them! When you read the authentic histories of any popular illusion, such as the spurious inspirations of the Jansenist Convulsionaries, the apparitions that invaded convents, as deposed in the trial of Urbain Grandier, the confessions of witches and wizards in places the most remote from each other, or, at this day, the tales of ’spirit-manifestation’ recorded in half the towns and villages of America,—do not all the superstitious impressions of a particular time have a common family likeness? What one sees, another sees, though there has been no communication between the two. I cannot tell you why these phantasms thus partake of the nature of an atmospheric epidemic; the fact remains incontestable. And strange as may be the coincidence between your impressions of a mystic agency and those of some other brains not cognizant of the chimeras of your own,

still, is it not simpler philosophy to say, 'They are coincidences of the same nature which made witches in the same epoch all tell much the same story of the broomsticks they rode and the sabbats at which they danced to the fiend's piping,' and there leave the matter, as in science we must leave many of the most elementary and familiar phenomena inexplicable as to their causes,—is not this, I say, more philosophical than to insist upon an explanation which accepts the supernatural rather than leave the extraordinary unaccounted for?"

"As you speak," said I, resting my downcast face upon my hand, "I should speak to any patient who had confided to me the tale I have told to you."

"And yet the explanation does not wholly satisfy you? Very likely: to some phenomena there is, as yet, no explanation. Perhaps Newton himself could not explain quite to his own satisfaction why he was haunted at midnight by the spectrum of a sun; though I have no doubt that some later philosopher whose ingenuity has been stimulated by Newton's account, has, by this time, suggested a rational solution of that enigma.[8] To return to your own case. I have offered such interpretations of the mysteries that confound you as appear to me authorized by physiological science. Should you adduce other facts which physiological science wants the data to resolve into phenomena always natural, however rare, still hold fast to that simple saying of Goethe: 'Mysteries are not necessarily miracles.' And if all which physiological science comprehends in its experience wholly fails us, I may then hazard certain conjectures in which, by acknowledging ignorance, one is compelled to recognize the Marvellous (for as where knowledge enters, the Marvellous recedes, so where knowledge falters, the Marvellous advances); yet still, even in those conjectures, I will distinguish the Marvellous from the Supernatural. But, for the present, I advise you to accept the guess that may best quiet the fevered imagination which any bolder guess would only more excite."

"You are right," said I, rising proudly to the full height of my stature, my head erect and my heart defying. "And so let this subject be renewed no more between us. I will brood over it no more myself. I regain the unclouded realm of my human intelligence; and, in that intelligence, I mock the sorcerer and disdain the spectre."

[1] Beattie's "Essay on Truth," part i. c. ii. 3. The story of Simon Browne is to be found in "The Adventurer."

[2] Miller's Physiology of the Senses, p. 394.

[3] Abercrombie on the Intellectual Powers, p. 281. (15th edition.)

[4] At the date of Faber's conversation with Allen Fenwick, the (so-called) spirit manifestations had not spread from America over Europe. But if they had, Faber's views would, no doubt, have remained the same.

[5] Abercrombie on the Intellectual Powers, p. 278. (15th edition.)

This author, not more to be admired for his intelligence than his candour, and who is entitled to praise for a higher degree of original thought than that to which he modestly pretends, relates a curious anecdote illustrating "the analogy between dreaming and spectral illusion, which he received from the gentleman to which it occurred,—an eminent medical friend:" "Having sat up late one evening, under considerable anxiety for one of his children, who was ill, he fell asleep in his chair, and had a frightful dream, in which the prominent figure was an immense baboon. He awoke with the fright, got up instantly, and walked to a table which was in the middle of the room. He was then quite awake, and quite conscious of the articles around him; but close by the wall in the end of the apartment he distinctly saw the baboon making the same grimaces which he had seen in his dreams; and this spectre continued visible for about half a minute." Now, a man who saw only a baboon would be quite ready to admit that it was but an optical illusion; but if, instead of a baboon, he had seen an intimate friend, and that friend, by some coincidence of time, had died about that date, he would be a very strong-minded man if he admitted for the mystery of seeing his friend the same natural solution which he would readily admit for seeing a baboon.

[6] See Muller's observations on this phenomenon, "Physiology of the Senses," Baley's translation, p. 1395.

[7] Sir David Brewster's Letters on Natural Magic, p. 39.

[8] Newton's explanation is as follows: "This story I tell you to let you understand, that in the observation related by Mr. Boyle, the man's fancy probably concurred with the impression made by the sun's light to produce that phantasm of the sun which he constantly saw in bright objects, and so your question about the cause of this phantasm involves another about the power of the fancy, which I must confess is too hard a knot for me to untie. To place this effect in a constant motion is hard, because the sun ought then to appear perpetually. It seems rather to consist in a disposition of the sensorium to move the imagination strongly, and to be easily moved both by the imagination and by the light as often as bright objects are looked upon."—Letter from Sir I. Newton to Locke, Lord King's Life of Locke, vol. i. pp. 405-408.

Dr. Roget (Animal and Vegetable Physiology considered with reference to Natural Theology, "Bridgewater Treatise," pp. 524, 525) thus refers to this phenomenon, which he states "all of us may experience":—

"When the impressions are very vivid" (Dr. Roget is speaking of visual impressions), "another phenomenon often takes place,—namely, their subsequent recurrence after a certain interval, during which they are not felt, and quite independently of any renewed application of the cause which had originally excited them."— (I mark by italics the words which more precisely coincide with Julius Faber's explanations.) "If, for example, we look steadfastly at the sun for a second or two, and then

immediately close our eyes, the image, or spectrum, of the sun remains for a long time present to the mind, as if the light were still acting on the retina. It then gradually fades and disappears; but if we continue to keep the eyes shut, the same impression will, after a certain time, recur, and again vanish: and this phenomenon will be repeated at intervals, the sensation becoming fainter at each renewal. It is probable that these reappearances of the image, after the light which produced the original impression has been withdrawn, are occasioned by spontaneous affections of the retina itself which are conveyed to the sensorium. In other cases, where the impressions are less strong, the physical changes producing these changes are perhaps confined to the sensorium."

It may be said that there is this difference between the spectrum of the sun and such a phantom as that which perplexed Allen Fenwick,—namely, that the sun has been actually beheld before its visionary appearance can be reproduced, and that Allen Fenwick only imagines he has seen the apparition which repeats itself to his fancy. "But there are grounds for the suspicion" (says Dr. Hibbert, "Philosophy of Apparitions," p. 250), "that when ideas of vision are vivified to the height of sensation, a corresponding affection of the optic nerve accompanies the illusion." Muller ("Physiology of the Senses," p. 1392, Baley's translation) states the same opinion still more strongly; and Sir David Brewster, quoted by Dr. Hibbert (p. 251) says: "In examining these mental impressions, I have found that they follow the motions of the eyeball exactly like the spectral impressions of luminous objects, and that they resemble them also in their apparent immobility when the eye is displaced by an external force. If this result (which I state with much diffidence, from having only my own experience in its favour) shall be found generally true by others, it will follow that the objects of mental contemplation may be seen as distinctly as external objects, and will occupy the same local position in the axis of vision, as if they had been formed by the agency of light." Hence the impression of an image once conveyed to the senses, no matter how, whether by actual or illusory vision, is liable to renewal, "independently of any renewed application of the cause which had originally excited it," and the image can be seen in that renewal "as distinctly as external objects," for indeed "the revival of the fantastic figure really does affect those points of the retina which had been previously impressed."

CHAPTER XLVI.

Julius Faber and Amy Lloyd stayed in my house three day, I and in their presence I felt a healthful sense of security and peace. Amy wished to visit her father's house, and I asked Faber, in taking her there, to seize the occasion to see Lilian, that he might communicate to me his impression of a case so peculiar. I prepared Mrs. Ashleigh for this visit by a

previous note. When the old man and the child came back, both brought me comfort. Amy was charmed with Lilian, who had received her with the sweetness natural to her real character, and I loved to hear Lilian's praise from those innocent lips.

Faber's report was still more calculated to console me.

"I have seen, I have conversed with her long and familiarly. You were quite right,—there is no tendency to consumption in that exquisite, if delicate, organization; nor do I see cause for the fear to which your statement had pre-inclined me. That head is too nobly formed for any constitutional cerebral infirmity. In its organization, ideality, wonder, veneration, are large, it is true, but they are balanced by other organs, now perhaps almost dormant, but which will come into play as life passes from romance into duty. Something at this moment evidently oppresses her mind. In conversing with her, I observe abstraction, listlessness; but I am so convinced of her truthfulness, that if she has once told you she returned your affection, and pledged to you her faith, I should, in your place, rest perfectly satisfied that whatever be the cloud that now rests on her imagination, and for the time obscures the idea of yourself, it will pass away."

Faber was a believer in the main divisions of phrenology, though he did not accept all the dogmas of Gall and Spurzheim; while, to my mind, the refutation of phrenology in its fundamental propositions had been triumphantly established by the lucid arguments of Sir W. Hamilton.[1] But when Faber rested on phrenological observations assurances in honour of Lilian, I forgot Sir W. Hamilton, and believed in phrenology. As iron girders and pillars expand and contract with the mere variations of temperature, so will the strongest conviction on which the human intellect rests its judgment vary with the changes of the human heart; and the building is only safe where these variations are foreseen and allowed for by a wisdom intent on self-knowledge.[2]

There was much in the affection that had sprung up between Julius Faber and Amy Lloyd which touched my heart and softened all its emotions. This man, unblessed, like myself, by conjugal and parental ties, had, in his solitary age, turned for solace to the love of a child, as I, in the pride of manhood, had turned to the love of woman. But his love was without fear, without jealousy, without trouble. My sunshine came to me in a fitful ray, through clouds that had gathered over my noon; his sunshine covered all his landscape, hallowed and hallowing by the calm of declining day.

And Amy was no common child. She had no exuberant imagination; she was haunted by no whispers from Afar; she was a creature fitted for the earth,—to accept its duties and to gladden its cares. Her tender observation, fine and tranquil, was alive to all the important household trifles by which, at the earliest age, man's allotted soother asserts her

privilege to tend and to comfort. It was pleasant to see her moving so noiselessly through the rooms I had devoted to her venerable protector, knowing all his simple wants, and providing for them as if by the mechanism of a heart exquisitely moulded to the loving uses of life. Sometimes when I saw her setting his chair by the window (knowing, as I did, how much he habitually loved to be near the light) and smoothing his papers (in which he was apt to be unmethodical), placing the mark in his book when he ceased to read, divining, almost without his glance, some wish passing through his mind, and then seating herself at his feet, often with her work—which was always destined for him or for one of her absent brothers,—now and then with the one small book that she had carried with her, a selection of Bible stories compiled for children,—sometimes when I saw her thus, how I wished that Lilian, too, could have seen her, and have compared her own ideal fantasies with those young developments of the natural heavenly Woman!

But was there nothing in that sight from which I, proud of my arid reason even in its perplexities, might have taken lessons for myself?

On the second evening of Faber's visit I brought to him the draft of deeds for the sale of his property. He had never been a man of business out of his profession; he was impatient to sell his property, and disposed to accept an offer at half its value. I insisted on taking on myself the task of negotiator; perhaps, too, in this office I was egotistically anxious to prove to the great physician that which he believed to be my "hallucination" had in no way obscured my common-sense in the daily affairs of life. So I concluded, and in a few hours, terms for his property that were only just, but were infinitely more advantageous than had appeared to himself to be possible. But as I approached him with the papers, he put his finger to his lips. Amy was standing by him with her little book in her hand, and his own Bible lay open on the table. He was reading to her from the Sacred Volume itself, and impressing on her the force and beauty of one of the Parables, the adaptation of which had perplexed her; when he had done, she kissed him, bade him goodnight, and went away to rest. Then said Faber thoughtfully, and as if to himself more than me,—

"What a lovely bridge between old age and childhood is religion! How intuitively the child begins with prayer and worship on entering life, and how intuitively on quitting life the old man turns back to prayer and worship, putting himself again side by side with the infant!"

I made no answer, but, after a pause, spoke of fines and freeholds, title-deeds and money; and when the business on hand was concluded, asked my learned guest if, before he departed, he would deign to look over the pages of my ambitious Physiological Work. There were parts of it on which I much desired his opinion, touching on subjects in which his special studies made him an authority as high as our land possessed.

He made me bring him the manuscript, and devoted much of that night and

the next day to its perusal.

When he gave it me back, which was not till the morning of his departure, he commenced with eulogies on the scope of its design, and the manner of its execution, which flattered my vanity so much that I could not help exclaiming, "Then, at least, there is no trace of 'hallucination' here!"

"Alas, my poor Allen! here, perhaps, hallucination, or self-deception, is more apparent than in all the strange tales you confided to me. For here is the hallucination of the man seated on the shores of Nature, and who would say to its measureless sea, 'So far shalt thou go and no farther;' here is the hallucination of the creature, who, not content with exploring the laws of the Creator, ends with submitting to his interpretation of some three or four laws, in the midst of a code of which all the rest are in a language unknown to him, the powers and free-will of the Lawgiver Himself; here is the hallucination by which Nature is left Godless, because Man is left soulless. What would matter all our speculations on a Deity who would cease to exist for us when we are in the grave? Why mete out, like Archytas, the earth and the sea, and number the sands on the shore that divides them, if the end of this wisdom be a handful of dust sprinkled over a skull!

"Nec quidquam tibi prodest
Aeris tentasse dornos, animoque rotundum
Percurrisse polum naorituro.'

"Your book is a proof of the soul that you fail to discover. Without a soul, no man would work for a Future that begins for his fame when the breath is gone from his body. Do you remember how you saw that little child praying at the grave of her father? Shall I tell you that in her simple orisons she prayed for the benefactor,—who had cared for the orphan; who had reared over dust that tomb which, in a Christian burial-ground, is a mute but perceptible memorial of Christian hopes; that the child prayed, haughty man, for you? And you sat by, knowing nought of this; sat by, amongst the graves, troubled and tortured with ghastly doubts, vain of a reason that was sceptical of eternity, and yet shaken like a reed by a moment's marvel. Shall I tell the child to pray for you no more; that you disbelieve in a soul? If you do so, what is the efficacy of prayer? Speak, shall I tell her this? Shall the infant pray for you never more?"

I was silent; I was thrilled.

"Has it never occurred to you, who, in denying all innate perceptions as well as ideas, have passed on to deductions from which poor Locke, humble Christian that he was, would have shrunk in dismay,—has it never occurred to you as a wonderful fact, that the easiest thing in the world to teach a child is that which seems to metaphysical schoolmen the abstrusest of all problems? Read all those philosophers wrangling about a First Cause, deciding on what are miracles, and then again deciding that

such miracles cannot be; and when one has answered another, and left in the crucible of wisdom a caput mortuum of ignorance, then turn your eyes, and look at the infant praying to the invisible God at his mother's knees. This idea, so miraculously abstract, of a Power the infant has never seen, that cannot be symbolled forth and explained to him by the most erudite sage,—a Power, nevertheless, that watches over him, that hears him, that sees him, that will carry him across the grave, that will enable him to live on forever,—this double mystery of a Divinity and of a Soul, the infant learns with the most facile readiness, at the first glimpse of his reasoning faculty. Before you can teach him a rule in addition, before you can venture to drill him into his horn-book, he leaps, with one intuitive spring of all his ideas, to the comprehension of the truths which are only incomprehensible to blundering sages! And you, as you stand before me, dare not say, 'Let the child pray for me no more!' But will the Creator accept the child's prayer for the man who refuses prayer for himself? Take my advice, pray! And in this counsel I do not overstep my province. I speak not as a preacher, but as a physician. For health is a word that comprehends our whole organization, and a just equilibrium of all faculties and functions is the condition of health. As in your Lilian the equilibrium is deranged by the over-indulgence of a spiritual mysticism which withdraws from the nutriment of duty the essential pabulum of sober sense, so in you the resolute negation of disciplined spiritual communion between Thought and Divinity robs imagination of its noblest and safest vent. Thus, from opposite extremes, you and your Lilian meet in the same region of mist and cloud, losing sight of each other and of the true ends of life, as her eyes only gaze on the stars and yours only bend to the earth. Were I advising her, I should say: 'Your Creator has placed the scene of your trial below, and not in the stars.' Advising you, I say: 'But in the trial below, man should recognize education for heaven.' In a word, I would draw somewhat more downward her fancy, raise somewhat more upward your reason. Take my advice then,—Pray. Your mental system needs the support of prayer in order to preserve its balance. In the embarrassment and confusion of your senses, clearness of perception will come with habitual and tranquil confidence in Him who alike rules the universe and reads the heart. I only say here what has been said much better before by a reasoner in whom all Students of Nature recognize a guide. I see on your table the very volume of Bacon which contains the passage I commend to your reflection. Here it is. Listen: 'Take an example of a dog, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on when he finds himself maintained by a man who, to him, is instead of a God, or melior natura, which courage is manifestly such as that creature, without that confidence of a better nature than his own, could never attain. So man, when he resteth and assureth himself upon Divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith which human nature could not obtain.'^[3] You are silent, but your gesture tells me your doubt,—a doubt which your heart, so femininely tender, will not speak aloud lest you should rob the old man of a hope with which your strength of manhood dispenses,—you doubt the efficacy of prayer! Pause and reflect, bold but candid inquirer into the laws of that guide you call Nature. If there were no efficacy in prayer; if prayer were as mere an

illusion of superstitious fantasy as aught against which your reason now struggles, do you think that Nature herself would have made it amongst the most common and facile of all her dictates? Do you believe that if there really did not exist that tie between Man and his Maker—that link between life here and life hereafter which is found in what we call Soul alone—that wherever you look through the universe, you would behold a child at Prayer? Nature inculcates nothing that is superfluous. Nature does not impel the leviathan or the lion, the eagle or the moth, to pray; she impels only man. Why? Because man only has soul, and Soul seeks to commune with the Everlasting, as a fountain struggles up to its source. Burn your book. It would found you a reputation for learning and intellect and courage, I allow; but learning and intellect and courage wasted against a truth, like spray against a rock! A truth valuable to the world, the world will never part with. You will not injure the truth, but you will mislead and may destroy many, whose best security is in the truth which you so eruditely insinuate to be a fable. Soul and Hereafter are the heritage of all men; the humblest, journeyman in those streets, the pettiest trader behind those counters, have in those beliefs their prerogatives of royalty. You would dethrone and embrate the lords of the earth by your theories. For my part, having given the greater part of my life to the study and analysis of facts, I would rather be the author of the tritest homily, or the baldest poem, that inculcated that imperishable essence of the soul to which I have neither scalpel nor probe, than be the founder of the subtlest school, or the framer of the loftiest verse, that robbed my fellow-men of their faith in a spirit that eludes the dissecting-knife,—in a being that escapes the grave-digger. Burn your book! Accept This Book instead; Read and Pray.”

He placed his Bible in my hand, embraced me, and, an hour afterwards, the old man and the child left my hearth solitary once more.

[1] The summary of this distinguished lecturer’s objections to phrenology is to be found in the Appendix to vol i. of ”Lectures on Metaphysics,” p. 404, et seq. Edition 1859.

[2] The change of length of iron girders caused by variation of temperature has not unfrequently brought down the whole edifice into which they were admitted. Good engineers and architects allow for such changes produced by temperature. In the tubular bridge across the Menai Straits, a self-acting record of the daily amount of its contraction and expansion is ingeniously Contrived.

[3] Bacon’s ”Essay on Atheism.” This quotation is made with admirable felicity and force by Dr. Whewell, page 378 of Bridgewater Treatise on Astronomy and General Physics considered with reference to Natural Theology.

CHAPTER XLVII.

That night, as I sat in my study, very thoughtful and very mournful, I resolved all that Julius Faber had said; and the impression his words had produced became gradually weaker and weaker, as my reason, naturally combative, rose up with all the replies which my philosophy suggested. No; if my imagination had really seduced and betrayed me into monstrous credulities, it was clear that the best remedy to such morbid tendencies towards the Superstitious was in the severe exercise of the faculties most opposed to Superstition,—in the culture of pure reasoning, in the science of absolute fact. Accordingly, I placed before me the very book which Julius Faber had advised me to burn; I forced all my powers of mind to go again over the passages which contained the doctrines that his admonition had censured; and before daybreak, I had stated the substance of his argument, and the logical reply to it, in an elaborate addition to my chapter on "Sentimental Philosophers." While thus rejecting the purport of his parting counsels, I embodied in another portion of my work his views on my own "illusions;" and as here my commonsense was in concord with his, I disposed of all my own previous doubts in an addition to my favourite chapter "On the Cheats of the Imagination." And when the pen dropped from my hand, and the day-star gleamed through the window, my heart escaped from the labour of my mind, and flew back to the image of Lilian. The pride of the philosopher died out of me, the sorrow of the man reigned supreme, and I shrank from the coming of the sun, despondent.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Not till the law had completed its proceedings, and satisfied the public mind as to the murder of Sir Philip Derval, were the remains of the deceased consigned to the family mausoleum. The funeral was, as may be supposed, strictly private, and when it was over, the excitement caused by an event so tragical and singular subsided. New topics engaged the public talk, and—in my presence, at least—the delicate consideration due to one whose name had been so painfully mixed up in the dismal story forbore a topic which I could not be expected to hear without distressful emotion. Mrs. Ashleigh I saw frequently at my own house; she honestly confessed that Lilian had not shown that grief at the cancelling of our engagement which would alone justify Mrs. Ashleigh in asking me again to see her daughter, and retract my conclusions against our union. She said that Lilian was quiet, not uncheerful, never spoke of me nor of Margrave, but seemed absent and pre-occupied as before, taking pleasure in nothing that had been wont to please her; not in music, nor books, nor that tranquil pastime which women call work, and in which they find excuse to meditate, in idleness, their own fancies. She rarely stirred out, even in the garden; when she did, her eyes seemed to avoid the house in which Margrave

had lodged, and her steps the old favourite haunt by the Monks' Well. She would remain silent for long hours together, but the silence did not appear melancholy. For the rest, her health was more than usually good. Still Mrs. Ashleigh persisted in her belief that, sooner or later, Lilian would return to her former self, her former sentiments for me; and she entreated me not, as yet, to let the world know that our engagement was broken off. "For if," she said, with good sense, "if it should prove not to be broken off, only suspended, and afterwards happily renewed, there will be two stories to tell when no story be needed. Besides, I should dread the effect on Lilian, if offensive gossips babbled to her on a matter that would excite so much curiosity as the rupture of a union in which our neighbours have taken so general an interest."

I had no reason to refuse acquiescence in Mrs. Ashleigh's request, but I did not share in her hopes; I felt that the fair prospects of my life were blasted; I could never love another, never wed another; I resigned myself to a solitary hearth, rejoiced, at least, that Margrave had not revisited at Mrs. Ashleigh's,—had not, indeed, reappeared in the town. He was still staying with Strahan, who told me that his guest had ensconced himself in Forman's old study, and amused himself with reading—though not for long at a time—the curious old books and manuscripts found in the library, or climbing trees like a schoolboy, and familiarizing himself with the deer and the cattle, which would group round him quite tame, and feed from his hand. Was this the description of a criminal? But if Sir Philip's assertion were really true; if the criminal were man without soul; if without soul, man would have no conscience, never be troubled by repentance, and the vague dread of a future world,—why, then, should not the criminal be gay despite his crimes, as the white bear gambols as friskly after his meal on human flesh? These questions would haunt me, despite my determination to accept as the right solution of all marvels the construction put on my narrative by Julius Faber.

Days passed; I saw and heard nothing of Margrave. I began half to hope that, in the desultory and rapid changes of mood and mind which characterized his restless nature, he had forgotten my existence.

One morning I went out early on my rounds, when I met Straban unexpectedly.

"I was in search of you," he said, "for more than one person has told me that you are looking ill and jaded. So you are! And the town now is hot and unhealthy. You must come to Derval Court for a week or so. You can ride into town every day to see your patients. Don't refuse. Margrave, who is still with me, sends all kind messages, and bade me say that he entreats you to come to the house at which he also is a guest!"

I started. What had the Scin-Laeca required of me, and obtained to that condition my promise?" If you are asked to the house at which I also am a guest, you will come; you will meet and converse with me as guest speaks

to guest in the house of a host!" Was this one of the coincidences which my reason was bound to accept as coincidences, and nothing more? Tut, tut! Was I returning again to my "hallucinations"? Granting that Faber and common-sense were in the right, what was this Margrave? A man to whose friendship, acuteness, and energy I was under the deepest obligations,—to whom I was indebted for active services that had saved my life from a serious danger, acquitted my honour of a horrible suspicion. "I thank you," I said to Strahan, "I will come; not, indeed, for a week, but, at all events, for a day or two."

"That's right; I will call for you in the carriage at six o'clock. You will have done your day's work by then?"

"Yes; I will so arrange."

On our way to Derval Court that evening, Strahan talked much about Margrave, of whom, nevertheless, he seemed to be growing weary.

"His high spirits are too much for one," said he; "and then so restless,—so incapable of sustained quiet conversation. And, clever though he is, he can't help me in the least about the new house I shall build. He has no notion of construction. I don't think he could build a barn."

"I thought you did not like to demolish the old house, and would content yourself with pulling down the more ancient part of it?"

"True. At first it seemed a pity to destroy so handsome a mansion; but you see, since poor Sir Philip's manuscript, on which he set such store, has been too mutilated, I fear, to allow me to effect his wish with regard to it, I think I ought at least scrupulously to obey his other whims. And, besides, I don't know, there are odd noises about the old house. I don't believe in haunted houses; still there is something dreary in strange sounds at the dead of night, even if made by rats, or winds through decaying rafters. You, I remember at college, had a taste for architecture, and can draw plans. I wish to follow out Sir Philip's design, but on a smaller scale, and with more attention to comfort."

Thus he continued to run on, satisfied to find me a silent and attentive listener. We arrived at the mansion an hour before sunset, the westering light shining full against the many windows cased in mouldering pilasters, and making the general dilapidation of the old place yet more mournfully evident.

It was but a few minutes to the dinner-hour. I went up at once to the room appropriated to me,—not the one I had before occupied. Strahan had already got together a new establishment. I was glad to find in the servant who attended me an old acquaintance. He had been in my own employ when I first settled at L—, and left me to get married. He and his wife were now both in Strahan's service. He spoke warmly of his new

master and his contentment with his situation, while he unpacked my carpet-bag and assisted me to change my dress. But the chief object of his talk and his praise was Mr. Margrave.

"Such a bright young gentleman, like the first fine day in May!"

When I entered the drawing-room, Margrave and Strahan were both there. The former was blithe and genial, as usual, in his welcome. At dinner, and during the whole evening till we retired severally to our own rooms, he was the principal talker,—recounting incidents of travel, always very loosely strung together, jesting, good-humouredly enough, at Strahan's sudden hobby for building, then putting questions to me about mutual acquaintances, but never waiting for an answer; and every now and then, as if at random, startling us with some brilliant aphorism, or some suggestion drawn from abstract science or unfamiliar erudition. The whole effect was sparkling, but I could well understand that, if long continued, it would become oppressive. The soul has need of pauses of repose,—intervals of escape, not only from the flesh, but even from the mind. A man of the loftiest intellect will experience times when mere intellect not only fatigues him, but amidst its most original conceptions, amidst its proudest triumphs, has a something trite and commonplace compared with one of those vague intimations of a spiritual destiny which are not within the ordinary domain of reason; and, gazing abstractedly into space, will leave suspended some problem of severest thought, or uncompleted some golden palace of imperial poetry, to indulge in hazy reveries, that do not differ from those of an innocent, quiet child! The soul has a long road to travel—from time through eternity. It demands its halting hours of contemplation. Contemplation is serene. But with such wants of an immortal immaterial spirit, Margrave had no fellowship, no sympathy; and for myself, I need scarcely add that the lines I have just traced I should not have written at the date at which my narrative has now arrived.

CHAPTER XLIX.

I had no case that necessitated my return to L— the following day. The earlier hours of the forenoon I devoted to Strahan and his building plans. Margrave flitted in and out of the room fitfully as an April sunbeam, sometimes flinging himself on a sofa, and reading for a few minutes one of the volumes of the ancient mystics, in which Sir Philip's library was so rich. I remember it was a volume of Proclus. He read that crabbed and difficult Greek with a fluency that surprised me. "I picked up the ancient Greek," said he, "years ago, in learning the modern." But the book soon tired him; then he would come and disturb us, archly enjoying Strahan's peevishness at interruption; then he would throw open the window and leap down, chanting one of his wild savage airs; and in another moment

he was half hid under the drooping boughs of a broad lime-tree, amidst the antlers of deer that gathered fondly round him. In the afternoon my host was called away to attend some visitors of importance, and I found myself on the sward before the house, right in view of the mausoleum and alone with Margrave.

I turned my eyes from that dumb House of Death wherein rested the corpse of the last lord of the soil, so strangely murdered, with a strong desire to speak out to Margrave the doubts respecting himself that tortured me. But—setting aside the promise to the contrary, which I had given, or dreamed I had given, to the Luminous Shadow—to fulfil that desire would have been impossible,—impossible to any one gazing on that radiant youthful face! I think I see him now as I saw him then: a white doe, that even my presence could not scare away from him, clung lovingly to his side, looking up at him with her soft eyes. He stood there like the incarnate principle of mythological sensuous life. I have before applied to him that illustration; let the repetition be pardoned. Impossible, I repeat it, to say to that creature, face to face, "Art thou the master of demoniac arts, and the instigator of secret murder?" As if from redundant happiness within himself, he was humming, or rather cooing, a strain of music, so sweet, so wildly sweet, and so unlike the music one hears from tutored lips in crowded rooms! I passed my hand over my forehead in bewilderment and awe.

"Are there," I said unconsciously,— "are there, indeed, such prodigies in Nature?"

"Nature!" he cried, catching up the word; "talk to me of Nature! Talk of her, the wondrous blissful mother! Mother I may well call her. I am her spoiled child, her darling! But oh, to die, ever to die, ever to lose sight of Nature!—to rot senseless, whether under these turfs or within those dead walls—"

I could not resist the answer,—

"Like yon murdered man! murdered, and by whom?"

"By whom? I thought that was clearly proved."

"The hand was proved; what influence moved the hand?"

"Tush! the poor wretch spoke of a Demon. Who can tell? Nature herself is a grand destroyer. See that pretty bird, in its beak a writhing worm! All Nature's children live to take life; none, indeed, so lavishly as man. What hecatombs slaughtered, not to satisfy the irresistible sting of hunger, but for the wanton ostentation of a feast, which he may scarcely taste, or for the mere sport that he finds in destroying! We speak with dread of the beasts of prey: what beast of prey is so dire a ravager as man,—so cruel and so treacherous? Look at yon flock of sheep, bred and fattened for the shambles; and this hind that I caress,—if I were the

park-keeper, and her time for my bullet had come, would you think her life was the safer because, in my own idle whim, I had tamed her to trust to the hand raised to slay her?"

"It is true," said I,—a grim truth. Nature, on the surface so loving and so gentle, is full of terror in her deeps when our thought descends into their abyss!"

Strahan now joined us with a party of country visitors. "Margrave is the man to show you the beauties of this park," said he. "Margrave knows every bosk and dingle, twisted old thorn-tree, or opening glade, in its intricate, undulating ground."

Margrave seemed delighted at this proposition; and as he led us through the park, though the way was long, though the sun was fierce, no one seemed fatigued. For the pleasure he felt in pointing out detached beauties which escaped an ordinary eye was contagious. He did not talk as talks the poet or the painter; but at some lovely effect of light amongst the tremulous leaves, some sudden glimpse of a sportive rivulet below, he would halt, point it out to us in silence, and with a kind of childlike ecstasy in his own bright face, that seemed to reflect the life and the bliss of the blithe summer day itself.

Thus seen, all my doubts in his dark secret nature faded away,—all my horror, all my hate; it was impossible to resist the charm that breathed round him, not to feel a tender, affectionate yearning towards him as to some fair happy child. Well might he call himself the Darling of Nature. Was he not the mysterious likeness of that awful Mother, beautiful as Apollo in one aspect, direful as Typhon in another?

CHAPTER L.

"What a strange-looking cane you have, sir!" said a little girl, who was one of the party, and who had entwined her arm round Margrave's. "Let me look at it."

"Yes," said Strahan, "that cane, or rather walking-staff, is worth looking at. Margrave bought it in Egypt, and declares that it is very ancient."

This staff seemed constructed from a reed: looked at, it seemed light, in the hand it felt heavy; it was of a pale, faded yellow, wrought with black rings at equal distances, and graven with half obliterated characters that seemed hieroglyphic. I remembered to have seen Margrave with it before, but I had never noticed it with any attention until now, when it was passed from hand to hand. At the head of the cane there was a large unpolished stone of a dark blue.

"Is this a pebble or a jewel?" asked one of the party.

"I cannot tell you its name or nature," said Margrave; "but it is said to cure the bite of serpents[1], and has other supposed virtues,—a talisman, in short."

He here placed the staff in my hands, and bade me look at it with care. Then he changed the conversation and renewed the way, leaving the staff with me, till suddenly I forced it back on him. I could not have explained why, but its touch, as it warmed in my clasp, seemed to send through my whole frame a singular thrill, and a sensation as if I no longer felt my own weight,—as if I walked on air.

Our rambles came to a close; the visitors went away; I re-entered the house through the sash-window of Forman's study. Margrave threw his hat and staff on the table, and amused himself with examining minutely the tracery on the mantelpiece. Strahan and myself left him thus occupied, and, going into the adjoining library, resumed our task of examining the plans for the new house. I continued to draw outlines and sketches of various alterations, tending to simplify and contract Sir Philip's general design. Margrave soon joined us, and this time took his seat patiently beside our table, watching me use ruler and compass with unwonted attention.

"I wish I could draw," he said; "but I can do nothing useful."

"Rich men like you," said Strahan, peevishly, "can engage others, and are better employed in rewarding good artists than in making bad drawings themselves."

"Yes, I can employ others; and—Fenwick, when you have finished with Strahan I will ask permission to employ you, though without reward; the task I would impose will not take you a minute."

He then threw himself back in his chair, and seemed to fall into a doze.

The dressing-bell rang; Strahan put away the plans,—indeed, they were now pretty well finished and decided on. Margrave woke up as our host left the room to dress, and drawing me towards another table in the room, placed before me one of his favourite mystic books, and, pointing to an old woodcut, said,

"I will ask you to copy this for me; it pretends to be a facsimile of Solomon's famous seal. I have a whimsical desire to have a copy of it. You observe two triangles interlaced and inserted in a circle?—the pentacle, in short. Yes, just so. You need not add the astrological characters: they are the senseless superfluous accessories of the dreamer who wrote the book. But the pentacle itself has an intelligible meaning; it belongs to the only universal language, the language of symbol, in

which all races that think—around, and above, and below us—can establish communion of thought. If in the external universe any one constructive principle can be detected, it is the geometrical; and in every part of the world in which magic pretends to a written character, I find that its hieroglyphics are geometrical figures. Is it not laughable that the most positive of all the sciences should thus lend its angles and circles to the use of—what shall I call it?—the ignorance?—ay, that is the word—the ignorance of dealers in magic?”

He took up the paper, on which I had hastily described the triangles and the circle, and left the room, chanting the serpent-charmer’s song.

[1] The following description of a stone at Corfu, celebrated as an antidote to the venom of the serpent’s bite, was given to me by an eminent scholar and legal functionary in that island:—

DESCRIPTION of THE BLUESTONE.—This stone is of an oval shape 1 2/10 in. long, 7/10 broad, 3/10 thick, and, having been broken formerly, is now set in gold.

When a person is bitten by a poisonous snake, the bite must be opened by a cut of a lancet or razor longways, and the stone applied within twenty-four hours. The stone then attaches itself firmly on the wound, and when it has done its office falls off; the cure is then complete. The stone must then be thrown into milk, whereupon it vomits the poison it has absorbed, which remains green on the top of the milk, and the stone is then again fit for use.

This stone has been from time immemorial in the family of Ventura, of Corfu, a house of Italian origin, and is notorious, so that peasants immediately apply for its aid. Its virtue has not been impaired by the fracture. Its nature or composition is unknown.

In a case where two were stung at the same time by serpents, the stone was applied to one, who recovered; but the other, for whom it could not be used, died.

It never failed but once, and then it was applied after the twenty-four hours.

Its colour is so dark as not to be distinguished from black.

P. M. COLQUHOUN.

Corfu, 7th Nov., 1860.

Sir Emerson Tennent, in his popular and excellent work on Ceylon, gives an account of ”snake stones” apparently similar to the one at Corfu, except

that they are "intensely black and highly polished," and which are applied, in much the same manner, to the wounds inflicted by the cobra-capella.

QUERY.-Might it not be worth while to ascertain the chemical properties of these stones, and, if they be efficacious in the extraction of venom conveyed by a bite, might they not be as successful if applied to the bite of a mad dog as to that of a cobra-capella?

CHAPTER LI.

When we separated for the night, which we did at eleven o'clock, Margrave said,—

"Good-night and good-by. I must leave you to-morrow, Strahan, and before your usual hour for rising. I took the liberty of requesting one of your men to order me a chaise from L—. Pardon my seeming abruptness, but I always avoid long leave-takings, and I had fixed the date of my departure almost as soon as I accepted your invitation."

"I have no right to complain. The place must be dull indeed to a gay young fellow like you. It is dull even to me. I am meditating flight already. Are you going back to L—?"

"Not even for such things as I left at my lodgings. When I settle somewhere and can give an address, I shall direct them to be sent to me. There are, I hear, beautiful patches of scenery towards the north, only known to pedestrian tourists. I am a good walker; and you know, Fenwick, that I am also a child of Nature. Adieu to you both; and many thanks to you, Strahan, for your hospitality."

He left the room.

"I am not sorry he is going," said Strahan, after a pause, and with a quick breath as if of relief. "Do you not feel that he exhausts one? An excess of oxygen, as you would say in a lecture."

I was alone in my own chamber; I felt indisposed for bed and for sleep; the curious conversation I had held with Margrave weighed on me. In that conversation, we had indirectly touched upon the prodigies which I had not brought myself to speak of with frank courage, and certainly nothing in Margrave's manner had betrayed consciousness of my suspicions; on the contrary, the open frankness with which he evinced his predilection for mystic speculation, or uttered his more unamiable sentiments, rather tended to disarm than encourage belief in gloomy secrets or sinister

powers. And as he was about to quit the neighbourhood, he would not again see Lilian, not even enter the town of L—. Was I to ascribe this relief from his presence to the promise of the Shadow; or was I not rather right in battling firmly against any grotesque illusion, and accepting his departure as a simple proof that my jealous fears had been amongst my other chimeras, and that as he had really only visited Lilian out of friendship to me, in my peril, so he might, with his characteristic acuteness, have guessed my jealousy, and ceased his visits from a kindly motive delicately concealed? And might not the same motive now have dictated the words which were intended to assure me that L— contained no attractions to tempt him to return to it? Thus, gradually soothed and cheered by the course to which my reflections led me, I continued to muse for hours. At length, looking at my watch, I was surprised to find it was the second hour after midnight. I was just about to rise from my chair to undress, and secure some hours of sleep, when the well-remembered cold wind passed through the room, stirring the roots of my hair; and before me stood, against the wall, the Luminous Shadow.

"Rise and follow me," said the voice, sounding much nearer than it had ever done before.

And at those words I rose mechanically, and like a sleepwalker.

"Take up the light."

I took it. The Scin-Laeca glided along the wall towards the threshold, and motioned me to open the door. I did so. The Shadow flitted through the corridor. I followed, with hushed footsteps, down a small stair into Forman's study. In all my subsequent proceedings, about to be narrated, the Shadow guided me, sometimes by voice, sometimes by sign. I obeyed the guidance, not only unresistingly, but without a desire to resist. I was unconscious either of curiosity or of awe,—only of a calm and passive indifference, neither pleasurable nor painful. In this obedience, from which all will seemed extracted, I took into my hands the staff which I had examined the day before, and which lay on the table, just where Margrave had cast it on re-entering the house. I unclosed the shutter to the casement, lifted the sash, and, with the light in my left hand, the staff in my right, stepped forth into the garden. The night was still; the flame of the candle scarcely trembled in the air; the Shadow moved on before me towards the old pavilion described in an earlier part of this narrative, and of which the mouldering doors stood wide open. I followed the Shadow into the pavilion, up the crazy stair to the room above, with its four great blank unglazed windows, or rather arcades, north, south, east, and west. I halted on the middle of the floor: right before my eyes, through the vista made by breathless boughs, stood out from the moonlit air the dreary mausoleum. Then, at the command conveyed to me, I placed the candle on a wooden settle, touched a spring in the handle of the staff; a lid flew back, and I drew from the hollow, first a lump of some dark bituminous substance, next a smaller slender wand of polished steel, of which the point was tipped with a translucent material,

which appeared to me like crystal. Bending down, still obedient to the direction conveyed to me, I described on the floor with the lump of bitumen (if I may so call it) the figure of the pentacle with the interlaced triangles, in a circle nine feet in diameter, just as I had drawn it for Margrave the evening before. The material used made the figure perceptible, in a dark colour of mingled black and red. I applied the flame of the candle to the circle, and immediately it became lambent with a low steady splendour that rose about an inch from the floor; and gradually from this light there emanated a soft, gray, transparent mist and a faint but exquisite odour. I stood in the midst of the circle, and within the circle also, close by my side, stood the Scin-Laeca,—no longer reflected on the wall, but apart from it, erect, rounded into more integral and distinct form, yet impalpable, and from it there breathed an icy air. Then lifting the wand, the broader end of which rested in the palm of my hand, the two forefingers closing lightly over it in a line parallel with the point, I directed it towards the wide aperture before me, fronting the mausoleum. I repeated aloud some words whispered to me in a language I knew not: those words I would not trace on this paper, could I remember them. As they came to a close, I heard a howl from the watch-dog in the yard,—a dismal, lugubrious howl. Other dogs in the distant village caught up the sound, and bayed in a dirge-like chorus; and the howling went on louder and louder. Again strange words were whispered to me, and I repeated them in mechanical submission; and when they, too, were ended, I felt the ground tremble beneath me, and as my eyes looked straight forward down the vista, that, stretching from the casement, was bounded by the solitary mausoleum, vague formless shadows seemed to pass across the moonlight,—below, along the sward, above, in the air; and then suddenly a terror, not before conceived, came upon me.

And a third time words were whispered; but though I knew no more of their meaning than I did of those that had preceded them, I felt a repugnance to utter them aloud. Mutely I turned towards the Scin-Laeca, and the expression of its face was menacing and terrible; my will became yet more compelled to the control imposed upon it, and my lips commenced the formula again whispered into my ear, when I heard distinctly a voice of warning and of anguish, that murmured "Hold!" I knew the voice; it was Lilian's. I paused; I turned towards the quarter from which the voice had come, and in the space afar I saw the features, the form of Lilian. Her arms were stretched towards me in supplication, her countenance was deadly pale, and anxious with unutterable distress. The whole image seemed in unison with the voice,—the look, the attitude, the gesture of one who sees another in deadly peril, and cries, "Beware!"

This apparition vanished in a moment; but that moment sufficed to free my mind from the constraint which had before enslaved it. I dashed the wand to the ground, sprang from the circle, rushed from the place. How I got into my own room I can remember not,—I know not; I have a vague reminiscence of some intervening wandering, of giant trees, of shroud-like moonlight, of the Shining Shadow and its angry aspect, of the blind walls and the iron door of the House of the Dead, of spectral images,—a

confused and dreary phantasmagoria. But all I can recall with distinctness is the sight of my own hueless face in the mirror in my own still room, by the light of the white moon through the window; and, sinking down, I said to myself, "This, at least, is an hallucination or a dream!"

CHAPTER LII.

A heavy sleep came over me at daybreak, but I did not undress nor go to bed. The sun was high in the heavens when, on waking, I saw the servant who had attended me bustling about the room.

"I beg your pardon, sir, I am afraid I disturbed you; but I have been three times to see if you were not coming down, and I found you so soundly asleep I did not like to wake you. Mr. Strahan has finished breakfast, and gone out riding; Mr. Margrave has left,—left before six o'clock."

"Ah, he said he was going early."

"Yes, sir; and he seemed so cross when he went. I could never have supposed so pleasant a gentleman could put himself into such a passion!"

"What was the matter?"

"Why, his walking-stick could not be found; it was not in the hall. He said he had left it in the study; we could not find it there. At last he found it himself in the old summerhouse, and said—I beg pardon—he said he was sure you had taken it there: that some one, at all events, had been meddling with it. However, I am very glad it was found, since he seems to set such store on it."

"Did Mr. Margrave go himself into the summer-house to look for it?"

"Yes, sir; no one else would have thought of such a place; no one likes to go there, even in the daytime."

"Why?"

"Why, sir, they say it is haunted since poor Sir Philip's death; and, indeed, there are strange noises in every part of the house. I am afraid you had a bad night, sir," continued the servant, with evident curiosity, glancing towards the bed, which I had not pressed, and towards the evening-dress which, while he spoke, I was rapidly changing for that which I habitually wore in the morning. "I hope you did not feel yourself ill?"

"No! but it seems I fell asleep in my chair."

"Did you hear, sir, how the dogs howled about two o'clock in the morning? They woke me. Very frightful!"

"The moon was at her full. Dogs will bay at the moon."

I felt relieved to think that I should not find Strahan in the breakfast-room; and hastening through the ceremony of a meal which I scarcely touched, I went out into the park unobserved, and creeping round the copses and into the neglected gardens, made my way to the pavilion. I mounted the stairs; I looked on the floor of the upper room; yes, there still was the black figure of the pentacle, the circle. So, then, it was not a dream! Till then I had doubted. Or might it not still be so far a dream that I had walked in my sleep, and with an imagination preoccupied by my conversations with Margrave,—by the hieroglyphics on the staff I had handled, by the very figure associated with superstitious practices which I had copied from some weird book at his request, by all the strange impressions previously stamped on my mind,—might I not, in truth, have carried thither in sleep the staff, described the circle, and all the rest been but visionary delusion? Surely, surely, so common-sense, and so Julius Faber would interpret the riddles that perplexed me! Be that as it may, my first thought was to efface the marks on the floor. I found this easier than I had ventured to hope. I rubbed the circle and the pentacle away from the boards with the sole of my foot, leaving but an undistinguishable smudge behind. I know not why, but I felt the more nervously anxious to remove all such evidences of my nocturnal visit to that room, because Margrave had so openly gone thither to seek for the staff, and had so rudely named me to the servant as having meddled with it. Might he not awake some suspicion against me? Suspicion, what of? I knew not, but I feared!

The healthful air of day gradually nerved my spirits and relieved my thoughts. But the place had become hateful to me. I resolved not to wait for Strahan's return, but to walk back to L—, and leave a message for my host. It was sufficient excuse that I could not longer absent myself from my patients; accordingly I gave directions to have the few things which I had brought with me sent to my house by any servant who might be going to L—, and was soon pleased to find myself outside the park-gates and on the high-road.

I had not gone a mile before I met Strahan on horseback. He received my apologies for not waiting his return to bid him farewell without observation, and, dismounting, led his horse and walked beside me on my road. I saw that there was something on his mind; at last he said, looking down,—

"Did you hear the dogs howl last night?"

"Yes! the full moon!"

"You were awake, then, at the time. Did you hear any other sound? Did you see anything?"

"What should I hear or see?"

Strahan was silent for some moments; then he said, with great seriousness,—

"I could not sleep when I went to bed last night; I felt feverish and restless. Somehow or other, Margrave got into my head, mixed up in some strange way with Sir Philip Derval. I heard the dogs howl, and at the same time, or rather a few minutes later, I felt the whole house tremble, as a frail corner-house in London seems to tremble at night when a carriage is driven past it. The howling had then ceased, and ceased as suddenly as it had begun. I felt a vague, superstitious alarm; I got up, and went to my window, which was unclosed (it is my habit to sleep with my windows open); the moon was very bright, and I saw, I declare I saw along the green alley that leads from the old part of the house to the mausoleum—No, I will not say what I saw or believed I saw,—you would ridicule me, and justly. But, whatever it might be, on the earth without or in the fancy within my brain, I was so terrified, that I rushed back to my bed, and buried my face in my pillow. I would have come to you; but I did not dare to stir. I have been riding hard all the morning in order to recover my nerves. But I dread sleeping again under that roof, and now that you and Margrave leave me, I shall go this very day to London. I hope all that I have told you is no bad sign of any coming disease; blood to the head, eh?"

"No; but imagination overstrained can produce wondrous effects. You do right to change the scene. Go to London at once, amuse yourself, and—"

"Not return, till the old house is razed to the ground. That is my resolve. You approve? That's well. All success to you, Fenwick. I will canter back and get my portmanteau ready and the carriage out, in time for the five o'clock train."

So then he, too, had seen—what? I did not dare and I did not desire to ask him. But he, at least, was not walking in his sleep! Did we both dream, or neither?