



SIR ARTHUR
CONAN DOYLE

THE
HORROR *of*
the **HEIGHTS**

& OTHER TALES *of* SUSPENSE

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TALES OF SUSPENSE

SIR
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PREFACE

I CARE NOT HOW HUMBLE your bookshelf may be, nor how lowly the room which it adorns. Close the door of that room behind you, shut off with it all the cares of the outer world, plunge back into the soothing company of the great dead, and then you are through the magic portal into that fair land wither worry and vexation can follow you no more. You have left all that is vulgar and all that is sordid behind you. There stand your noble, silent comrades, waiting in their ranks. Pass your eye down their files. Choose your man. And then you have but to hold up your hand to him and away you go together into dreamland. Surely there would be something eerie about a line of books were it not that familiarity has deadened our sense of it. Each is a mummified soul embalmed in cerecloth and natron of leather and printer's ink. Each cover of a true book enfolds the concentrated essence of a man. The personalities of the writers have faded into the thinnest shadows, as their bodies into impalpable dust, yet here are their very spirits at your command.

It is our familiarity also which has lessened our perception of the miraculous good fortune which we enjoy. Let us suppose that we were suddenly to learn that Shakespeare had returned to earth, and that he would favor any of us with an hour of his wit and his fancy. How eagerly we would seek him out! And yet we have him—the very best of him—at our elbows from week to week, and hardly trouble ourselves to put out our hands to beckon him down. No matter what mood a man may be in, when once he has passed through the magic door he can summon the world's greatest to sympathize with him in it. If he be thoughtful, here are the kings of thought. If he be dreamy, here are the

masters of fancy. Or is it amusement that he lacks? He can signal to any one of the world's great storytellers, and out comes the dead man and holds him enthralled by the hour. The dead are such good company that one may come to think too little of the living. It is a real and a pressing danger with many of us, that we should never find our own thoughts and our own souls, but be ever obsessed by the dead. Yet secondhand romance and secondhand emotion are surely better than the dull, soul-killing monotony which life brings to most of the human race. But best of all when the dead man's wisdom and the dead man's example give us guidance and strength in the living of our own strenuous days.

Come through the magic door with me, and sit here on the green settee, where you can see the old oak case with its untidy lines of volumes. Smoking is not forbidden. Would you care to hear me talk of them? Well, I ask nothing better, for there is no volume there which is not a dear, personal friend, and what can a man talk of more pleasantly than that? The other books are over yonder, but these are my own favorites—the ones I care to reread and to have near my elbow. There is not a tattered cover which does not bring its mellow memories to me....

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
from *Through the Magic Door*

THE HORROR OF THE HEIGHTS

The idea that the extraordinary narrative which has been called the Joyce-Armstrong Fragment is an elaborate practical joke, evolved by some unknown person cursed by a perverted and sinister sense of humor, has now been abandoned by all who have examined the facts. The most *macabre* and imaginative of plotters would hesitate before linking his morbid fancies with the unquestioned and tragic facts which reinforce the statement. Though the assertions contained in it are amazing and even monstrous, it is nonetheless forcing itself upon the general intelligence that they are true, and that we must readjust our ideas to the new situation.

This world of ours appears to be separated by a slight and precarious margin of safety from a most singular and unexpected danger. I will endeavor in this narrative, which reproduces the original document in its necessarily somewhat fragmentary form, to lay before the reader the whole of the facts up to date, prefacing my statement by saying that if there be any who doubt the narrative of Joyce-Armstrong there can be no question at all as to the facts concerning Lieutenant Myrtle, R. N., and Mr. Hay Connor, who undoubtedly met their end in the manner described.

The Joyce-Armstrong Fragment was found in the field which is called Lower Haycock, lying one mile to the westward of the village of Withyham upon the Kent and Sussex border. It was on the fifteenth of September last that an agricultural laborer, James Flynn, in the employment of Matthew Dodd, farmer of the Chantry Farm, Withyham, perceived a brier pipe lying near the footpath which skirts the hedge in Lower Haycock. A few paces farther on he picked up a pair of broken binocular glasses. Finally, among

some nettles in the ditch, he caught sight of a flat canvas-backed book which proved to be a notebook with detachable leaves, some of which had come loose and were fluttering along the base of the hedge. These he collected, but some, including the first, were never recovered and leave a deplorable hiatus in this all-important statement.

The notebook was taken by the laborer to his master, who in turn showed it to Dr. J. H. Atherton of Hartfield. This gentleman at once recognized the need for an expert examination, and the manuscript was forwarded to the Obro Club in London, where it now lies.

The first two pages of the manuscript are missing. There is also one torn away at the end of the narrative, though none of these affects the general coherence of the story. It is conjectured that the missing opening is concerned with the record of Mr. Joyce-Armstrong's qualifications as an aeronaut, which can be gathered from other sources and are admitted to be unsurpassed among the air pilots of England. For many years he has been looked upon as among the most daring and the most intellectual of flying men, a combination which has enabled him both to invent and to test several new devices, including the common gyroscopic attachment which is by his known name.

The main body of the manuscript is written neatly in ink, but the last few lines are in pencil and are so ragged as to be hardly legible—exactly, in fact, as they might be expected to appear if they were scribbled off hurriedly from the seat of a moving airplane.

There are, it may be added, several stains both on the last page and on the outside cover which have been pronounced by the Home Office experts to be blood—probably human and certainly mammalian. The fact that something closely resembling the organism of malaria was discovered in this blood, and that Joyce-Armstrong is known to have suffered from intermittent fever, is a remarkable example of the new weapons which modern science has placed in the hands of our detectives.

And now a word as to the personality of the author of this epoch-making statement. Joyce-Armstrong, according to the few friends who really knew something of the man, was a poet and a dreamer as well as a mechanic and an inventor. He was a man of considerable wealth, much of which he had spent in the pursuit of his aeronautical hobby. He had four private airplanes in his hangars near Devizes, and is said to have made no less than one hundred and seventy ascents in the course of last year.

He was a retiring man, with dark moods in which he would avoid the society of his fellows. Captain Dangerfield, who knew him better than anyone else, says that there were times when his eccentricity threatened to develop into something more serious. His habit of carrying a shotgun with him in his airplane was one manifestation of it. Another was the morbid effect which the fall of Lieutenant Myrtle had upon his mind.

Myrtle, who was attempting the height record, fell from an altitude of something over thirty thousand feet. Horrible to narrate, his head was entirely obliterated, though his body and limbs preserved their configuration. At every gathering of airmen, Joyce-Armstrong, according to Dangerfield, would ask with an enigmatic smile: "And where, pray, is Myrtle's head?" This dreadful question, and the strange fashion in which it was asked, froze the blood of men who were callous to the dangers of their perilous calling.

On another occasion, after dinner at the mess of the Flying School on Salisbury Plain, he started a debate as to what will be the most permanent danger which airmen will have to encounter. Having listened to successive opinions as to air pockets, faulty engines, and overbanking, he ended by shrugging his shoulders and refusing to put forward his own views, though he gave the impression that they differed from any advanced by his companions. It is worth remarking that after his own complete disappearance it was found that his private affairs were arranged with a precision which may show that he had a strong premonition of disaster.

With these essential explanations I will now give the narrative exactly as it stands, beginning at page three of the blood-soaked notebook.

“Nevertheless, when I dined at Rheims with Coselli and Gustav Raymond I found that neither of them was aware of any particular danger in the higher layers of the atmosphere. I did not actually say what was in my thoughts, but I got so near it that if they had had any corresponding idea they could not have failed to express it. But then they are two empty, vain-glorious fellows with no thought beyond seeing their silly names in the newspaper. It is interesting to note that neither of them had ever been much beyond the twenty-thousand-foot level. Of course, men have been higher than this both in balloons and in the ascent of mountains. It must be well above that point that the airplane enters the danger zone—always presuming that my premonitions are correct.

“Airplaning has been with us now for more than twenty years, and one might well ask, why should this peril be only revealing itself in our day? The answer is obvious. In the old days of weak engines, when a hundred-horsepower Gnome was considered ample for every need, the flights were very restricted. Now that three hundred horsepower is the rule rather than the exception, visits to the upper layers have become easier and more common. Some of us can remember how in our youth Garros made a worldwide reputation by attaining nineteen thousand feet, and it was considered a remarkable achievement to fly over the Alps.

“Our standard now has been immeasurably raised, and there are twenty high flights for one in former years. Many of them have been undertaken with impunity. The thirty-thousand-foot level has been reached time after time with no discomfort beyond cold and asthma.

“What does this prove? A visitor might descend upon this planet a thousand times and never see a tiger. Yet tigers exist, and if he chanced to come down into a jungle he

might be devoured. There are jungles of the upper air, and there are worse things than tigers which inhabit them. I believe in time these jungles will be accurately mapped out. Even at the present moment I could name two of them. One of them lies over the Pau-Biarritz district of France. Another is just over my head as I write here in my house in Wiltshire. I rather think there is a third in the Homburg-Wiesbaden district.

“It was the disappearance of the airmen that first set me thinking. Of course, everyone said that they had fallen into the sea, but that did not satisfy me at all. First, there was Verrier in France; his machine was found near Bayonne, but they never got his body.

“There was the case of Baxter also, who vanished, though his engine and some of the iron fixings were found in a wood in Leicestershire. In that case, Dr. Middleton of Amesbury, who was watching the flight with a telescope, declares that just before the clouds obscured the view he saw the machine, which was at an enormous height, suddenly rise perpendicularly upward in a succession of jerks, in a manner that he would have thought to be impossible. That was the last seen of Baxter. There was a correspondence in the papers, but it never led to anything.

“There were several other similar cases, and then there was the death of Hay Connor. What a crackle there was about an unsolved mystery of the air, and what columns in the halfpenny papers, and yet how little was ever done to get at the bottom of the business! He came down in a tremendous volplane from an unknown height. He never got off his machine, and died in his pilot’s seat.

“Died of what? ‘Heart disease,’ said the doctors. Rubbish! Hay Connor’s heart was as sound as mine is. What did Venables say? Venables was the only man who was at his side when he died. He said that he was shivering and looked like a man who had been badly scared. ‘Died of fright,’ said Venables, but could not imagine what he was frightened about. Only said one word to Venables, which sounded like

'Monstrous.' They could make nothing of that at the inquest. But I could make something of it.

"Monsters! That was the last word of poor Harry Hay Connor. And he *did* die of fright, just as Venables thought.

"And then there was Myrtle's head. Do you really believe—does anybody really believe—that a man's head could be driven clean into his body by the force of a fall? Well, perhaps it may be possible, but I for one have never believed that it was so with Myrtle. And the grease upon his clothes—'all slimy with grease,' said somebody at the inquest. Queer that nobody got thinking after that! I did—but then I had been thinking for a good long time.

"I've made three ascents—how Dangerfield used to chaff me about my shotgun!—but I've never been high enough! Now, with this new, light Paul Veroner machine and its one hundred seventy-five Robur, I should easily touch the thirty thousand tomorrow. I'll have a shot at the record. Maybe I shall have a shot at something else as well. Of course, it's dangerous. If a fellow wants to avoid danger he had best keep out of flying altogether and subside finally into flannel slippers and a dressing gown. But I'll visit the air jungle tomorrow—and if there's anything there I shall know it.

"If I return, I'll find myself a bit of a celebrity. If I don't, this notebook may explain what I am trying to do, and how I lost my life in doing it. But no drivel about accidents or mysteries, if *you* please.

"I chose my Paul Veroner monoplane for the job. There's nothing like a monoplane when real work is to be done. Beaumont found that out in very early days. For one thing, it doesn't mind damp, and the weather looks as if we should be in the clouds all the time. It's a bonny little model, and answers my hand like a tender-mouthed horse. The engine is a ten-cylinder rotary Robur, working up to one hundred seventy-five. It has all the modern improvements, enclosed fuselage, high-curved landing skids, brakes, gyroscopic steadiers, and three speeds worked by an alteration of the angle of the planes, upon the Venetian-blind principle.

“I took a shotgun with me, with a dozen cartridges filled with buckshot. You should have seen the face of Perkins, my old mechanic, when I directed him to put them in. I was dressed like an Arctic explorer, with two jerseys under my overalls, thick socks inside my padded boots, a storm cap with flaps, and my talc goggles. It was stifling outside the hangars, but I was going for the summit of the Himalayas, and had to dress for the part.

“Of course, I took an oxygen bag; the man who goes for the altitude record without one will either be frozen or smothered—or both.

“I had a good look at the planes, the rudder bar, and the elevating lever before I got in. Everything was in order so far as I could see. Then I switched on my engine and found that she was running sweetly. When they let her go she rose almost at once, upon the lowest speed. I circled my home field once or twice just to warm her up, and then with a wave to the others I flattened out my planes and put her on her highest. She skimmed like a swallow down wind for eight or ten miles until I turned her nose up a little and she began to climb in a great spiral for the cloud bank above me. It’s all important to rise slowly and adapt yourself to the pressure as you go.

“It was a close, warm day for an English September, and there was the hush and heaviness of impending rain. Now and then there came sudden puffs of wind from the southwest—one of them so gusty and unexpected that it caught me napping and turned me half-round for an instant. I remember the time when gusts and whirls and air pockets used to be things of danger—before we learned to put an overmastering power into our engines. Just as I reached the cloud banks, with the altimeter marking three thousand, down came the rain.

“My word, how it poured! It drummed upon my wings, and lashed against my face, blurring my glasses so that I could hardly see. I got down on to a low speed, for it was painful to travel against it. As I got higher it became hail, and I had

to turn tail to it. One of my cylinders was out of action—a dirty plug, I should imagine; but still I was rising steadily with plenty of power.

“After a bit the trouble passed, whatever it was, and I heard the full, deep-throated purr—then ten singing as one. That’s where the beauty of our modern silencers comes in. We can at last control our engines by ear. How they squeal and squeak and sob when they are in trouble! All those cries for help were wasted in the old days when every sound was swallowed up by the monstrous racket of the machine. If only the early aviators could come back to see the beauty and perfection of the mechanism which has been bought at the cost of their lives!

“About 9:30 I was nearing the clouds. Down below me, all blurred and shadowed with rain, lay the vast expanse of Salisbury Plain. Half a dozen flying machines were doing hackwork at the thousand-foot level, looking like little black swallows against the green background. I dare say they were wondering what I was doing up in cloudland.

“Suddenly a gray curtain drew across beneath me, and the wet folds of vapor were swirling round my face. It was clammily cold and miserable. But I was above the hailstorm and that was something gained. The cloud was as dark and thick as a London fog. In my anxiety to get clear, I cocked her nose up until the automatic alarm bell rang and I actually began to slide backward. My sopped and dripping wings had made me heavier than I thought, but presently I was in lighter cloud and soon had cleared the first layer.

“There was a second—opal-colored and fleecy—at a great height above my head; a white, unbroken ceiling above, and a dark, unbroken floor below, with the monoplane laboring upward upon a vast spiral between them. It is deadly lonely in these cloud spaces. Once a great flight of some small water bird went past me, flying very fast to the westward. The quick whir of their wings and their musical cry were cheery to my ear. I fancy that they were teal, but I am a

wretched zoologist. Now that we humans have become birds, we must really learn to know our brethren by sight.

“The wind down beneath me whirled and swayed the broad cloud plain. Once a great eddy formed in it, a whirlpool of vapor, and through it, as down a funnel, I caught sight of the distant world. A large white biplane was passing at a vast depth beneath me. I fancy it was the morning mail service between Bristol and London. Then the drift swirled inward again and the great solitude was unbroken.

“Just after ten I touched the lower edge of the upper-cloud stratum. It consisted of fine, diaphanous vapor drifting swiftly from the westward. The wind had been steadily rising all this time, and it was now blowing a sharp breeze—twenty-eight an hour by my gaze. Already it was very cold, though my altimeter marked only nine thousand. The engines were working beautifully, and we went droning steadily upward. The cloud bank was thicker than I had expected, but at last it thinned out into a golden mist before me, and then in an instant I had shot out from it, and there was an unclouded sky and a brilliant sun over my head—all blue and gold above, all shining silver below, one vast, glimmering plain as far as my eyes could reach.

“It was quarter past ten o’clock, and the barograph needle pointed to twelve thousand eight hundred. Up I went and up, my ears concentrated upon the deep purring of my motor, my eyes busy always with the watch, the revolution indicator, the petrol lever, and the oil pump. No wonder aviators are said to be a fearless race. With so many things to think of there is no time to trouble about oneself. About this time I noted how unreliable is the compass when above a certain height from earth. At fifteen thousand feet mine was pointing east and a point south. The sun and the wind gave me my true bearings.

“I rose steadily, reflecting the sun like a gilded dragonfly between earth and heaven, soaring higher and higher from the silver fleece beneath me.

“But a mighty wind was flowing like a great, smooth river across these empty solitudes of air. I had hoped to reach an eternal stillness in these high altitudes, but with every thousand feet of ascent the gale grew stronger. My machine groaned and trembled in every joint and rivet as she faced it, and swept away like a sheet of paper when I banked her on the turn, skimming down wind at a greater pace, perhaps, than ever mortal man has moved. Yet I had always to turn again and tack up in the wind’s eye, for it was not merely a height record that I was after. By all my calculations it was above Wiltshire that my air jungle lay, and all my labor might be lost if I struck the outer layers at some farther point.

“When I reached the nineteen-thousand-foot level, which was about midday, the wind was so severe that I looked with some anxiety to the stays of my wings, expecting momentarily to see them snap or slacken. I even cast loose the parachute behind me, and fastened its hook into the ring of my leathern belt so as to ready for the worst. This is the time when a bit of scamped work by the mechanic is paid for by the life of the aeronaut. But she held together bravely. Every cord and strut was humming and vibrating like a harp string; but it was glorious to see how, for all the beating and the buffeting, she was still the mistress of the sky.

“This is surely something divine in man himself that he should rise so superior to the limitations which Creation seems to impose—rise, too, by such unselfish, heroic devotion as this air conquest has shown. Talk of human degeneration! When has such a story as this been written in the annals of our race!

“These were the thoughts in my head as I climbed that monstrous inclined plane, with the wind sometimes beating in my face and sometimes whistling behind my ears, while the cloudland beneath me fell away to such a distance that the folds and hummocks of silver had all smoothed out into one flat, shining plain.

“But suddenly I had a horrible and unprecedented experience. I have known before what it is to be in what our neighbors have called a *‘tourbillon,’* but never on such a scale as this. That huge, sweeping river of wind of which I have spoken had, as it appears, whirlpools within it which were as monstrous as itself. Without a moment’s warning I was dragged suddenly into the heart of one. I spun round for a minute or two with such velocity that I almost lost my senses, and then fell suddenly, left wing foremost, down the vacuum funnel in the center. I dropped like a stone, and lost nearly a thousand feet in about twenty seconds. It was only my belt that kept me in my seat, and the shock and breathlessness left me hanging half-insensible over the side of the fuselage.

“But I am always capable of a supreme effort—it is my one great merit as an aviator. I was conscious that the descent was slower. The whirlpool was a cone rather than a funnel, and I had come to the apex. With a terrific wrench, throwing my weight all to one side, I leveled my planes and brought her head away from the wind. In an instant I had shot out of the eddies and was skimming down the sky.

“Then, shaken but victorious, I turned her nose up and began once more my steady grind on the upward spiral. I took a large sweep to avoid the danger spot of the whirlpool, and soon I was safely above it. Just after one o’clock I was twenty-one thousand feet above the sea level. To my great joy I had topped the gale, and with every hundred feet of ascent the air grew stiller. On the other hand, it was very cold, and I was conscious of that peculiar nausea which goes with rarefication of air. For the first time I unscrewed the mouth of my oxygen bag and took an occasional whiff of the glorious bag. I could feel it running like a cordial through my veins, and I was exhilarated almost to the point of drunkenness. I shouted and sang as I soared upward into the cold, still outer world.

“It was very clear to me that the insensibility which came upon Glaisher, and in a lesser degree upon Coxwell, when in

1862 they ascended in a balloon to the height of thirty thousand feet, was due to the extreme speed with which a perpendicular ascent is made. Doing it at an easy gradient and accustoming oneself to the lessened barometric pressure by slow degrees, there are no such dreadful symptoms. At the same great height I found that even without my oxygen inhaler I could breathe without undue distress.

“It was bitterly cold, however, and my thermometer was at zero Fahrenheit. At 1:30, I was nearly seven miles above the surface of the earth, and still ascending steadily. I found, however, that the rarefied air was giving markedly less support to my planes, and that my angle of ascent had to be considerably lowered in consequence. It was already clear that even with my light weight and strong engine power there was a point in front of me where I should be held. To make matters worse, one of my sparking plugs was in trouble again and there was intermittent misfiring in the engine. My heart was heavy with the fear of failure.

“It was about that time that I had a most extraordinary experience. Something whizzed past me in a trail of smoke and exploded with a loud hissing sound, sending forth a cloud of steam. For the instant I could not imagine what had happened. Then I remembered that the earth is forever being bombarded by meteor stones and would be hardly inhabitable were they not in nearly every case turned to vapor in the outer layers of the atmosphere. Here is a new danger for the high-altitude man, for two others passed me when I was nearing the forty-thousand-foot mark. I cannot doubt that at the edge of the earth’s envelope the risk would be a very real one.

“My barograph needle marked forty-one thousand three hundred when I became aware that I could go no farther. Physically, the strain was not as yet greater than I could bear, but my machine had reached its limit. The attenuated air gave no firm support to the wings, and the least tilt developed into sideslip, while she seemed sluggish on her

controls. Possibly, had the engine been at its best, another thousand feet might have been within our capacity; but it was still misfiring, and two out of the ten cylinders appeared to be out of action. If I had not already reached the zone for which I was searching, then I should never see it upon this journey.

“But was it not possible that I had attained it? Soaring in circles like a monstrous hawk upon the forty-thousand-foot level, I let the monoplane guide herself, and with my Mannheim glass I made a careful observation of my surroundings. The heavens were perfectly clear; there was no indication of those dangers which I had imagined.

“I have said I was soaring in circles. It struck me suddenly that I should do well to take a wider sweep and open up a new air tract. If the hunter entered an earth jungle he would drive through it if he wished find his game. My reasoning had led me to believe that the air jungle which I had imagined lay somewhere over Wiltshire. This should be to the south and west of me. I took my bearings from the sun, for the compass was hopeless and no trace of earth was to be seen—nothing but the distant silver cloud plain. However, I got my direction as best I might and kept her head straight to the mark. I reckoned more that my petrol supply would not last for more than another hour or so, but I could afford to use it to the last drop, since a single magnificent volplane would at anytime take me to the earth.

“Suddenly I was aware of something new. The air in front of me had lost its crystal clearness. It was full of long, ragged wisps of something which I can only compare to very fine cigarette smoke. It hung about in wreaths and coils, turning and twisting slowly in the sunlight. As the monoplane shot through it, I was aware of a faint taste of oil upon my lips, and there was a greasy scum upon the woodwork of the machine. Some infinitely fine organic matter appeared to be suspended in the atmosphere.

“There was no life there. It was inchoate and diffuse, extending for many square acres and then fringing off into

the void. No, it was not life. But might it not be the remains of life? Above all, might it not be the food of life, of monstrous life, even as the humble grease of the ocean is the food for the mighty whale? The thought was in my mind when my eyes looked upward and I saw the most wonderful vision that ever man has seen. Can I hope to convey it to you, even as I saw it myself last Thursday!

“Conceive a jellyfish such as sails in our summer seas, bell-shaped and of enormous size—far larger, I should judge, than the dome of Saint Paul’s. It was of a light pink color veined with a delicate green, but the whole huge fabric so tenuous that it was but a fairy outline against the dark blue sky. It pulsed with a delicate and regular rhythm. From it there depended two long, drooping green tentacles which swayed slowly backward and forward. This gorgeous vision passed gently with noiseless dignity over my head, as light and fragile as a soap bubble, and drifted upon its stately way.

“I had half-turned my monoplane that I might look after this beautiful creature, when in a moment I found myself amidst a perfect fleet of them, of all sizes, but none so large as the first. Some were quite small, but the majority about as big as an average balloon, and with much the same curvature at the top. There was in them a delicacy of texture and coloring which reminded me of the finest Venetian glass. Pale shades of pink and green were the prevailing tints, but all had a lovely iridescence where the sun shimmered through their dainty forms. Some hundreds of them drifted past me, a wonderful fairy squadron of strange, unknown argosies of sky—creatures whose forms and substance were so attuned to these pure heights that one could not conceive anything so delicate within actual sight or sound of earth.

“But soon my attention was drawn to a new phenomenon—the serpents of the outer air. These were long, thin, fantastic coils of vaporlike material, which turned and twisted with great speed, flying round and round so fast that

the eyes could hardly follow them. Some of these ghostlike creatures were twenty or thirty feet long; but it was difficult to tell their girth, for their outline was so hazy that it seemed to fade away into the air around them. These air snakes were of a very light gray or smoke color, with some darker lines within which gave the impression of a definite organism. One of them whisked past my very face, and I was conscious of a cold, clammy contact; but their composition was so unsubstantial that I could not connect them with any thought of physical danger, any more than the beautiful belllike creatures which had preceded them. There was no more solidity in their frames than in the floating spume from a broken wave.

“But a more terrible experience was in store for me. Floating downward from a great height, there came a purplish patch of vapor, small as I saw it first, but rapidly enlarging as it approached me, until it appeared to be hundreds of square feet in size. Though fashioned of some transparent jellylike substance, it was nonetheless of much more definite outline and solid consistence than anything which I had seen before.

“There were more traces, too, of a physical organization, especially two vast, shadowy, circular plates upon either side, which may have been eyes, and a perfectly solid white projection between them which was as curved and cruel as the beak of a vulture. The whole aspect of this monster was formidable and threatening, and it kept changing its color from a very light mauve to a dark, angry purple so thick that it cast a shadow as it drifted between my monoplane and the sun. On the upper curve of its huge body there were three great projections which I can only describe as enormous bubbles, and I was convinced as I looked at them that they were charged with some extremely light gas which served to buoy up the misshapen and semisolid mass in the rarefied air.

“The creature moved swiftly along, keeping pace easily with the monoplane, and for twenty miles or more it formed

my horrible escort, hovering over me like a bird of prey which is waiting to pounce. Its method of progression—done so swiftly that it was not easy to follow—was to throw out a long, glutinous streamer in front of it, which in turn seemed to draw forward the rest of the writhing body. So elastic and gelatinous was it that never for two successive minutes was it the same shape, and yet each change made it more threatening and loathsome than the last.

“I knew that it meant mischief. Every purple flush of its hideous body told me so. The vague, goggling eyes, which were turned always upon me, were cold and merciless in their viscid hatred. I dipped the nose of my monoplane downward to escape it. As I did so, as quick as a flash, there shot out a long tentacle from this mass of floating blubber, and it fell as light and sinuous as a whiplash across the front of my machine. There was a loud hiss as it lay for a moment across the hot engine, and it whisked itself into the air again while the huge, flat body drew itself together as if in sudden pain.

“I dipped to a vol-piqué, but again a tentacle fell over the monoplane, and was shorn off by the propeller as easily as it might have cut through a smoke wreath. A long, gliding, sticky, serpentlike coil came from behind and caught me round the waist, dragging me out of the fuselage. I tore at it, my fingers sinking into the smooth, gluelike surface, and for an instant I disengaged myself, but only to be caught round the boot by another coil, which gave me a jerk that tilted me almost on my back.

“As I fell over I blazed off both barrels of my gun, though indeed it was like attacking an elephant with a peashooter to imagine that any human weapon could cripple that mighty bulk. And yet I aimed better than I knew, for with a loud report one of the great blisters upon the creature’s back exploded with the puncture of the buckshot. It was very clear that my conjecture was right, and that these vast, clear bladders were distended with some lifting gas, for in an instant the huge, cloudlike body turned sideways,

writhing desperately to find its balance, while the white beak snapped and gaped in horrible fury.

“But already I had shot away on the steepest glide that I dared to attempt, my engine still full on, the flying propeller and the force of gravity shooting me downward like an aerolite. Far behind me I saw a dull purplish smudge growing swiftly smaller and merging into the blue sky behind it.

“I was safe out of the deadly jungle of the outer air.

“Once out of danger I throttled my engine, for nothing tears a machine to pieces quicker than running on full power from a height. It was a glorious spiral volplane from nearly eight miles in altitude, first to the level of the silver cloud bank, then to that of the storm cloud beneath it, and finally in beating rain to the surface of the earth. I saw the Bristol Channel beneath me as I broke from the clouds; but having still some petrol in my tank I got twenty miles inland before I found myself stranded in a field near the village of Ashcombe.

“There I got three tins of petrol from a passing motorcar, and at ten minutes past six that evening I alighted gently in my own home meadow at Devizes after such a journey as no mortal upon earth has ever yet taken and lived to tell the tale. I have seen the beauty and I have seen the horror of the heights—and greater beauty or greater horror than that is not within the ken of man.

“And now it is my plan to go once again before I give my results to the world.

“My reason for this is that I must surely have something to show by the way of proof before I lay such a tale before my fellow men. It is true that others will soon follow and will confirm what I have said, and yet I should wish to carry conviction from the first. Those lovely iridescent bubbles of the air should not be hard to capture. They drift slowly upon their way, and the swift monoplane could intercept their leisurely course. It is likely enough that they would dissolve in the heavier layers of the atmosphere, and that some small heap of amorphous jelly might be all that I should

bring to earth with me. And yet something there would surely be, by which I could substantiate my story.

“Yes, I will go, even if I run a risk by doing so. These purple horrors would not seem to be numerous. It is probable that I shall not see one. If I do I shall dive at once. At the worst there is always the shotgun and my knowledge of ...”

(Here a page of the manuscript is unfortunately missing.)
On the next page is written in large, struggling writing:

Forty-three thousand feet. I shall never see earth again. They are beneath me, three of them. God help me, it is a dreadful death to die!

Such in its entirety is the Joyce-Armstrong Statement.

Of the man nothing has since been seen. Pieces of his shattered monoplane have been picked up in the preserves of Mr. Budd-Lushington upon the borders of Kent and Sussex, within a few miles of the spot where the notebook was discovered.

If the unfortunate aviator's theory is correct that this air jungle, as he called it, existed only over the southwest of England, then it would seem that he had fled from it at the full speed of his monoplane, but had been overtaken and devoured by these horrible creatures at some spot in the outer atmosphere above the place where the grim relics were found. The picture of that monoplane skimming down the sky, with the nameless terrors flying swiftly beneath it and cutting it off always from the earth, while they gradually closed in upon their victim, is one upon which a man who valued his sanity would prefer not to dwell.

There are many, as I am aware, who still jeer at the facts which I have here set down, but even they must admit that Joyce-Armstrong has disappeared, and I would commend to them his own words:

“This notebook may explain what I am trying to do, and how I lost my life in doing it. But no drivel about accidents or

mysteries, if *you* please.”

LOT NO. 249

Of the dealings of Edward Bellingham with William Monkhouse Lee, and of the cause of the great terror of Abercrombie Smith, it may be that no absolute and final judgment will ever be delivered. It is true that we have the full and clear narrative of Smith himself, and such corroboration as he could look for from Thomas Styles, the servant, from the Reverend Plumtree Peterson, Fellow of Old's, and from such other people as chanced to gain some passing glance at this or that incident in a singular chain of events. Yet, in the main, the story must rest upon Smith alone, and the most will think that it is more likely that one brain, however outwardly sane, has some subtle warp in its texture, some strange flaw in its workings, than that path of nature has been overstepped in open day in so famed a center of learning and light as the University of Oxford. Yet when we think how narrow and how devious this path of nature is, how dimly we can trace it, for all our lamps of science, and how from the darkness which girds it round great and terrible possibilities loom ever shadowly upward, it is a bold and confident man who will put a limit to the strange bypaths into which the human spirit may wander.

In a certain wing of what we will call Old College in Oxford there is a corner turret of an exceeding great age. The heavy arch which spans the open door has bent downward in the center under the weight of its years, and the gray lichen-blotched blocks of stone are bound and knitted together with withes and strands of ivy, as though the old mother had set herself to brace them up against wind and weather. From the door a stone stair curves upward spirally, passing two landings, and terminating in a third one, its

steps all shapeless and hollowed by the tread of so many generations of the seekers after knowledge. Life has flowed like water down this winding stair, and, waterlike, has left these smooth-worn grooves behind it. From the long-gowned pedantic scholars of Plantagenet days down to the young bloods of a later age, how full and strong had been that tide of young English life! And what was left now of all those hopes, those strivings, those fiery energies, save here and there in some old-world churchyard a few scratches upon a stone, and perchance a handful of dust in a moldering coffin? Yet here were the silent stair and the gray old wall, with a bend and saltire and many another heraldic device still to be read upon its surface, like grotesque shadows thrown back from the days that had passed.

In the month of May, in the year 1884, three young men occupied the sets of rooms which opened on to the separate landing of the old stair. Each set consisted simply of a sitting room and of a bedroom, while the two corresponding rooms upon the ground floor were used, the one as a coal cellar, and the other as the living room of the servant, or gyp, Thomas Styles, whose duty it was to wait upon the three men above him. To right and to left was a line of lecture rooms and of offices, so that the dwellers in the old turret enjoyed a certain seclusion, which made the chambers popular among the more studious undergraduates. Such were the three who occupied them now—Abercrombie Smith above, Edward Bellingham beneath him, and William Monkhouse Lee upon the lowest story.

It was ten o'clock on a bright spring night, and Abercrombie Smith lay back in his armchair, his feet upon the fender, and his brierroot pipe between his lips. In a similar chair, and equally at his ease, there lounged on the other side of the fireplace his old school friend Jephro Hastie. Both men were in flannels, for they had spent their evening upon the river, but apart from their dress no one could look at their hard-cut alert faces without seeing that they were open-air men—men whose minds and tastes

turned naturally to all that was manly and robust. Hastie, indeed, was stroke of his college boat, and Smith was an even better oar, but a coming examination had already cast its shadow over him and held him to his work, save for the few hours a week which health demanded. A litter of medical books upon the table, with scattered bones, models, and anatomical plates, pointed to the extent as well as the nature of his studies, while a couple of singlesticks and a set of boxing gloves above the mantelpiece hinted at the means by which, with Hastie's help, he might take his exercise in its most compressed and least distant form. They knew each other very well—so well that they could sit now in that soothing silence which is the very highest development of companionship.

“Have some whiskey,” said Abercrombie Smith at last, between two cloudbursts. “Scotch in the jug and Irish in the bottle.”

“No, thanks. I'm in for the sculls. I don't liquor when I'm training. How about you?”

“I'm reading hard. I think it best to leave it alone.”

Hastie nodded, and they relapsed into a contented silence.

“By the way, Smith,” asked Hastie, presently, “have you made the acquaintance of either of the fellows on your stair yet?”

“Just a nod when we pass. Nothing more.”

“Hum! I should be inclined to let it stand at that. I know something of them both. Not much, but as much as I want. I don't think I should take them to my bosom if I were you. Not that there's much amiss with Monkhouse Lee.”

“Meaning the thin one?”

“Precisely. He is a gentlemanly little fellow. I don't think there is any vice in him. But then you can't know him without knowing Bellingham.”

“Meaning the fat one?”

“Yes, the fat one. And he's a man whom I for one would rather not know.”

Abercrombie Smith raised his eyebrows and glanced across at his companion. "What's up, then?" he asked. "Drink? Cards? Cad? You used not to be censorious."

"Ah! you evidently don't know the man, or you wouldn't ask. There's something damnable about him, something reptilian. My gorge always rises at him. I should put him down as a man with secret vices—an evil liver. He's no fool, though. They say that he is one of the best men in his line that they have ever had in the college."

"Medicine or classics?"

"Eastern languages. He's a demon at them. Chillingworth met him somewhere above the second cataract last long, and he told me that he just prattled to the Arabs as if he had been born and nursed and weaned among them. He talked Coptic to the Copts, and Hebrew to the Jews, and Arabic to the Bedouins, and they were all ready to kiss the hem of his frock coat. There are some old hermit Johnnies up in those parts who sit on rocks and scowl and spit at the casual stranger. Well, when they saw this chap Bellingham, before he had said five words they just lay down on their bellies and wriggled. Chillingworth said that he never saw anything like it. Bellingham seemed to take it as his right too, and strutted about among them and talked down to them like a Dutch uncle. Pretty good for an undergrad of Old's, wasn't it?"

"That sort of thing doesn't mean much in the East, though. It was just their way of saying that they were surprised and pleased to find a foreigner who knew something of their history and language. But how do you come to know this fellow?"

"Well, I come from Applesford, you know, and so does young Monkhouse Lee. His father is vicar there, and he has a sister, Eveline Lee, who is as nice a little girl as you would wish to see. When Lee began to be chummy with Bellingham, he asked him down to stay at the vicarage, and I saw something of him. The mischief of it is that he's managed in some way to get the better of little Eveline, and

she is engaged to him. What she can see in the fellow! But it's my belief that there are many women, and Eveline Lee is among them, who are so unselfish, and so gentle, and so frightened of giving pain, that if their fathers' gardeners were to propose to them, they would accept them for fear of hurting their feelings if they refused. Well, I suppose they know their own business best, but it makes a man grind his teeth. A dove and a toad—that's what I always think of."

Abercrombie Smith grinned and knocked his ashes out against the side of the grate. "You show every card in your hand, old chap," said he. "What a prejudiced, green-eyed, evil-thinking old man it is! You have really nothing against the fellow except that."

"Well, I've known her ever since she was as long as that cherry-wood pipe, and I don't like to see her taking risks. And it is a risk. He looks beastly. And he has a beastly temper, a venomous temper. You remember his row with Long Norton?"

"No; you always forget that I am a freshman."

"Ah, it was last winter. Of course. Well, you know the towpath along by the river. There were several fellows going along it, Bellingham in front, when they came on an old market woman coming the other way. It had been raining—you know what those fields are like when it has rained—and the path ran between the river and a great puddle that was nearly as broad. Well, what does this swine do but keep the path, and push the old girl into the mud, where she and her marketings came to terrible grief. It was a blackguard thing to do, and Long Norton, who is as gentle a fellow as ever stepped, told him what he thought of it. One word led to another, and it ended in Norton laying his stick across the fellow's shoulders. There was the deuce of a fuss about it, and it's a treat to see the way in which Bellingham looks at Norton when they meet now. By Jove, Smith, it's nearly eleven o'clock."

"No hurry. Light your pipe again."

“Not I. I’m supposed to be in training. Here I’ve been sitting gossiping like a ——— old woman when I ought to have been safely tucked up. I’ll borrow your skull, if you can spare it. Williams has had mine for a month. I’ll take the little bones of your ear too, if you are sure you won’t need them. Thanks very much. Never mind a bag, I can carry them very well under my arm. Good-night, my son, and take my tip as to your neighbor.”

When Hastie, bearing his anatomical plunder, had clattered off down the winding stair, Abercrombie Smith hurled his pipe into the wastepaper basket, and drawing his chair nearer to the lamp, plunged into a formidable green-covered volume, adorned with great colored maps of that strange internal kingdom of which we are the hapless and helpless monarchs. Though a freshman at Oxford, the student was not so in medicine, for he had worked for four years at Glasgow and at Berlin, and this coming examination would place him finally as a member of his profession. With his firm mouth, broad forehead, and clear-cut, somewhat hard-featured face, he was a man who, if he had no brilliant talent, was yet so dogged, so patient, and so strong that he might in the end overtop a more showy genius. A man who can hold his own among Scotchmen and North Germans is not a man to be easily set back. Smith had left a name at Glasgow and at Berlin, and he was bent now upon doing as much at Oxford, if hard work and devotion could accomplish it.

He had sat reading for about an hour, and the hands of the noisy carriage clock upon the side table were rapidly closing together upon the twelve, when a sudden sound fell upon the student’s ear, a sharp, rather shrill sound, like the hissing intake of a man’s breath who gasps under some strong emotion. Smith laid down his book and slanted his ear to listen. There was no one on either side or above him, so that the interruption came certainly from the neighbor beneath him—the same neighbor of whom Hastie had given so unsavory an account. Smith knew him only as a flabby

pale-faced man of silent and studious habits, a man whose lamp threw a golden bar from the old turret even after he had extinguished his own. This community in lateness had formed a certain silent bond between them. It was soothing to Smith when the hours stole on toward dawning to feel that there was another so close who set as small a value upon his sleep as he did. He could even see him at times, for when the moon lay behind the turret, and cast its black length across the green quadrangle lawn, each window stood out upon the shadow as a yellow glimmering square, and there, in the center of this golden frame, Smith could sometimes see the blurred outline of the sunken head and rounded shoulders of the worker beneath him. Even now, as his thoughts turned toward him, Smith's feelings were kindly. Hastie was a good fellow, but he was rough, strong-fibered, with no imagination or sympathy. He could not tolerate departures from what he looked upon as the model type of manliness. If a man could not be measured by a public-school standard, then he was beyond the pale with Hastie. Like so many who are themselves robust, he was apt to confuse the constitution with the character, to ascribe to want of principle what was really a want of circulation. Smith, with his stronger mind, knew his friend's habit, and made allowance for it now as his thoughts turned toward the man beneath him.

There was no return of the singular sound, and Smith was about to turn to his work once more, when suddenly there broke out in the silence of the night a hoarse cry, a positive scream, the call of a man who is moved and shaken beyond all control. Smith sprang out of his chair and dropped his book. He was a man of fairly firm fiber, but there was something in this sudden uncontrollable shriek of horror which chilled his blood and pringed in his skin. Coming in such a place and at such an hour, it brought a thousand fantastic possibilities into his head. Should he rush down, or was it better to wait? He had all the national hatred of making a scene, and he knew so little of his neighbor that

he would not lightly intrude upon his affairs. For a moment he stood in doubt, and even as he balanced the matter there was a quick rattle of footsteps upon the stairs, and young Monkhouse Lee, half dressed and as white as ashes, burst into his room.

“Come down!” he gasped. “Bellingham’s ill.”

Abercrombie Smith followed him closely down the stairs into the sitting room which was beneath his own, and intent as he was upon the matter in hand, he could not but take an amazed glance around him as he crossed the threshold. It was such a chamber as he had never seen before—a museum rather than a study. Walls and ceiling were thickly covered with a thousand strange relics from Egypt and the East. Tall angular figures bearing burdens or weapons stalked in an uncouth frieze round the apartments. Above were bull-headed, stork-headed, cat-headed, owl-headed statues, with viper-crowned, almond-eyed monarchs, and strange beetlelike deities cut out of the blue Egyptian lapis lazuli. Horus and Isis and Osiris peeped down from every niche and shelf, while across the ceiling a true son of Old Nile, a great hanging-jawed crocodile, was hung in a double noose.

In the center of this singular chamber was a large square table, littered with papers, bottles, and the dried leaves of some graceful palmlike plant. These varied objects had all been heaped together in order to make room for a mummy case, which had been conveyed from the wall, as was evident from the gap there, and laid across the front of the table. The mummy itself, a horrid, black, withered thing, like a charred head on a gnarled bush, was lying half out of the case, with its clawlike hand and bony forearm resting upon the table. Propped up against the sarcophagus was an old yellow scroll of papyrus, and in front of it, in a wooden armchair, sat the owner of the room, his head thrown back, his widely opened eyes directed in a horrified stare to the crocodile above him, and his blue thick lips puffing loudly with every expiration.

“My God! he’s dying!” cried Monkhouse Lee, distractedly. He was a slim, handsome young fellow, olive-skinned and dark-eyed, of a Spanish rather than of an English type, with a Celtic intensity of manner which contrasted with the Saxon phlegm of Abercrombie Smith.

“Only a faint, I think,” said the medical student. “Just give me a hand with him. You take his feet. Now on to the sofa. Can you kick all those little wooden devils off? What a litter it is! Now he will be all right if we undo his collar and give him some water. What has he been up to at all?”

“I don’t know. I heard him cry out as I ran up. I know him pretty well, you know. It is very good of you to come down.”

“His heart is going like a pair of castanets,” said Smith, laying his hand on the breast of the unconscious man. “He seems to me to be frightened all to pieces. Chuck the water on him! What a face he has got on him!”

It was indeed a strange and most repellent face, for color and outline were equally unnatural. It was white, not with the ordinary pallor of fear, but with an absolutely bloodless white, like the underside of a sole. He was very fat, but gave the impression of having at sometime been considerably fatter, for his skin hung loosely in creases and folds, and was shot with a meshwork of wrinkles. Short stubbly brown hair bristled up from his scalp, with a pair of thick wrinkled ears protruding on either side. His light gray eyes were still open, the pupils dilated, and the balls projecting in a fixed and horrid stare. It seemed to Smith as he looked down upon him that he had never seen nature’s danger signals flying so plainly upon a man’s countenance, and his thoughts turned more seriously to the warning which Hastie had given him an hour before.

“What the deuce can have frightened him so?” he asked.

“It’s the mummy.”

“The mummy? How, then?”

“I don’t know. It’s beastly and morbid. I wish he would drop it. It’s the second fright he has given me. It was the

same last winter. I found him just like this, with that horrid thing in front of him.”

“What does he want with the mummy, then?”

“Oh, he’s a crank, you know. It’s his hobby. He knows more about these things than any man in England. But I wish he wouldn’t! Ah, he’s beginning to come to.”

A faint tinge of color had begun to steal back into Bellingham’s ghastly cheeks, and his eyelids shivered like a sail after a calm. He clasped and unclasped his hands, drew a long thin breath between his teeth, and suddenly jerking up his head, threw a glance of recognition around him. As his eyes fell upon the mummy, he sprang off the sofa, seized the roll of papyrus, thrust it into a drawer, locked the drawer, and then staggered back onto the sofa.

“What’s up?” he asked. “What do you chaps want?”

“You’ve been shrieking out and making no end of a fuss,” said Monkhouse Lee. “If our neighbor here from above hadn’t come down, I’m sure I don’t know what I should have done with you.”

“Ah, it’s Mr. Abercrombie Smith,” said Bellingham, glancing up at him. “How very good of you to come in! What a fool I am! Oh, my God, what a fool I am!” He sunk his head on to his hands, and burst into peal after peal of hysterical laughter.

“Look here! Drop it!” cried Smith, shaking him roughly by the shoulder. “Your nerves are all in a jangle. You must drop these little midnight games with mummies, or you’ll be going off your chump. You’re all on wires now.”

“I wonder,” said Bellingham, “whether you would be as cool as I am if you had seen—”

“What, then?”

“Oh, nothing. I meant that I wonder if you could sit up at night with a mummy without trying your nerves. I have no doubt that you are quite right. I dare say that I have been taking it out of myself too much lately. But I am all right now. Please don’t go, though. Just wait for a few minutes until I am quite myself.”

“The room is very close,” remarked Lee, throwing open the window and letting in the cool night air.

“It’s balsamic resin,” said Bellingham. He lifted up one of the dried palmate leaves from the table and frizzled it up over the chimney of the lamp. It broke away into heavy smoke wreaths, and a pungent biting odor filled the chamber. “It’s the sacred plant—the plant of the priests,” he remarked. “Do you know anything of Eastern languages, Mr. Smith?”

“Nothing at all. Not a word.”

The answer seemed to lift a weight from the Egyptologist’s mind. “By the way,” he continued, “how long was it from the time that you came down until I came to my senses?”

“Not long. Some four or five minutes.”

“I thought it could not be very long,” said he, drawing a long breath. “But what a strange thing unconsciousness is! There is no measurement to it. I could not tell from my own sensations if it were seconds or weeks. Now that gentleman on the table was packed up in the days of the eleventh dynasty, some forty centuries ago, and yet if he could find his tongue, he would tell us that this lapse of time has been but a closing of the eyes and a reopening of them. He is a singularly fine mummy, Mr. Smith.”

Smith stepped over to the table and looked down with a professional eye at the black and twisted form in front of him. The features, though horribly discolored, were perfect, and two little nutlike eyes still lurked in the depths of the black hollow sockets. The blotched skin was drawn tightly from bone to bone, and a tangled wrap of black coarse hair fell over the ears. Two thin teeth, like those of a rat, overlay the shriveled lower lip. In its crouching position, with bent joints and craned head, there was a suggestion of energy about the horrid thing which made Smith’s gorge rise. The gaunt ribs, with their parchmentlike covering, were exposed, and the sunken, leaden-hued abdomen, with the long slit where the embalmer had left his mark; but the lower limbs

were wrapped round with coarse yellow bandages. A number of little clovelike pieces of myrrh and of cassia were sprinkled over the body, and lay scattered on the inside of the case.

"I don't know his name," said Bellingham, passing his hand over the shriveled head. "You see the outer sarcophagus with the inscriptions is missing. Lot 249 is all the title he has now. You see it printed on his case. That was his number in the auction at which I picked him up."

"He has been a very pretty sort of fellow in his day," remarked Abercrombie Smith.

"He has been a giant. His mummy is six feet seven in length, and that would be a giant over there, for they were never a very robust race. Feel these great knotted bones too. He would be a nasty fellow to tackle."

"Perhaps these very hands helped to build the stones into the pyramids," suggested Monkhouse Lee, looking down with disgust in his eyes at the crooked, unclean talons.

"No fear. This fellow has been pickled in natron, and looked after in the most approved style. They did not serve hods-men in that fashion. Salt or bitumen was enough for them. It has been calculated that this sort of thing cost about seven hundred and thirty pounds in our money. Our friend was a noble at the least. What do you make of that small inscription near his feet, Mr. Smith?"

"I told you that I know no Eastern tongue."

"Ah, so you did! It is the name of the embalmer, I take it. A very conscientious worker he must have been. I wonder how many modern works will survive four thousand years?"

He kept on speaking lightly and rapidly, but it was evident to Abercrombie Smith that he was still palpitating with fear. His hands shook, his lower lip trembled, and look where he would, his eye always came sliding round to his gruesome companion. Through all his fear, however, there was a suspicion of triumph in his tone and manner. His eye shone, and his footstep, as he paced the room, was brisk and jaunty. He gave the impression of a man who has gone

through an ordeal the marks of which he still bears upon him, but which has helped him to his end.

"You're not going yet?" he cried as Smith rose from the sofa. At the prospect of solitude, his fears seemed to crowd back upon him, and he stretched out a hand to detain him.

"Yes, I must go. I have my work to do. You are all right now. I think that with your nervous system you should take up some less morbid study."

"Oh, I am not nervous as a rule; and I have unwrapped mummies before."

"You fainted last time," observed Monkhouse Lee.

"Ah yes, so I did. Well, I must have a nerve tonic or a course of electricity. You are not going, Lee?"

"I'll do whatever you wish, Ned."

"Then I'll come down with you and have a shakedown on your sofa. Good-night, Mr. Smith. I am so sorry to have disturbed you with my foolishness."

They shook hands, and as the medical student stumbled up the spiral and irregular stair he heard a key turn in a door, and the steps of his two new acquaintances as they descended to the lower floor.

In this strange way began the acquaintance between Edward Bellingham and Abercrombie Smith, an acquaintance which the latter, at least, had no desire to push further. Bellingham, however, appeared to have taken a fancy to his rough-spoken neighbor, and made his advances in such a way that he could hardly be repulsed without absolute brutality. Twice he called to thank Smith for his assistance, and many times afterward he looked in with books, papers, and such other civilities as two bachelor neighbors can offer each other. He was, as Smith soon found, a man of wide reading, with catholic tastes and an extraordinary memory. His manner, too, was so pleasing and suave that one came, after a time, to overlook his repellent appearance. For a jaded and wearied man he was no

unpleasant companion, and Smith found himself, after a time, looking forward to his visits, and even returning them.

Clever as he undoubtedly was, however, the medical student seemed to detect a dash of insanity in the man. He broke out at times into a high inflated style of talk which was in contrast with the simplicity of his life.

“It is a wonderful thing,” he cried, “to feel that one can command powers of good and evil—a ministering angel or a demon of vengeance.” And again, of Monkhouse Lee he said: “Lee is a good fellow, an honest fellow, but he is without strength or ambition. He would not make a fit partner for a man with a great enterprise. He would not make a fit partner for me.”

At such hints and innuendos stolid Smith, puffing solemnly at his pipe, would simply raise his eyebrows and shake his head, with little interjections of medical wisdom as to earlier hours and fresher air.

One habit Bellingham had developed of late which Smith knew to be a frequent herald of a weakening mind. He appeared to be forever talking to himself. At late hours of the night, when there could be no visitor with him, Smith could still hear his voice beneath him in a low muffled monologue, sunk almost to a whisper, and yet very audible in the silence. This solitary babbling annoyed and distracted the student, so that he spoke more than once to his neighbor about it. Bellingham, however, flushed up at the charge, and denied curtly that he had uttered a sound; indeed, he showed more annoyance over the matter than the occasion seemed to demand.

Had Abercrombie Smith had any doubt as to his own ears he had not to go far to find corroboration. Tom Styles, the little wrinkled manservant who had attended to the wants of the lodgers in the turret for a longer time than any man’s memory could carry him, was sorely put to it over the same matter.

“If you please, sir,” said he, as he tidied down the top chamber one morning, “do you think Mr. Bellingham is all

right, sir?"

"All right, Styles?"

"Yes, sir. Right in the head, sir."

"Why should he not be, then?"

"Well, I don't know, sir. His habits has changed of late. He's not the same man he used to be, though I make free to say that he was never quite one of my gentlemen, like Mr. Hastie or yourself, sir. He's took to talkin' to himself something awful. I wonder it don't disturb you. And for days sometimes he'll keep his door locked, so as I can't even make the bed; and then again he'll have it open the same as ever—wide open so as all who pass can see his mummies and things. I don't know what to make of him, sir."

"I don't know what business it is of yours, Styles."

"Well, I takes an interest, Mr. Smith. It may be forward of me, but I can't help it. I feel sometimes as if I was mother and father to my young gentlemen. It all falls on me when things go wrong and the relations come. There was poor Mr. Williams, who went mad in '47. And Mr. McAlister in '62. Brain softening from overwork, they said. He lived in this very room. I don't speak of the delirium tremenses which I've had, three on each floor, and four on the lowest. But Mr. Bellingham, sir. I want to know what it is that walks about his room sometimes when he's out and when the door's locked on the outside."

"Eh? You're talking nonsense, Styles."

"Maybe so, sir; but I heard it more'n once with my own ears."

"Rubbish, Styles."

"Very good, sir. You'll ring the bell if you want me."

Abercrombie Smith gave little heed to the gossip of the old manservant, but a small incident occurred a few days later which left an unpleasant effect upon his mind, and brought the words of Styles forcibly to his memory.

Bellingham had come up to see him late one night, and was entertaining him with an interesting account of the rock tombs of Beni Hassan in Upper Egypt, when Smith, whose

hearing was remarkably acute, distinctly heard the sound of a door opening on the landing below.

"There's some fellow gone in or out of your room," he remarked.

Bellingham sprang up and stood helpless for a moment, with the expression of a man who is half incredulous and half afraid.

"I surely locked it. I am almost positive that I locked it," he stammered. "No one could have opened it."

"Why, I hear someone coming up the steps now," said Smith.

Bellingham rushed out through the door, slammed it loudly behind him, and hurried down the stairs. About halfway down Smith heard him stop, and thought he caught the sound of whispering. A moment later the door beneath him shut, a key creaked in a lock, and Bellingham, with beads of moisture upon his pale face, ascended the stairs once more, and reentered the room.

"It's all right," he said, throwing himself down in a chair. "It was that fool of a dog. He had pushed the door open. I don't know how I came to forget to lock it."

"I didn't know you kept a dog," said Smith, looking very thoughtfully at the disturbed face of his companion.

"Yes. I haven't had him long. I must get rid of him. He's a great nuisance."

"He must be, if you find it so hard to shut him up. I should have thought that shutting the door would have been enough without locking it."

"I want to prevent old Styles from letting him out. He's of some value, you know, and it would be awkward to lose him."

"I am a bit of a dog fancier myself," said Smith, still gazing hard at his companion from the corner of his eyes. "Perhaps you'll let me have a look at it."

"Certainly. But I am afraid it cannot be tonight; I have an appointment. Is that clock right? Then I am a quarter of an hour late already. You'll excuse me, I am sure." He picked up

his cap and hurried from the room. In spite of his appointment, Smith heard him reenter his own chamber and lock his door upon the inside.

This interview left a disagreeable impression upon the medical student's mind. Bellingham had lied to him, and lied so clumsily that it looked as if he had desperate reasons for concealing the truth. Smith knew that his neighbor had no dog. He knew, also, that the step which he had heard upon the stairs was not the step of an animal. But if it were not, then what could it be? There was old Styles's statement about the something which used to pace the room at times when the owner was absent. Could it be a woman? Smith rather inclined to the view. If so, it would mean disgrace and expulsion to Bellingham if it were discovered by the authorities, so that his anxiety and falsehoods might be accounted for. And yet it was inconceivable that an undergraduate could keep a woman in his rooms without being instantly detected. Be the explanation what it might, there was something ugly about it, and Smith determined, as he turned to his books, to discourage all further attempts at intimacy on the part of his soft-spoken and ill-favored neighbor.

But his work was destined to interruption that night. He had hardly caught up the broken threads when a firm heavy footfall came three steps at a time from below, and Hastie, in blazer and flannels, burst into the room.

"Still at it!" said he, plumping down into his wonted armchair. "What a chap you are to stew! I believe an earthquake might come and knock Oxford into a cocked hat, and you would sit perfectly placid with your books among the ruins. However, I won't bore you long. Three whiffs of baccy, and I am off."

"What's the news, then?" asked Smith, cramming a plug of bird's-eye into his brier with his forefinger.

"Nothing very much. Wilson made seventy for the freshmen against the eleven. They say that they will play him instead of Buddicomb, for Buddicomb is clean off color.

He used to be able to bowl a little, but it's nothing but half volleys and long hops now."

"Medium right," suggested Smith, with the intense gravity which comes upon a 'varsity man when he speaks of athletics.

"Inclining to fast with a work from leg. Comes with the arm about three inches or so. He used to be nasty on a wet wicket. Oh, by the way, have you heard about Long Norton?"

"What's that?"

"He's been attacked."

"Attacked?"

"Yes, just as he was turning out of the High Street, and within a hundred yards of the gate of Old's."

"But who—"

"Ah, that's the rub! If you said 'what,' you would be more grammatical. Norton swears that it was not human, and, indeed, from the scratches on his throat, I should be inclined to agree with him."

"What, then? Have we come down to spooks?" Abercrombie Smith puffed his scientific contempt.

"Well, no; I don't think that is quite the idea, either. I am inclined to think that if any showman has lost a great ape lately, and the brute is in these parts, a jury would find a true bill against it. Norton passes that way every night, you know, about the same hour. There's a big elm from Rainy's garden. Norton thinks the thing dropped on him out of the tree. Anyhow, he was nearly strangled by two arms, which, he says, were as strong and as thin as steel bands. He saw nothing; only these beastly arms that tightened and tightened on him. He yelled his head nearly off, and a couple of chaps came running, and the thing went over the wall like a cat. He never got a fair sight of it the whole time. It gave Norton a shake up, I can tell you. I tell him it has been as good as a change at the seaside for him."

"A garroter, most likely," said Smith.

“Very possibly. Norton says not; but we don’t mind what he says. The garroter had long nails, and was pretty smart at swinging himself over walls. By the way, your beautiful neighbor would be pleased if he heard about it. He had a grudge against Norton, and he’s not a man, from what I know of him, to forget his little debts. But hullo, old chap, what have you got in your noddle?”

“Nothing,” Smith answered, curtly. He had started in his chair, and the look had flashed over his face which comes upon a man who is struck suddenly by some unpleasant idea.

“You looked as if something I had said had taken you on the raw. By the way, you have made the acquaintance of Master B. since I looked in last, have you not? Young Monkhouse Lee told me something to that effect.”

“Yes; I know him slightly. He has been up here once or twice.”

“Well, you’re big enough and ugly enough to take care of yourself. He’s not what I should call exactly a healthy sort of Johnny, though, no doubt, he’s very clever, and all that. But you’ll soon find out for yourself. Lee is all right; he’s a very decent little fellow. Well, so long, old chap! I row Mullins for the Vice-Chancellor’s pot on Wednesday week, so mind you come down, in case I don’t see you before.”

He clattered off, with a trail of smoke behind him like a steamer, while bovine Smith laid down his pipe and turned stolidly to his books once more. But with all the will in the world, he found it very hard to keep his mind upon his work. It would slip away to brood upon the man beneath him, and upon the little mystery which seemed to hang round his chambers. Then his thoughts turned to this singular attack of which Hastie had spoken, and to the grudge which Bellingham was said to owe the object of it. The two ideas would persist in rising together in his mind, as though there were some close and intimate connection between them. And yet the suspicion was so dim and vague that it could not be put down in words.

“Confound the chap!” cried Smith, as he shied his book on pathology across the room. “He has spoiled my night’s reading, and that’s reason enough, if there were no other, why I should steer clear of him in the future.”

For ten days the medical student confined himself so closely to his studies that he neither saw nor heard anything of either of the men beneath him. At the hours when Bellingham had been accustomed to visit him, he took care to sport his oak, and though he more than once heard a knocking at his outer door, he resolutely refused to answer it. One afternoon, however, he was descending the stairs when, just as he was passing it, Bellingham’s door flew open, and young Monkhouse Lee came out with his eyes sparkling and a dark flush of anger upon his olive cheeks. Close at his heels followed Bellingham, his fat, unhealthy face all quivering with malignant passion.

“You fool!” he hissed. “You’ll be sorry.”

“Very likely,” cried the other. “Mind what I say. It’s off! I won’t hear of it!”

“You’ve promised, anyhow.”

“Oh, I’ll keep that! I won’t speak. But I’d rather little Eva was in her grave. Once for all, it’s off. She’ll do what I say. We don’t want to see you again.”

So much Smith could not avoid hearing, but he hurried on, for he had no wish to be involved in their dispute. There had been a serious breach between them, that was clear enough, and Lee was going to cause the engagement with his sister to be broken off. Smith thought of Hastie’s comparison of the toad and the dove, and was glad to think that the matter was at an end. Bellingham’s face when he was in a passion was not pleasant to look upon. He was not a man to whom an innocent girl could be trusted for life. As he walked, Smith wondered languidly what could have caused the quarrel, and what the promise might be which Bellingham had been so anxious that Monkhouse Lee should keep.

It was the day of the sculling match between Hastie and Mullins, and a stream of men were making their way down to the banks of the Isis. A May sun was shining brightly, and the yellow path was barred with the black shadows of the tall elm trees. On either side the gray colleges lay back from the road, the hoary old mothers of minds looking out from their high mullioned windows at the tide of young life which swept so merrily past them. Black-clad tutors, prim officials, pale reading men, brown-faced, straw-hatted young athletes in white sweaters or many-colored blazers, all were hurrying toward the blue winding river which curves through the Oxford meadows.

Abercrombie Smith, with the intuition of an old oarsman, chose his position at the point where he knew that the struggle, if there were a struggle, would come. Far off he heard the hum which announced the start, the gathering roar of the approach, the thunder of running feet, and the shouts of the men in the boats beneath him. A spray of half-clad, deep-breathing runners shot past him, and craning over their shoulders, he saw Hastie pulling a steady thirty-six, while his opponent, with a jerky forty, was a good boat's length behind him. Smith gave a bellow of approval, and pulling out his watch, was starting off again for his chambers, when he felt a touch upon his shoulder, and found that young Monkhouse Lee was beside him.

"I saw you there," he said in a timid, deprecating way. "I wanted to speak to you, if you could spare me a half hour. This cottage is mine. I share it with Harrington of King's. Come in and have a cup of tea."

"I must be back presently," said Smith. "I am hard on the grind at present. But I'll come in for a few minutes with pleasure. I wouldn't have come out only Hastie is a friend of mine."

"So he is of mine. Hasn't he a beautiful style? Mullins wasn't in it. But come into the cottage. It's a little den of a place, but it is pleasant to work in during the summer months."

It was a little square white building with green doors and shutters, and a rustic trelliswork porch, with a drapery of creepers over it, standing back some fifty yards from the river's bank. Inside, the main room was roughly fitted up as a study—deal table, unpainted shelves with books, and a few cheap oleographs upon the wall. A kettle sang upon a spirit stove, and there were tea things upon a tray on the table.

"Try that chair and have a cigarette," said Lee. "Let me pour you out a cup of tea. It's so good of you to come in, for I know that your time is a good deal taken up. I wanted to say to you that if I were you I would change my rooms at once."

"Eh?" Smith sat staring with a lighted match in one hand and his unlit cigarette in the other.

"Yes; it must seem very extraordinary, and the wont of it is that I cannot give my reasons, for I am under a solemn promise—a very solemn promise. But I may go as far as to say that I don't think Bellingham is a very safe man to live near. I intend to camp out here as much as I can for a time."

"Not safe? What do you mean?"

"Ah, that's what I mustn't say. But do take my advice, and move your rooms. We had a grand row today. You must have heard us, for you came down the stairs."

"I saw that you had fallen out."

"He's a horrible chap, Mr. Smith. That is the only word for him. I have had my doubts about him ever since that night when he fainted—you remember, when you came down. I taxed him today, and he told me things that made my hair rise, and wanted me to stand in with him. I'm not straitlaced, but I am a clergyman's son, you know, and I think there are some things which are quite beyond the pale. I only thank God that I found him out before it was too late, for he was to have married into my family."

"This is all very fine, Lee," said Abercrombie Smith, curtly. "But either you are saying a great deal too much or a great deal too little."

"I give you a warning."

"If there is real reason for warning, no promise can bind you. If I see a rascal about to blow a place up with dynamite, no pledge will stand in my way of preventing him."

"Ah, but I cannot prevent him, and I can do nothing but warn you."

"Without saying what you warn me against."

"Against Bellingham."

"But that is childish. Why should I fear him, or any man?"

"I can't tell you. I can only entreat you to change your rooms. You are in danger where you are. I don't even say that Bellingham would wish to injure you. But it might happen, for he is a dangerous neighbor just now."

"Perhaps I know more than you think," said Smith, looking keenly at the young man's boyish, earnest face. "Suppose I tell you that someone else shares Bellingham's rooms."

Monkhouse Lee sprang from his chair in uncontrollable excitement. "You know, then?" he gasped.

"A woman."

Lee dropped back again with a groan. "My lips are sealed," he said. "I must not speak."

"Well, anyhow," said Smith, rising, "it is not likely that I would allow myself to be frightened out of rooms which suit me very nicely. It would be a little too feeble for me to move out all my goods and chattels because you say that Bellingham might in some unexplained way do me an injury. I think that I'll just take my chance, and stay where I am, and as I see that it's nearly five o'clock, I must ask you to excuse me." He bade the young student adieu in a few curt words, and made his way homeward through the sweet spring evening, feeling half ruffled, half amused, as any other strong, unimaginative man might who has been menaced by a vague and shadowy danger.

There was one little indulgence which Abercrombie Smith always allowed himself, however closely his work might press upon him. Twice a week, on the Tuesday and the Friday, it was his invariable custom to walk over to

Farlingford, the residence of the Reverend Plumtree Peterson, situated about a mile and a half out of Oxford. Peterson had been a close friend of Smith's elder brother Francis, and as he was a bachelor, fairly well-to-do, with a good cellar and a better library, his house was a pleasant goal for a man who was in need of a brisk walk. Twice a week, then, the medical student would swing out there along the dark country roads, and spend a pleasant hour in Peterson's comfortable study, discussing, over a glass of old port, the gossip of the 'varsity or the latest black letter which the book dealers had sent to his host.

On the day which followed his interview with Monkhouse Lee, Smith shut up his books at a quarter past eight, the hour when he usually started for his friend's house. As he was leaving his room, however, his eyes happened to fall upon one of the books which Bellingham had lent him, and his conscience pricked him for not having returned it. However repellent the man might be, he should not be treated with discourtesy. Taking the book, he walked down stairs and knocked at his neighbor's door. There was no answer; but on turning the handle he found that it was unlocked. Pleased at the thought of avoiding an interview, he stepped inside, and placed the book with his card upon the table.

The lamp was turned half down, but Smith could see the details of the room plainly enough. It was all much as he had seen it before—the frieze, the animal-headed gods, the hanging crocodile, and the table littered over with papers and dried leaves. The mummy case stood upright against the wall, but the mummy itself was missing. There was no sign of any second occupant of the room, and he felt as he withdrew that he had probably done Bellingham an injustice. Had he a guilty secret to preserve, he would hardly leave his door open so that all the world might enter.

The spiral stair was as black as pitch, and Smith was slowly making his way down its irregular steps, when he was suddenly conscious that something had passed him in the

darkness. There was a faint sound, a whiff of air, a light brushing past his elbow, but so slight that he could scarcely be certain of it. He stopped and listened, but the wind was rustling among the ivy outside, and he could hear nothing else.

“Is that you, Styles?” he shouted.

There was no answer, and all was still behind him. It must have been a sudden gust of air, for there were crannies and cracks in the old turret. And yet he could almost have sworn that he heard a footfall by his very side. He had emerged into the quadrangle, still turning the matter over in his head, when a man came running swiftly across the smooth-cropped lawn.

“Is that you, Smith?”

“Hullo, Hastie!”

“For God’s sake come at once! Young Lee is drowned! Here’s Harrington of King’s with the news. The doctor is out. You’ll do, but come along at once. There may be life in him.”

“Have you brandy?”

“No.”

“I’ll bring some. There’s a flask on my table.”

Smith bounded up the stairs, taking three at a time, seized the flask, and was rushing down with it, when, as he passed Bellingham’s room, his eyes fell upon something which left him gasping and staring upon the landing.

The door, which he had closed behind him, was now open, and right in front of him, with the lamplight shining upon it, was the mummy case. Three minutes ago it had been empty. He could swear to that. Now it framed the lank body of its horrible occupant, who stood, grim and stark, with his black shriveled face toward the door. The form was lifeless and inert, but it seemed to Smith as he gazed that there still lingered a lurid spark of vitality, some faint sign of consciousness in the little eyes which lurked in the depths of the hollow sockets. So astounded and shaken was he that he had forgotten his errand, and still stood staring at the

lean sunken figure when the voice of his friend below recalled him to himself.

“Come on, Smith!” he shouted. “It’s life and death, you know. Hurry up! Now, then,” he added, as the medical student reappeared, “let us do a sprint. It is well under a mile, and we should do it in five minutes. A human life is better worth running for than a pot.”

Away they dashed, neck and neck, through the darkness, and did not pull up until, panting and spent, they had reached the little cottage by the river. Young Lee, limp and dripping like a broken water plant, was stretched upon the sofa, the green scum of the river upon his black hair, and a fringe of white foam upon his leaden-hued lips. Beside him knelt his fellow student Harrington and their old housekeeper, endeavoring to chafe some warmth back into his rigid limbs.

“I think there’s life in him,” said Smith, with his hand to his side. “Put your watch glass to his lips. Yes, there’s dimming on it. You take one arm, Hastie. Now work it as I do, and we’ll soon pull him round.”

For ten minutes they worked in silence, inflating and depressing the chest of the unconscious man. At the end of that time a shiver ran through his body, his lips trembled, and he opened his eyes. The three students burst out into an irrepressible cheer.

“Wake up, old chap. You’ve frightened us quite enough.”

“Have some brandy. Take a sip from the flask.”

“He’s all right now,” said his companion Harrington. “Heavens, what a fright I got! I was reading here, and he went out for a stroll as far as the river, when I heard a scream and a splash. Out I ran, and by the time I could find him and fish him out, all life seemed to have gone out of him. Then Mrs. Simpson couldn’t get a doctor, for she has a game leg, and I had to run, and I don’t know what I’d have done without you fellows. That’s right, old chap. Sit up.”

Monkhouse Lee had raised himself on his hands and looked wildly about him. “What’s up?” he asked. “I’ve been

in the water. Ah, yes; I remember." A look of fear came into his eyes, and he sank his face in his hands.

"How did you fall in?"

"I didn't fall in."

"How, then?"

"I was thrown in. I was standing by the bank, and something from behind picked me up like a feather and hurled me in. I heard nothing, and I saw nothing. But I know what it was for all that."

"And so do I," whispered Smith.

Lee looked up with a quick glance of surprise. "You've learned, then?" he said. "You remember the advice I gave you?"

"Yes, and I begin to think that I shall take it."

"I don't know what the deuce you fellows are talking about," said Hastie, "but I think if I were you, Harrington, I would get Lee to bed at once. It will be time enough to discuss why and the wherefore when he is a little stronger. I think, Smith, you and I can leave him alone now. I am walking back to college; if you are coming in that direction, we can have a chat."

But it was little chat that they had upon their homeward path. Smith's mind was too full of the incidents of the evening, the absence of the mummy from from his neighbor's rooms, the step that passed him on the stair, the reappearance—the extraordinary, inexplicable reappearance of the grisly thing—and then this attack upon Lee, corresponding so closely to the previous outrage upon another man against whom Bellingham bore a grudge. All this settled in his thoughts, together with the many little incidents which had previously turned him against his neighbor, and the singular circumstances under which he was first called to him. What had been a dim suspicion, a vague fantastic conjecture, had suddenly taken form, and stood out in his mind as a grim fact, a thing not to be denied. And yet how monstrous it was! how unheard of! how entirely beyond all bounds of human experience. An

impartial judge, or even the friend who walked by his side would simply tell him that his eyes had deceived him, that the mummy had been there all the time, that young Lee had tumbled into the river as any other man tumbles into a river, and that a blue pill was the best thing for a disordered liver. He felt that he would have said as much if the positions had been reversed. And yet he could swear that Bellingham was a murderer at heart, and that he wielded a weapon such as no man had ever used in all the grim history of crime.

Hastie had branched off to his rooms with a few crisp and emphatic comments upon his friend's unsociability, and Abercrombie Smith crossed the quadrangle to his corner turret with a strong feeling of repulsion for his chambers and their associations. He would take Lee's advice, and move his quarters as soon as possible, for how could a man study when his ear was ever straining for every murmur or footstep in the room below? He observed, as he crossed over the lawn, the light was still shining in Bellingham's window, and as he passed up the staircase the door opened, and the man himself looked out at him. With his fat evil face he was like some bloated spider fresh from the weaving of his poisonous web.

"Good-evening," said he. "Won't you come in?"

"No," cried Smith, fiercely.

"No? You are busy as ever? I wanted to ask you about Lee. I was sorry to hear that there was a rumor that something was amiss with him." His features were grave, but there was the gleam of a hidden laugh in his eyes as he spoke. Smith saw it, and he could have knocked him down for it.

"You'll be sorrier still to hear that Mr. Monkhouse Lee is doing very well, and is out of all danger," he answered. "Your hellish tricks have not come off this time. Oh, you needn't try to brazen it out. I know all about it."

Bellingham took a step back from the angry student, and half closed the door as if to protect himself. "You are mad,"

he said. "What do you mean? Do you assert that I had anything to do with Lee's accident?"

"Yes," thundered Smith. "You and that bag of bones behind you; you worked it out between you. I tell you what it is, Master B., they have given up burning folk like you, but we still keep a hangman, and, by George! if any man in this college meets his death while you are here, I'll have you up, and if you don't swing for it, it won't be my fault. You'll find that your filthy Egyptian tricks won't answer in England."

"You're a raving lunatic," said Bellingham.

"All right. You just remember what I say, for you'll find that I'll be better than my word."

The door slammed, and Smith went fuming up to his chamber, where he locked the door upon the inside, and spent half the night in smoking his old brier and brooding over the strange events of the evening.

On the next day Abercrombie Smith heard nothing of his neighbor, but Harrington called upon him in the afternoon to say that Lee was almost himself again. All day Smith stuck fast to his work, but in the evening he determined to pay the visit to his friend Peterson which he had started upon the night before. It was the first time that he had ever failed to put in an appearance, and he knew that Peterson would be expecting an explanation for his absence the previous evening. A good walk and a friendly chat would be welcome to his jangled nerves after all that occurred.

Bellingham's door was shut as he passed, but glancing back when he was some distance from the turret, he saw his neighbor's head at the window outlined against the lamplight, his face pressed apparently against the glass as he gazed out into the darkness. It was a blessing to be away from all contact with him, if but for a few hours, and Smith stepped out briskly, and breathed the soft spring air into his lungs. The half-moon lay in the west between two Gothic pinnacles, and threw upon the silvered street a dark tracery from the stonework above. There was a brisk breeze, and light fleecy clouds drifted swiftly across the sky. Old's was on

the very border of the town, and in five minutes Smith found himself beyond the houses and between the hedges of a May-scented Oxfordshire lane.

It was a lonely and little-frequented road which led to his friend's house. Early as it was, Smith did not meet a single soul upon his way. He walked briskly along until he came to the avenue gate, which opened into the long gravel drive leading up to Farlingford. In front of him he could see the cozy red light of the windows glimmering through the foliage. He stood with his hand upon the iron latch of the swinging gate, and he glanced back at the road along which he had come. Something was coming swiftly down it.

It moved in the shadow of the hedge, silently and furtively, a dark crouching figure, dimly visible against the black background. Even as he gazed back at it it had lessened its distance by twenty paces, and was fast closing upon him. Out of the darkness he had a glimpse of a scraggy neck, and of two eyes that will ever haunt him in his dreams. He turned, and with a cry of terror he ran for his life up the avenue. There were the red lights, the signals of safety, almost within a stone's throw of him. He was a famous runner, but never had he run as he ran that night.

The heavy gate had swung into place behind him, but he heard it dash open again before his pursuer. As he rushed madly and wildly through the night he could hear a swift dry patter behind him, and could see, as he threw back a glance, that this horror was bounding like a tiger at his heels, with blazing eyes and stringy arms outthrown. Thank God, the door was ajar. He could see the thin bar of light which shot from the lamp in the hall. Nearer yet sounded the clatter from behind. He heard a hoarse gurgling at his very shoulder. With a shriek he flung himself against the door, slammed and bolted it behind him, and sank half-fainting on to the hall chair.

"My goodness, Smith, what's the matter?" asked Peterson, appearing at the door of his study.

"Give me some brandy!"

Peterson disappeared, and came rushing out again with a glass and a decanter.

"You need it," he said, as his visitor drank off what he poured out for him. "Why, man, you are as white as a cheese."

Smith laid down his glass, rose up, and took a deep breath. "I am my own man again now," said he. "I was never so unmanned before. But, with your leave, Peterson, I will sleep here tonight, for I don't think I could face that road again except by daylight. It's weak, I know, but I can't help it."

Peterson looked at his visitor with a very questioning eye. "Of course you shall sleep here if you wish. I'll tell Mrs. Burney to make up the spare bed. Where are you off to now?"

"Come up with me to the window that overlooks the door. I want you to see what I have seen."

They went up to the window of the upper hall, whence they could overlook the whole front of the house. The drive and the fields on either side lay quiet and still, bathed in the peaceful moonlight.

"Well, really, Smith," remarked Peterson, "it is well that I know you to be an abstemious man. What in the world can have frightened you?"

"I'll tell you presently. But where can it have gone? Ah, now look, look! See the curve of the road just beyond your gate."

"Yes, I see; you needn't pinch my arm off. I saw someone pass. I should say a man, rather thin apparently, and tall, very tall. But what of him? And what of yourself? You are still shaking like an aspen leaf."

"I have been within handgrip of the devil, that's all. But come down to your study, and I shall tell you the whole story."

He did so. Under the cheery lamplight, with a glass of wine on the table beside him, and the portly form and florid face of his friend in front, he narrated, in their order, all the

events, great and small, which had formed so singular a chain, from the night on which he had found Bellingham fainting in front of the mummy case until his horrid experience of an hour ago.

“There, now,” he said, as he concluded, “that’s the whole black business. It is monstrous and incredible, but it is true.”

The Reverend Plumtree Peterson sat for sometime in silence with a very puzzled expression upon his face.

“I never heard of such a thing in my life, never!” he said at last. “You have told me the facts. Now tell me your inferences.”

“You can draw your own.”

“But I should like to hear yours. You have thought over the matter, and I have not.”

“Well, it must be a little vague in detail, but the main points seem to me to be clear enough. This fellow Bellingham in his Eastern studies has got hold of some infernal secret by which a mummy—or possibly only this particular mummy—can be temporarily brought to life. He was trying this disgusting business on the night when he fainted. No doubt the sight of the creature moving had shaken his nerve, even though he had expected it. You remember that almost the first words he said was to call out upon himself as a fool. Well, he got more hardened afterward, and carried the matter through without fainting. The vitality which he could put into it was evidently only a passing thing, for I have seen it continually in its case as dead as this table. He has some elaborate process, I fancy, by which he brings the thing to pass. Having done it, he naturally bethought him that he might use the creature as an agent. It has intelligence and it has strength. For some purpose he took Lee into his confidence; but Lee, like a decent Christian, would have nothing to do with such a business. Then they had a row, and Lee vowed that he would tell his sister of Bellingham’s true character. Bellingham’s game was to prevent him, and he nearly managed it, by setting this creature of his on his track. He

had already tried its powers upon another man—Norton—toward whom he had a grudge. It is the merest chance that he has not two murders upon his soul. Then, when I taxed him with the matter, he had the strongest reason for wishing to get me out of the way before I could convey my knowledge to anyone else. He got his chance when I went out, for he knew my habits, and where I was bound for. I have had a narrow shave, Peterson, and it is mere luck you didn't find me on your doorstep in the morning. I'm not a nervous man as a rule, and I never thought to have the fear of death put upon me as it was tonight."

"My dear boy, you take the matter too seriously," said his companion. "Your nerves are out of order with your work, and you make too much of it. How could such a thing as this stride out about the streets of Oxford, even at night, without being seen?"

"It has been seen. There is quite a scare in the town about an escaped ape, as they imagine the creature to be. It is the talk of the place."

"Well, it's a striking chain of events. And yet, my dear fellow, you must allow that each incident in itself is capable of a more natural explanation."

"What! even my adventure of tonight?"

"Certainly. You come out with your nerves all unstrung, and your head full of this theory of yours. Some gaunt, half-famished tramp steals after you, and seeing you run, is emboldened to pursue you. Your fears and imagination do the rest."

"It won't do, Peterson; it won't do."

"And again in the instance of your finding the mummy case empty, and then a few moments later with an occupant, you know that it was lamplight, that the lamp was half turned down, and that you had no special reason to look hard at the case. It is quite possible that you may have overlooked the creature in the first instance."

"No, no; it is out of the question."

“And then Lee may have fallen into the river, and Norton been garroted. It is certainly a formidable indictment that you have against Bellingham; but if you were to place it before a police magistrate, he would simply laugh in your face.”

“I know he would. That is why I mean to take the matter into my own hands.”

“Eh?”

“Yes; I feel that a public duty rests upon me. And besides, I must do it for my own safety, unless I choose to allow myself to be hunted by this beast out of the college, and that would be a little too feeble. I have quite made up my mind what I shall do. And first of all, may I use your paper and pens for an hour?”

“Most certainly. You will find all that you want upon that side table.”

Abercrombie Smith sat down before a sheet of fool’s cap, and for an hour, and then for a second hour, his pen traveled swiftly over it. Page after page was finished and tossed aside, while his friend leaned back in his armchair, looking across at him with patient curiosity. At last, with an exclamation of satisfaction, Smith sprang to his feet, gathered his papers up into order, and laid the last one upon Peterson’s desk.

“Kindly sign this as a witness,” he said.

“A witness? Of what?”

“Of my signature, and of the date. The date is the most important. Why, Peterson, my life might hang upon it.”

“My dear Smith, you are talking wildly. Let me beg you to go to bed.”

“On the contrary, I never spoke so deliberately in my life. And I will promise to go to bed the moment you have signed it.”

“But what is it?”

“It is a statement of all that I have been telling you tonight. I wish you to witness it.”

“Certainly,” said Peterson, signing his name under that of his companion. “There you are! But what is the idea?”

“You will kindly retain it, and produce it in case I am arrested.”

“Arrested? For what?”

“For murder. It is quite on the cards. I wish to be ready for every event. There is only one course open to me, and I am determined to take it.”

“For Heaven’s sake, don’t do anything rash!”

“Believe me, it would be far more rash to adopt any other course. I hope that we won’t need to bother you, but it will ease my mind to know that you have this statement of my motives. And now I am ready to take your advice and to go to roost, for I want to be at my best in the morning.”

Abercrombie Smith was not an entirely pleasant man to have as an enemy. Slow and easy-tempered, he was formidable when driven to action. He brought to every purpose in life the same deliberate resoluteness which had distinguished him as a scientific student. He had laid his studies aside for a day, but he intended that the day should not be wasted. Not a word did he say to his host as to his plans, but by nine o’clock he was well on his way to Oxford.

In the High Street he stopped at Clifford’s, the gun maker’s, and bought a heavy revolver, with a box of central fire cartridges. Six of them he slipped into the chambers, and half cocking the weapon, placed it in the pocket of his coat. He then made his way to Hastie’s rooms, where the big oarsman was lounging over his breakfast, with the *Sporting Times* propped up against the coffee pot.

“Hullo! What’s up?” he asked. “Have some coffee?”

“No, thank you. I want you to come with me, Hastie, and do what I ask you.”

“Certainly, my boy.”

“And bring a heavy stick with you.”

“Hullo!” Hastie stared. “Here’s a hunting crop that would fell an ox.”

“One other thing. You have a box of amputating knives. Give me the longest of them.”

“There you are. You seem to be fairly on the war trail. Anything else?”

“No; that will do.” Smith placed the knife inside his coat, and led the way to the quadrangle. “We are neither of us chickens, Hastie,” said he. “I think I can do this job alone, but I take you as a precaution. I am going to have a little talk with Bellingham. If I have only him to deal with, I won’t, of course, need you. If I shout, however, up you come, and lam out with your whip as hard as you can lick. Do you understand?”

“All right. I’ll come if I hear you bellow.”

“Stay here, then. I may be a little time, but don’t budge until I come down.”

“I’m a fixture.”

Smith ascended the stairs, opened Bellingham’s door, and stepped in. Bellingham was seated behind his table, writing. Beside him, among his litter of strange possessions, towered the mummy case, with its sale number 249 still stuck upon its front, and its hideous occupant stiff and stark within it. Smith looked very deliberately round him, closed the door, locked it, and then stepping across to the fireplace, struck a match and set the fire alight. Bellingham sat staring, with amazement and rage upon his bloated face.

“Well, really now. You make yourself at home,” he gasped.

Smith sat himself deliberately down, placed his watch upon the table, drew out his pistol, cocked it, and laid it in his lap. Then he took the long amputating knife from his bosom, and threw it down in front of Bellingham. “Now, then,” said he. “Just get to work and cut up that mummy.”

“Oh, is that it?” said Bellingham, with a sneer.

“Yes, that is it. They tell me that the law can’t touch you. But I have a law that will set matters straight. If in five minutes you have not set to work, I swear by the God who made me that I will put a bullet through your brain.”

“You would murder me?” Bellingham had half risen, and his face was the color of clay.

“Yes.”

“And for what?”

“To stop your mischief. One minute has gone.”

“But what have I done?”

“I know and you know.”

“This is mere bullying.”

“Two minutes are gone.”

“But you must give reasons. You are a madman—a dangerous madman. Why should I destroy my own property? It is a valuable mummy.”

“You must cut it up, and you must burn it.”

“I will do no such thing.”

“Four minutes are gone.” Smith took up the pistol, and he looked toward Bellingham with an inexorable face. As the second-hand stole round, he raised his hand, and the finger twitched upon the trigger.

“There! there! I’ll do it!” screamed Bellingham. In frantic haste he caught up the knife and hacked at the figure of the mummy, ever glancing round to see the eye and the weapon of his terrible visitor bent upon him. The creature crackled and snapped under every stab of the keen blade. A thick yellow dust rose up from it. Spices and dried essences rained down upon the floor. Suddenly, with a rending crack, its backbone snapped asunder, and it fell, a brown heap of sprawling limbs, upon the floor.

“Now into the fire!” said Smith.

The flames leaped and roared as the dried and tinderlike debris was piled upon it. The little room was like the stokehole of a steamer, and the sweat ran down the faces of the two men; but still the one stooped and worked, while the other sat watching him with a set face. A thick fat smoke oozed out from the fire, and a heavy smell of burned rosin and singed hair filled the air. In a quarter of an hour a few charred and brittle sticks were all that was left of Lot No. 249.

“Perhaps that will satisfy you,” snarled Bellingham, with hate and fear in his little gray eyes as he glanced back at his tormentor.

“No; I must make a clean sweep of all your materials. We must have no more devil’s tricks. In with all these leaves! They may have something to do with it.”

“And what now?” asked Bellingham, when the leaves also had been added to the blaze.

“Now the roll of papyrus which you had on the table that night. It is in that drawer, I think.”

“No, no,” shouted Bellingham. “Don’t burn that! Why, man, you don’t know what you do! It is unique; it contains wisdom which is nowhere else to be found.”

“Out with it!”

“But look here, Smith, you can’t really mean it. I’ll share the knowledge with you. I’ll teach you all that is in it. Or, stay, let me only copy it before you burn it!”

Smith stepped forward and turned the key in the drawer. Taking out the yellow curled roll of paper, he threw it into the fire, and pressed it down with his heel. Bellingham screamed, and grabbed at it; but Smith pushed him back, and stood over it until it was reduced to a formless gray ash.

“Now, Master B.,” said he, “I think I have pretty well drawn your teeth. You’ll hear from me again, if you go back to your old tricks. And now, good-morning, for I must go back to my studies.”

And such is the narrative of Abercrombie Smith as to the singular events which occurred in Old College, Oxford, in the spring of ’81. As Bellingham left the university immediately afterward, and was last heard of in the Sudan, there is no one who can contradict his statement. But the wisdom of men is small, and the ways of nature are strange, and who shall put a bound to the dark things which may be found by those who seek for them?

THE LOS AMIGOS FIASCO

used to be the leading practitioner of Los Amigos. Of course, everyone has heard of the great electrical generating gear there. The town is widespread, and there are dozens of little townlets and villages all round, which receive their supply from the same center, so that the works are on a very large scale. The Los Amigos folk say that they are the largest upon earth, but then we claim that for everything in Los Amigos except the gaol and the death rate. Those are said to be the smallest.

Now, with so fine an electrical supply, it seemed to be a sinful waste of hemp that the Los Amigos criminals should perish in the old-fashioned manner. And then came the news of the electrocutions in the East, and how the results had not after all been so instantaneous as had been hoped. The Western Engineers raised their eyebrows when they read of the puny shocks by which these men had perished, and they vowed in Los Amigos that when an irreclaimable came their way he should be dealt handsomely by, and have the run of all the big dynamos. There should be no reserve, said the engineers, but he should have all that they had got. And what the result of that would be none could predict, save that it must be absolutely blasting and deadly. Never before had a man been so charged with electricity as they would charge him. He was to be smitten by the essence of ten thunderbolts. Some prophesied combustion, and some disintegration and disappearance. They were waiting eagerly to settle the question by actual demonstration, and it was just at that moment that Duncan Warner came that way.

Warner had been wanted by the law, and by nobody else, for many years. Desperado, murderer, train robber, and

road agent, he was a man beyond the pale of human pity. He had deserved a dozen deaths, and the Los Amigos folk grudged him so gaudy a one as that. He seemed to feel himself to be unworthy of it, for he made two frenzied attempts at escape. He was a powerful, muscular man, with a lion head, tangled black locks, and a sweeping beard which covered his broad chest. When he was tried, there was no finer head in all the crowded court. It's no new thing to find the best face looking from the dock. But his good looks could not balance his bad deeds. His advocate did all he knew, but the cards lay against him, and Duncan Warner was handed over to the mercy of the big Los Amigos dynamos.

I was there at the committee meeting when the matter was discussed. The town council had chosen four experts to look after the arrangements. Three of them were admirable. There was Joseph M' Connor, the very man who had designed the dynamos, and there was Joshua Westmacott, the chairman of the Los Amigos Electrical Supply Company, Limited. Then there was myself as the chief medical man, and lastly an old German of the name of Peter Stulpnagel. The Germans were a strong body at Los Amigos, and they all voted for their man. That was how he got on the committee. It was said that he had been a wonderful electrician at home, and he was eternally working with wires and insulators and Leyden jars; but, as he never seemed to get any further, or to have any results worth publishing, he came at last to be regarded as a harmless crank, who had made science his hobby. We three practical men smiled when we heard that he had been elected as our colleague, and at the meeting we fixed it all up very nicely among ourselves without much thought of the old fellow who sat with his ears scooped forward in his hands, for he was a trifle hard of hearing, taking no more part in the proceedings than the gentlemen of the Press who scribbled their notes on the back benches.

We did not take long to settle it all. In New York a strength of some two thousand volts had been used, and death had not been instantaneous. Evidently their shock had been too weak. Los Amigos should not fall into that error. The charge should be six times greater, and therefore, of course, it would be six times more effective. Nothing could possibly be more logical. The whole concentrated force of the great dynamos should be employed on Duncan Warner.

So we three settled it, and had already risen to break up the meeting, when our silent companion opened his mouth for the first time.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “you appear to me to show an extraordinary ignorance upon the subject of electricity. You have not mastered the first principles of its actions upon a human being.”

The committee was about to break into an angry reply to this brusque comment, but the chairman of the Electrical Company tapped his forehead to claim its indulgence for the crankiness of the speaker.

“Pray tell us, sir,” said he, with an ironical smile, “what is there in our conclusions with which you find fault?”

“With your assumption that a large dose of electricity will merely increase the effect of a small dose. Do you not think it possible that it might have an entirely different result? Do you know anything, by actual experiment, of the effect of such powerful shocks?”

“We know it by analogy,” said the chairman, pompously. “All drugs increase their effect when they increase their dose; for example—for example—”

“Whiskey,” said Joseph M’Connor.

“Quite so. Whiskey. You see it there.”

Peter Stulpnagel smiled and shook his head.

“Your argument is not very good,” said he. “When I used to take whiskey, I used to find that one glass would excite me, but that six would send me to sleep, which is just the opposite. Now, suppose that electricity were to act in just the opposite way also, what then?”

We three practical men burst out laughing. We had known that our colleague was queer, but we never had thought that he would be as queer as this.

“What, then?” repeated Peter Stulpnagel.

“We’ll take our chances,” said the chairman.

“Pray consider,” said Peter, “that workmen who have touched the wires, and who have received shocks of only a few hundred volts, have died instantly. The fact is well known. And yet when a much greater force was used upon a criminal in New York, the man struggled for some little time. Do you not clearly see that the smaller dose is the more deadly?”

“I think, gentlemen, that this discussion had been carried on quite long enough,” said the chairman, rising again. “The point, I take it, has already been decided by the majority of the committee, and Duncan Warner shall be electrocuted on Tuesday by the full strength of the Los Amigos dynamos. Is it not so?”

“I agree,” said Joseph M’Connor.

“I agree,” said I.

“And I protest,” said Peter Stulpnagel.

“Then the motion is carried, and your protest will be duly entered in the minutes,” said the chairman, and so the sitting was dissolved.

The attendance at the electrocution was a very small one. We four members of the committee were, of course, present with the executioner, who was to act under their orders. The others were the United States Marshal, the governor of the gaol, the chaplain, and three members of the Press. The room was a small brick chamber, forming an outhouse to the Central Electrical station. It had been used as a laundry, and had an oven and copper at one side, but no other furniture save a single chair for the condemned man. A metal plate for his feet was placed in front of it, to which ran a thick, insulated wire. Above, another wire depended from the ceiling, which could be connected with a small metallic rod projecting from a cap which was to be placed upon his

head. When the connection was established Duncan Warner's hour was come.

There was a solemn hush as we waited for the coming of the prisoner. The practical engineers looked a little pale, and fidgeted nervously with the wires. Even the hardened Marshal was ill at ease, for a mere hanging was one thing, and this blasting of the flesh and blood a very different one. As to the Pressmen, their faces were whiter than the sheets which lay before them. The only man who appeared to feel none of the influence of these preparations was the little German crank, who strolled from one to the other with a smile on his lips and mischief in his eyes. More than once he even went so far as to burst into a shout of laughter, until the chaplain sternly rebuked him for his ill-timed levity.

"How can you so far forget yourself, Mr. Stulpnagel," said he, "as to jest in the presence of death?"

But the German was quite unabashed.

"If I were in the presence of death I should not jest," said he, "but since I am not I may do what I choose."

This flippant reply was about to draw another and a sterner reproof from the chaplain, when the door was swung open and two warders entered leading Duncan Warner between them. He glanced round him with a set face, stepped resolutely forward, and seated himself upon the chair.

"Touch her off!" said he.

It was barbarous to keep him in suspense. The chaplain murmured a few words in his ear, the attendant placed the cap upon his head, and then, while we all held our breath, the wire and the metal were brought in contact.

"Great Scott!" shouted Duncan Warner.

He had bounded in his chair as the frightful shock crashed through his system. But he was not dead. On the contrary, his eyes gleamed far more brightly than they had done before. There was only one change, but it was a singular one. The black had passed from his hair and beard as the shadow passes from a landscape. They were both as white

as snow. And yet there was no other sign of decay. His skin was smooth and plump and lustrous as a child's.

The Marshal looked at the committee with a reproachful eye.

"There seems to be some hitch here, gentlemen," said he. We three practical men looked at each other.

Peter Stulpnagel smiled pensively.

"I think that another should do it," said I.

Again the connection was made, and again Duncan Warner sprang in his chair and shouted, but, indeed, were it not that he still remained in the chair none of us would have recognized him. His hair and his beard had shredded off in an instant, and the room looked like a barber's shop on a Saturday night. There he sat, his eyes still shining, his skin radiant with the glow of perfect health, but with a scalp as bald as a Dutch cheese, and a chin without so much as a trace of down. He began to revolve one of his arms, slowly and doubtfully at first, but with more confidence as he went on.

"That jint," said he, "has puzzled half the doctors on the Pacific Slope. It's as good as new, and as limber as a hickory twig."

"You are feeling pretty well?" asked the old German.

"Never better in my life," said Duncan Warner cheerily.

The situation was a painful one. The Marshal glared at the committee. Peter Stulpnagel grinned and rubbed his hands. The engineers scratched their heads. The bald-headed prisoner revolved his arms and looked pleased.

"I think that one more shock—" began the chairman.

"No, sir," said the Marshal; "we've had foolery enough for one morning. We are here for an execution, and a execution we'll have."

"What do you propose?"

"There's a hook handy upon the ceiling. Fetch in a rope, and we'll soon set this matter straight."

There was another awkward delay while the warders departed for the cord. Peter Stulpnagel bent over Duncan

Warner, and whispered something in his ear. The desperado started in surprise.

“You don’t say?” he asked.

The German nodded.

“What! No ways?”

Peter shook his head, and the two began to laugh as though they shared some huge joke between them.

The rope was brought, and the Marshal himself slipped the noose over the criminal’s neck. Then the two warders, the assistant, and he swung their victim into the air. For half an hour he hung—a dreadful sight—from the ceiling. Then in solemn silence they lowered him down, and one of the warders went out to order the shell to be brought round. But as he touched ground again what was our amazement when Duncan Warner put his hands up to his neck, loosened the noose, and took a long, deep breath.

“Paul Jefferson’s sale is goin’ well,” he remarked, “I could see the crowd from up yonder,” and he nodded at the hook in the ceiling.

“Up with him again!” shouted the Marshal, “we’ll get the life out of him somehow.”

In an instant the victim was up at the hook once more.

They kept him there for an hour, but when he came down he was perfectly garrulous.

“Old man Plunket goes too much to the Arcady Saloon,” said he. “Three times he’s been there in an hour; and him with a family. Old man Plunket would do well to swear off.”

It was monstrous and incredible, but there it was. There was no getting round it. The man was there talking when he ought to have been dead. We all sat staring in amazement, but United States Marshal Carpenter was not a man to be euchred so easily. He motioned the others to one side, so that the prisoner was left standing alone.

“Duncan Warner,” said he, slowly, “you are here to play your part, and I am here to play mine. Your game is to live if you can, and my game is to carry out the sentence of the law. You’ve beat us on electricity. I’ll give you one there. And

you've beaten us on hanging, for you seem to thrive on it. But it's my turn to beat you now, for my duty has to be done."

He pulled a six-shooter from his coat as he spoke, and fired all the shots through the body of the prisoner. The room was so filled with smoke that we could see nothing, but when it cleared the prisoner was still standing there, looking down in disgust at the front of his coat.

"Coats must be cheap where you come from," said he. "Thirty dollars it cost me, and look at it now. The six holes in front are bad enough, but four of the balls have passed out, and a pretty state the back must be in."

The Marshal's revolver fell from his hand, and he dropped his arms to his sides, a beaten man.

"Maybe some of you gentlemen can tell me what this means," said he, looking helplessly at the committee.

Peter Stulpnagel took a step forward.

"I'll tell you all about it," said he.

"You seem to be the only person who knows anything."

"I *am* the only person who knows anything. I should have warned these gentlemen; but, as they would not listen to me, I have allowed them to learn by experience. What you have done with your electricity is that you have increased this man's vitality until he can defy death for centuries."

"Centuries!"

"Yes, it will take the wear of hundreds of years to exhaust the enormous nervous energy with which you have drenched him. Electricity is life, and you have charged him with it to the utmost. Perhaps in fifty years you might execute him, but I am not sanguine about it."

"Great Scott! What shall I do with him?" cried the unhappy Marshal.

Peter Stulpnagel shrugged his shoulders.

"It seems to me that it does not much matter what you do with him now," said he.

"Maybe we could drain the electricity out of him again. Suppose we hang him up by the heels?"

“No, no, it’s out of the question.”

“Well, well, he shall do no more mischief in Los Amigos, anyhow,” said the Marshal, with decision. “He shall go into the new gaol. The prison will wear him out.”

“On the contrary,” said Peter Stulpnagel, “I think that it is much more probable that he will wear out the prison.”

It was rather a fiasco, and for years we didn’t talk more about it than we could help, but it’s no secret now, and I thought you might like to jot down the facts in your casebook.

THE PARASITE

*M*arch 24th.—The spring is fairly with us now. Outside my laboratory window the great chestnut tree is all covered with the big glutinous gummy buds, some of which have already begun to break into little green shuttlecocks. As you walk down the lanes you are conscious of the rich silent forces of Nature working all around you. The wet earth smells fruitful and luscious. Green shoots are peeping out everywhere. The twigs are stiff with their sap, and the moist heavy English air is laden with a faintly resinous perfume. Buds in the hedges, lambs beneath them—everywhere the work of reproduction going forward!

I can see it without and I can feel it within. We also have our spring, when the little arterioles dilate, the lymph glands in a brisker stream, the glands work harder, winnowing and straining. Every nature readjusts the whole machine. I can feel the ferment in my blood at this very moment, and as the cool sunshine pours through my window I could dance about in it like a gnat. So I should, only Charles Sadler would rush upstairs to know what was the matter. Besides, I must remember that I am Professor Gilroy. An old professor may afford to be natural, but when fortune has given one of the first chairs in the university to a man of four-and-thirty, he must try and act the part consistently.

What a fellow Wilson is! If I could only throw the same enthusiasm into physiology that he does into psychology. I should become a Claude Bernard, at the least. His whole life and soul and energy work to one end. He drops to sleep collating his results of the past day, and he wakes to plan his researches for the coming one. And yet outside the narrow circle who follow his proceedings he gets so little credit for it. Physiology is a recognized science. If I add even

a brick to the edifice, everyone sees and applauds it. But Wilson is trying to dig the foundations for a science of the future. His work is underground, and does not show. Yet he goes on uncomplainingly, corresponding with a hundred semimaniacs in the hope of finding one reliable little speck of truth, collating old books, devouring new ones, experimenting, lecturing, trying to light up in others the fiery interest which is consuming him. I am filled with wonder and admiration when I think of him, and yet when he asks me to associate myself with his researches I am compelled to tell him that in their present state they offer little attraction to a man who is devoted to exact science. If he could show me something positive and objective I might then be tempted to approach the question from its physiological side. So long as half his subjects are tainted with charlatanry and the other half with hysteria we physiologists must content ourselves with the body, and leave the mind to our descendants.

No doubt I am a materialist. Agatha says that I am a rank one. I tell her that is an excellent reason for shortening our engagement, since I am in such urgent need of her spirituality. And yet I may claim to be a curious example of the effect of education upon temperament, for by nature I am, unless I deceive myself, a highly psychic man. I was a nervous, sensitive boy, a dreamer, a somnambulist, full of impressions and intuitions. My black hair, my dark eyes, my thin olive face, my tapering fingers, are all characteristic of my real temperament, and cause experts like Wilson to claim me as their own. But my brain is soaked with exact knowledge. I have trained myself to deal only with fact and with proof. Surmise and fancy have no place in my scheme of thought. Show me what I can see with my microscope, cut with my scalpel, weigh in my balance, and I will devote a lifetime to its investigation. But when you ask me to study feelings, impressions, suggestions, you ask me to do what is distasteful, and even demoralizing. A departure from pure reason affects me like an evil smell or a musical discord.

Which is a very sufficient reason why I am a little loath to go to Professor Wilson's tonight. Still, I feel that I could hardly get out of the invitation without positive rudeness—and now that Mrs. Marden and Agatha are going, of course I would not if I could. But I had rather meet them anywhere else. I know that Wilson would draw me into this nebulous semiscience of his if he could. In his enthusiasm he is perfectly impervious to hints or remonstrances. Nothing short of a positive quarrel will make him realize my aversion to the whole business. I have no doubt that he has some new mesmerist or clairvoyant or medium or trickster of some sort whom he is going to exhibit to us, for even his entertainments bear upon his hobby. Well, it will be a treat for Agatha, at any rate. She is interested in it as a woman usually is in whatever is vague and mystical and indefinite.

10:50 P.M.—This diary-keeping of mine is, I fancy, the outcome of that scientific habit of mind about which I wrote this morning. I like to register impressions while they are fresh. Once a day, at least, I endeavor to define my own mental position. It is a useful piece of self-analysis, and has, I fancy, a steadying effect upon the character. Frankly, I must confess that my own needs what stiffening I can give it. I fear that, after all, much of my neurotic temperament survives, and that I am far from that cool, calm precision which characterizes Murdoch or Pratt-Haldane. Otherwise, why should the tomfoolery which I have witnessed this evening have set my nerves thrilling so that even now I am all unstrung? My only comfort is that neither Wilson nor Miss Penclosa, nor even Agatha, could have possibly known my weakness.

And what in the world was there to excite me? Nothing; or so little that it will seem ludicrous when I set it down.

The Mardens got to Wilson's before me. In fact, I was one of the last to arrive, and found the room crowded. I had hardly time to say a word to Mrs. Marden and to Agatha, who was looking charming in white and pink, with glittering

wheatears in her hair, when Wilson came twitching at my sleeve.

“You want something positive, Gilroy,” said he, drawing me apart into a corner. “My dear fellow, I have a phenomenon—a phenomenon.”

I should have been more impressed had I not heard the same before. His sanguine spirit turns every firefly into a star.

“No possible question about the *bona fides* this time,” said he, in answer, perhaps, to some little gleam of amusement in my eyes. “My wife has known her for many years. They both came from Trinidad, you know. Miss Penclosa has only been in England a month or two, and knows no one outside the university circle, but I assure you that the things she has told us suffice in themselves to establish clairvoyance upon an absolutely scientific basis. There is nothing like her, amateur or professional. Come and be introduced.”

I like none of these mystery mongers, but the amateur least of all. With the paid performer you may pounce upon him and expose him the instant that you have seen through his trick. He is there to deceive you, and you are there to find him out. But what are you to do with the friend of your host’s wife? Are you to turn on a light suddenly, expose her slapping a surreptitious banjo? Or are you to hurl cochineal over her evening frock when she steals round with her phosphorous bottle and her supernatural platitude? There would be a scene, and you would be looked upon as a brute. So you have your choice of being that or a dupe. I was in no very good humor as I followed Wilson to the lady.

Anyone less like my idea of a West Indian could not be imagined. She was a small frail creature, well over forty, I should say, with a pale peaky face, and hair of a very light shade of chestnut. Her presence was insignificant, and her manner retiring. In any group of ten women she would have been the last woman whom one would have picked out. Her eyes were perhaps her most remarkable, and also, I am compelled to say, her least pleasant, feature. They were

gray in color—gray with a shade of green—and their expression struck me as being decidedly furtive. I wonder if furtive is the word, or should I have said fierce? On second thoughts feline would have expressed it better. A crutch leaning against the wall told me, what was painfully evident when she rose, that one of her legs was crippled.

So I was introduced to Miss Penclosa, and it did not escape me that as my name was mentioned she glanced across at Agatha. Wilson had evidently been talking. And presently, no doubt, thought I, she will inform me by occult means that I am engaged to a young lady with wheatears in her hair. I wondered how much more Wilson had been telling her about me.

“Professor Gilroy is a terrible skeptic,” said he. “I hope, Miss Penclosa, that you will be able to convert him.”

She looked keenly up at me.

“Professor Gilroy is quite right to be skeptical if he has not seen anything convincing,” said she. “I should have thought,” she added, “that you would yourself have been an excellent subject.”

“For what, may I ask?” said I.

“Well, for mesmerism, for example.”

“My experience has been that mesmerists go for their subjects to those who are mentally unsound. All their results are vitiated, as it seems to me, by the fact that they are dealing with abnormal organisms.”

“Which of these ladies would you say possessed a normal organism?” she asked. “I should like you to select the one who seems to you to have the best-balanced mind. Should we say the girl in pink and white?—Miss Agatha Marden, I think the name is.”

“Yes, I should attach weight to any results from her.”

“I have never tried how far she is impressionable. Of course some people respond much more rapidly than others. May I ask how far your skepticism extends? I suppose that you admit the mesmeric sleep and the power of suggestion?”

“I admit nothing, Miss Penclosa.”

“Dear me, I thought science had got further than that. Of course I know nothing about the scientific side of it. I only know what I can do. You see the girl in red, for example, over near the Japanese jar. I shall will that she come across to us.”

She bent forward as she spoke and dropped her fan upon the floor. The girl whisked round and came straight toward us with an inquiring look upon her face, as if someone had called her.

“What do you think of that, Gilroy?” cried Wilson, in a kind of ecstasy.

I did not dare to tell him what I thought of it. To me it was the most barefaced shameless piece of imposture that I had ever witnessed. The collusion and the signal had really been too obvious.

“Professor Gilroy is not satisfied,” said she, glancing up at me with her strange little eyes. “My poor fan is to get the credit of that experiment. Well, we must try something else. Miss Marden, would you have any objection to my putting you off?”

“Oh, I should love it!” cried Agatha. By this time all the company had gathered round us in a circle—the shirtfronted men and the white-throated women, some awed, some critical, as though it were something between a religious ceremony and a conjurer’s entertainment. A red-velvet armchair had been pushed into the center, and Agatha lay back in it, a little flushed, and trembling slightly from excitement. I could see it from the vibration of the wheatears. Miss Penclosa rose from her seat and stood over her, leaning upon her crutch.

And there was a change in the woman. She no longer seemed small or insignificant. Twenty years were gone from her age. Her eyes were shining; a tinge of color had come into her sallow cheeks; her whole figure had expanded. So I have seen a dull-eyed, listless lad change in an instant into briskness and life when given a task of which he felt himself

master. She looked down at Agatha with an expression which I resented from the bottom of my soul—the expression with which a Roman empress might have looked at her kneeling slave. Then, with a quick, commanding gesture, she tossed up her arms and swept them slowly down in front of her.

I was watching Agatha narrowly. During these passes she seemed to be simply amused. At the fourth I observed a slight glazing of her eyes, accompanied by some dilation of her pupils. At the sixth there was a momentary rigor. At the seventh her lids began to droop. At the tenth her eyes were closed, and her breathing was slower and fuller than usual. I tried, as I watched, to preserve my scientific calm, but a foolish, causeless agitation convulsed me. I trust that I hid it, but I felt as a child feels in the dark. I could not have believed that I was still open to such weakness.

“She is in the trance,” said Miss Penclosa.

“She is sleeping!” I cried.

“Wake her, then!”

I pulled her by the arm and shouted in her ear. She might have been dead for all the impression that I could make. Her body was there on the velvet chair. Her organs were acting, her heart, her lungs. But her soul! It had slipped from beyond our ken. Whither had it gone? What power had dispossessed it? I was puzzled and disconcerted.

“So much for the mesmeric sleep,” said Miss Penclosa. “As regards suggestion—whatever I may suggest Miss Marden will infallibly do, whether it be now or after she has awakened from her trance. Do you demand proof of it?”

“Certainly,” said I.

“You shall have it.” I saw a smile pass over her face, as though an amusing thought had struck her. She stooped and whispered earnestly into the subject’s ear. Agatha, who had been so deaf to me, nodded her head as she listened.

“Awake!” cried Miss Penclosa, with a sharp tap of her crutch upon the floor. The eyes opened, the glazing cleared

slowly away, and the soul looked out once more after its strange eclipse.

We went away early. Agatha was none the worse for her strange excursion, but I was nervous and unstrung, unable to listen to or answer the stream of comments which Wilson was pouring out for my benefit. As I bade her good-night, Miss Penclosa slipped a piece of paper into my hand.

“Pray forgive me,” said she, “if I take means to overcome your skepticism. Open this note at ten o’clock tomorrow morning. It is a little private test.”

I can’t imagine what she means, but there is the note, and it shall be opened as she directs. My head is aching, and I have written enough for tonight. Tomorrow I dare say that what seems so inexplicable will take quite another complexion. I shall not surrender my convictions without a struggle.

March 25th.—I am amazed, confounded. It is clear that I must reconsider my opinion upon this matter. But first let me place on record what has occurred.

I had finished breakfast, and was looking over some diagrams with which my lecture is to be illustrated, when my housekeeper entered to tell me that Agatha was in my study and wished to see me immediately. I glanced at the clock, and saw with surprise that it was only half past nine.

When I entered the room she was standing on the hearthrug facing me. Something in her pose chilled me, and checked the words which were rising to my lips. Her veil was half down, but I could see that she was pale, and that her expression was constrained.

“Austin,” she said, “I have come to tell you that our engagement is at an end.”

I staggered. I believe that I literally did stagger. I know that I found myself leaning against the bookcase for support.

“But—but,” I stammered—“this is very sudden, Agatha.”

“Yes, Austin, I have come here to tell you that our engagement is at an end.”

“But surely,” I cried, “you will give me some reason. This is unlike you, Agatha. Tell me how I have been unfortunate enough to offend you.”

“It is all over, Austin.”

“But why? You must be under some delusion, Agatha. Perhaps you have been told some falsehood about me. Or you may have misunderstood something that I have said to you. Only let me know what it is, and a word may set it all right.”

“We must consider it all at an end.”

“But you left me last night without a hint at any disagreement. What could have occurred in the interval to change you so? It must have been something that happened last night. You have been thinking it over, and you have disapproved of my conduct. Was it the mesmerism? Did you blame me for letting that woman exercise her power over you? You know that at the least sign I should have interfered.”

“It is useless, Austin. All is over.”

Her voice was cold and measured, her manner strangely formal and hard. It seemed to me that she was absolutely resolved not to be drawn into any argument or explanation. As for me, I was shaking with agitation, and I turned my face aside, so ashamed was I that she should see my want of control.

“You must know what this means to me,” I cried. “It is the blasting of all my hopes and the ruin of my life. You surely will not inflict such a punishment upon me unheard. You will let me know what is the matter. Consider how impossible it would be for me under any circumstances to treat you so. For God’s sake, Agatha, let me know what I have done.”

She walked past me without a word and opened the door.

“It is quite useless, Austin,” said she. “You must consider our engagement at an end.” An instant later she was gone, and before I could recover myself sufficiently to follow her I heard the hall door close behind her.

I rushed into my room to change my coat, with the idea of hurrying round to Mrs. Marden's to learn from her what the cause of my misfortune might be. So shaken was I that I could hardly lace my boots. Never shall I forget those horrible ten minutes. I had just pulled on my overcoat when the clock upon the mantelpiece struck ten.

Ten! I associated the idea with Miss Penclosa's note. It was lying before me on the table, and I tore it open. It was scribbled in pencil in a peculiarly angular handwriting.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR GILROY [it said].—Pray excuse the personal nature of the test which I am giving you. Professor Wilson happened to mention the relations between you and my subject of this evening, and it struck me that nothing could be more convincing to you than if I were to suggest to Miss Marden that she should call upon you at half past nine tomorrow morning and suspend your engagement for half an hour or so. Science is so exacting that it is difficult to give a satisfying test, but I am convinced that this at least will be an action which she would be most unlikely to do of her own free will. Forget anything that she may have said, as she has really nothing whatever to do with it, and will certainly not recollect anything about it. I write this note to shorten your anxiety, and to beg you to forgive me for the momentary unhappiness which my suggestion must have caused you.

Yours faithfully,

HELEN PENCLOSA

Really, when I had read the note, I was too relieved to be angry. It was a liberty. Certainly it was a very great liberty indeed on the part of a lady whom I had only met once. But, after all, I had challenged her by my skepticism. It may have been, as she said, a little difficult to devise a test which would satisfy me.

And she had done that. There could be no question at all upon the point. For me hypnotic suggestion was finally

established. It took its place from now onward as one of the facts of life. That Agatha, who of all women of my acquaintance had the best-balanced mind, had been reduced to a condition of automatism appeared to be certain. A person at a distance had worked her as an engineer on the shore might guide a Brennan torpedo. A second soul had stepped in, as it were, had pushed her own aside, and had seized her nervous mechanism, saying, "I will work this for half an hour." And Agatha must have been unconscious as she came and as she returned. Could she make her way in safety through the streets in such a state? I put on my hat and hurried round to see if all was well with her.

Yes. She was at home. I was shown into the drawing room, and found her sitting with a book upon her lap.

"You are an early visitor, Austin," she said, smiling.

"And you have been an even earlier one," I answered. She looked puzzled. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"You have not been out today?"

"No, certainly not."

"Agatha," said I seriously, "would you mind telling me exactly what you have done this morning?"

She laughed at my earnestness. "You've got on your professional look, Austin. See what comes of being engaged to a man of science! However, I will tell you, though I can't imagine what you want to know for. I got up at eight. I breakfasted at half past. I came into this room at ten minutes past nine, and began to read *The Memoirs of Madame de Rémusat*. In a few minutes I did the French lady the bad compliment of dropping to sleep over her pages; and I did you, sir, the flattering one of dreaming about you. It is only a few minutes since I woke up."

"And found yourself where you had been before?"

"Why, where else should I find myself?"

"Would you mind telling me, Agatha, what it was that you dreamed about me? It really is not mere curiosity on my part."

“I merely had a vague impression that you came into it. I cannot recall really anything definite.”

“If you have not been out today, Agatha, how is it that your shoes are dusty?”

A pained look came over her face.

“Really, Austin, I do not know what is the matter with you this morning. One would almost think that you doubted my word. If my boots are dusty it must be, of course, that I have put on a pair which the maid had not cleaned.”

It was perfectly evident that she knew nothing whatever about the matter, and I reflected that, after all, perhaps it was better that I should not enlighten her. It might frighten her, and could serve no good purpose that I could see. I said no more about it, therefore, and left shortly afterward to give my lecture.

But I am immensely impressed. My horizon of scientific possibilities has suddenly been enormously extended. I no longer wonder at Wilson’s demonic energy and enthusiasm. Who would not work hard who had a vast virgin field ready to his hand? Why, I have known the novel shape of a nucleolus, or a trifling peculiarity of striped muscular fiber seen under a three-hundred-diameter lens, fill me with exultation. How petty do such researches seem when compared with this one, which strikes at the very roots of life and the nature of the soul! I had always looked upon spirit as a product of matter. The brain, I thought, secreted the mind, as the liver does the bile. But how can this be, when I see mind working from a distance, and playing upon matter as a musician might upon a violin? The body does not give rise to the soul, then, but is rather the rough instrument by which the spirit manifests itself. The windmill does not give rise to the wind, but only indicates it. It was opposed to my whole habit of thought, and yet it was undeniably possible and worthy of investigation.

And why should I not investigate it? I see that under yesterday’s date I said, “If I could see something positive and objective I might be tempted to approach it from the

physiological aspect." Well, I have got my test. I shall be as good as my word. The investigation would, I am sure, be of immense interest. Some of my colleagues might look askance at it, for science is full of unreasoning prejudices, but if Wilson has the courage of his convictions I can afford to have it also. I shall go to him tomorrow morning—to him and to Miss Penclosa. If she can show us so much it is probable that she can show us more.

March 26th.—Wilson was, as I had anticipated, very exultant over my conversion, and Miss Penclosa was also demurely pleased at the result of her experiment. Strange what a silent, colorless creature she is, save only when she exercises her power! When talking about it gives her color and life. She seems to take a singular interest in me. I cannot help observing how her eyes follow me about the room.

We had the most interesting conversation about her own powers. It is just as well to put her views on record, though they cannot, of course, claim any scientific weight.

"You are on the very fringe of the subject," said she, when I had expressed wonder at the remarkable instance of suggestion which she had shown me. "I had no direct influence upon Miss Marden when she came round to you. I was not even thinking of her that morning. What I did was to set her mind, as I might set the alarm of a clock, so that at the hour named it would go off of its own accord. If six months instead of twelve hours had been suggested, it would have been the same."

"And if the suggestion had been to assassinate me?"

"She would have most inevitably have done so."

"But this is a terrible power," I cried.

"It is, as you say, a terrible power," she answered, gravely; "and the more you know of it, the more terrible will it seem to you."

"May I ask," said I, "what you meant when you said that this matter of suggestion is only at the fringe of it? What do

you consider the essential?"

"I had rather not tell you."

I was surprised at the decision of her answer.

"You understand," said I, "that it is not out of curiosity I ask, but in hope that I may find some scientific explanation for the facts with which you furnish me."

"Frankly, Professor Gilroy," said she, "I am not at all interested in science, nor do I care whether it can or cannot classify these powers."

"But I was hoping—"

"Ah, that is quite another thing. If you make it a personal matter," said she, with the pleasantest of smiles, "I shall be only too happy to tell you anything you wish to know. Let me see. What was it you asked me? Oh, about the further powers. Professor Wilson won't believe in them, but they are quite true all the same. For example, it is possible for an operator to gain complete command over his subject—presuming that the latter is a good one. Without any previous suggestion he may make him do whatever he likes."

"Without the subject's knowledge?"

"That depends. If the force were strongly exerted, he would know no more about it than Miss Marden did when she came round and frightened you so. Or, if the influence was less powerful, he might be conscious of what he was doing, but be quite unable to prevent himself from doing it."

"Would he have lost his own will power, then?"

"It would be overridden by another stronger one."

"Have you ever exercised this power yourself?"

"Several times."

"Is your own will so strong, then?"

"Well, it does not entirely depend on that. Many have strong wills which are not detachable from themselves. The thing is to have the gift of projecting it into another person, and superseding their own. I feel that the power varies with my own strength and health."

“Practically you send your soul into another person’s body.”

“Well, you might put it that way.”

“And what does your own body do?”

“It merely feels lethargic.”

“Well, but is there no danger to your own health?” I asked.

“There might be a little. You have to be careful never to let your own consciousness absolutely go, otherwise you might experience some difficulty in finding your way back in. You must always preserve the connection, as it were. I am afraid I express myself very badly, Professor Gilroy, but of course I don’t know how to put these things in a scientific way. I am just giving you my own experiences and my own explanations.”

Well, I read this over now at my leisure, and I marvel at myself. Is this Austin Gilroy, the man who has won his way to the front by his hard reasoning power and by his devotion to fact? Here I am, gravely retailing the gossip of a woman who tells me how her soul may be projected from her body, and how, while she lies in a lethargy, she can control the actions of people at a distance. Do I accept it? Certainly not. She must prove and reprove before I yield a point. But if I am still a skeptic, I have at least ceased to be a scoffer. We are to have a sitting this evening, and she is to try if she can produce any mesmeric effect upon me. If she can it will make an excellent starting point for our investigation. No one can accuse *me*, at any rate, of complicity. If she cannot, we must try and find some subject who will be like Caesar’s wife. Wilson is perfectly impervious.

10 P.M.—I believe that I am on the threshold of an epoch-making investigation. To have the power of examining these phenomena from inside—to have an organism which will respond, and at the same time a brain which will appreciate and criticize—that is surely a unique advantage. I am quite sure that Wilson would give five years of his life to be as susceptible as I have proved myself to be.

There was no one present except Wilson and his wife. I was seated with my head leaning back; and Miss Penclosa, standing in front, and a little to the left, used the same long sweeping strokes as with Agatha. At each of them a warm current of air seemed to strike me, and to suffuse a thrill and glow all through me, from head to foot. My eyes were fixed upon Miss Penclosa's face; but as I gazed, the features seemed to blur and to fade away. I was conscious only of her own eyes looking down at me, gray, deep, inscrutable. Larger they grew, and larger, until they changed suddenly into two mountain lakes, toward which I seemed to be falling with horrible rapidity. I shuddered; and as I did so, some deeper stratum of thought told me that the shudder represented the rigor which I had observed in Agatha. An instant later, I struck the surface of the lakes, now joined into one, and down I went beneath the water, with a fullness in my head and a buzzing in my ears. Down I went, down, down, and then with a swoop up again, until I could see the light streaming brightly through the green water. I was almost at the surface, when the word "Awake!" rang through my head, and with a start I found myself back in the armchair, with Miss Penclosa leaning on her crutch, and Wilson, his notebook in his hand, peeping over her shoulder. No heaviness or weariness was left behind. On the contrary, though it is only an hour or so since the experiment, I feel so wakeful that I am more inclined for my study than my bedroom. I see quite a vista of interesting experiments extending before us, and am all impatience to begin upon them.

March 27th.—A blank day, as Miss Penclosa goes with Wilson and his wife to the Suttons. Have begun Binet and Ferré's *Animal Magnetism*. What strange deep waters these are! Results, results, results—and the cause an absolute mystery! It is stimulating to the imagination, but I must be on my guard against that. Let us have no inferences nor deductions, and nothing but solid facts. I *know* that the mesmeric trance is true; I *know* that mesmeric suggestion is

true; I *know* that I am myself sensitive to this force. That is my present position. I have a large new notebook, which shall be devoted entirely to scientific detail.

Long talk with Agatha and Mrs. Marden in the evening about our marriage. We think that the summer vac. (the beginning of it) would be the best time for the wedding. Why should we delay? I grudge even those few months. Still, as Mrs. Marden says, there are a good many things to be arranged.

March 28th.—Mesmerized again by Miss Penclosa. Experience much the same as before, save that insensibility came on more quickly. See Notebook A for temperature of room, barometric pressure, pulse, and respiration, as taken by Professor Wilson.

March 29th.—Mesmerized again. Details in Notebook A.

March 30th.—Sunday, and a blank day. I grudge any interruption of our experiments. At present they merely embrace the physical signs, which go with slight, with complete, and with extreme insensibility. Afterward we hope to pass on to the phenomena of suggestion and of lucidity. Professors have demonstrated these things upon women at Nancy and the Salpêtrière. It will be more convincing when a woman demonstrates them upon a professor, with a second professor as a witness. And that I should be the subject—I, the skeptic, the materialist! At least, I have shown that my devotion to science is greater than to my own personal consistency. The defeating of our own words is the greatest sacrifice which truth ever requires of us.

My neighbor, Charles Sadler, the handsome young demonstrator of anatomy, came in this evening to return a volume of Virchow's *Archives*, which I had lent him. I call him young, but, as a matter of fact, he is a year older than I am.

"I understand, Gilroy," said he, "that you are being experimented upon by Miss Penclosa? Well," he went on, when I had acknowledged it, "if I were you, I should not let it go any further. You will think me very impertinent, no doubt;

but, nonetheless I feel it to be my duty to advise you to have no more to do with her.”

Of course I asked him why.

“I am so placed that I cannot enter into particulars as freely as I could wish,” said he. “Miss Penclosa is the friend of my friend, and my position is a delicate one. I can only say this, that I have myself been the subject of some of the woman’s experiments, and that they have left a most unpleasant impression on my mind.”

He could hardly expect me to be satisfied with that, and I tried hard to get something more definite out of him, but without success. Is it conceivable that he could be jealous at my having superseded him? Or is he one of those men of science who feel personally injured when facts run counter to their preconceived opinions? He cannot seriously suppose that because he has some vague grievance, I am therefore to abandon a series of experiments which promise to be so fruitful of results. He appeared to be annoyed at the light way in which I treated his shadowy warnings, and we parted with some little coldness on both sides.

March 31st.—Mesmerized by Miss P.

April 1st.—Mesmerized by Miss P. (Notebook A.)

April 2nd.—Mesmerized by Miss P. (Sphygmographic chart by Professor Wilson.)

April 3rd.—It is possible that this course of mesmerism may be a little trying to the general constitution. Agatha says that I am thinner, and darker under the eyes. I am conscious of a nervous irritability which I had not observed in myself before. The least noise, for example, makes me start, and the stupidity of a student causes me exasperation instead of amusement. Agatha wishes me to stop, but I tell her that every course of study is trying, and that one can never attain a result without paying some price for it. When she sees the sensation which my forthcoming paper on “The relation between mind and matter” may make she will understand that it is worth a little nervous wear and tear. I should not be surprised if I got my F.R.S. over it.

Mesmerized again in the evening. The effect is produced more rapidly now, and the subjective visions are less marked. I keep full notes of each sitting. Wilson is leaving for town for a week or ten days, but we shall not interrupt the experiments, which depend for their value as much upon my sensations as on his observations.

April 4th.—I must be carefully on my guard. A complication has crept into our experiments which I had not reckoned upon. In my eagerness for scientific facts, I have been foolishly blind to the human relations between Miss Penclosa and myself. I can write here what I would not breathe to a living soul. The unhappy woman appears to have formed an attachment for me.

I should not say such a thing, even in the privacy of my own intimate journal, if it had not come to such a pass that it is impossible to ignore it. For some time—that is, for the last week—there have been signs which I have brushed aside and refused to think of. Her brightness when I come, her dejection when I go, her eagerness that I should come often, the expression of her eyes, the tone of her voice—I tried to think that they meant nothing, and were perhaps only her ardent West Indian manner. But last night, as I awoke from the mesmeric sleep, I put out my hand, unconsciously, involuntarily, and clasped hers. When I came fully to myself we were sitting with them locked, she looking up at me with an expectant smile. And the horrible thing was that I felt impelled to say what she expected me to say. What a false wretch I should have been! How I should have loathed myself today had I yielded to the temptation of that moment! But, thank God, I was strong enough to spring up and hurry from the room. I was rude, I fear, but I could not—no, I *could* not—trust myself another moment. I, a gentleman, a man of honor, engaged to one of the sweetest girls in England—and yet in a moment of reasonless passion I nearly professed my love for this woman, whom I hardly know. She is far older than myself, and a cripple. It is monstrous, odious, and yet the impulse was so strong that

had I stayed another minute in her presence I should have committed myself. What was it? I have to teach others the workings of our organism, and what do I know of it myself? Was it the sudden uncropping of some lower stratum in my nature—a brutal primitive instinct suddenly asserting itself? I could almost believe the tales of obsession by evil spirits so overmastering was the feeling.

Well, the incident places me in a most unfortunate position. On the one hand, I am very loath to abandon a series of experiments which have already gone so far, and which promise such brilliant results. On the other, if this unhappy woman has conceived a passion for me— But surely even now I must have made some hideous mistake. She, with her age and her deformity! It is impossible. And then she knew about Agatha. She understood how I was placed. She only smiled out of amusement, perhaps, when in my dazed state I seized her hand. It was my half-mesmerized brain which gave it a meaning, and sprang with such bestial swiftness to meet it. I wish I could persuade myself that it was indeed so. On the whole, perhaps, my wisest plan would be to postpone our other experiments until Wilson's return. I have written a note to Miss Penclosa, therefore, making no allusion to last night, but saying that a press of work would cause me to interrupt our sittings for a few days. She has answered, formally enough, to say that if I should change my mind I should find her at home at the usual hour.

10 P.M.—Well, well, what a thing of straw I am! I am coming to know myself better of late, and the more I know, the lower I fall in my own estimation. Surely I was not always so weak as this. At four o'clock I should have smiled had anyone told me that I should go to Miss Penclosa's tonight, and yet at eight I was at Wilson's door as usual. I don't know how it occurred. The influence of habit, I suppose. Perhaps there is a mesmeric craze, as there is an opium craze, and I am a victim to it. I only know that as I worked in my study I became more and more uneasy. I

fidgeted. I worried. I could not concentrate my mind upon the papers in front of me. And then at last, almost before I knew what I was doing, I seized my hat, and hurried round to keep my usual appointment.

We had an interesting evening. Mrs. Wilson was present during most of the time, which prevented the embarrassment which one at least of us must have felt. Miss Penclosa's manner was quite the same as usual, and she expressed no surprise at my having come in spite of my note. There was nothing in her bearing to show that yesterday's incident had made any impression upon her, and so I am inclined to hope that I overrated it.

April 6th.—No, no, no, I did not overrate it. I can no longer attempt to conceal from myself that this woman has conceived a passion for me. It is monstrous, but it is true. Again tonight I awoke from the mesmeric trance to find my hand in hers, and to suffer that odious feeling which urges me to throw away my honor, my career, everything, for the sake of this creature, who, as I can plainly see when I am away from her influence, possesses no single charm upon earth. But when I am near her I do not feel this. She rouses something in me—something evil—something I had rather not think of. She paralyzes my better nature, too, at the moment when she stimulates my worse. Decidedly it is not good for me to be near her.

Last night was worse than before. Instead of flying, I actually sat for some time with my hand in hers, talking over the most intimate subjects with her. We spoke of Agatha among other things. What could I have been dreaming of? Miss Penclosa said that she was conventional, and I agreed with her. She spoke once or twice in a disparaging way of her, and I did not protest. What a creature I have been!

Weak as I have proved myself to be, I am still strong enough to bring this sort of thing to an end. It shall not happen again. I have sense enough to fly when I cannot fight. From this Sunday night onward I shall never sit with

Miss Penclosa again. Never! Let the experiments go; let the research come to an end; anything is better than facing this monstrous temptation which drags me so low. I have said nothing to Miss Penclosa, but I shall simply stay away. She can tell the reason without any words of mine.

April 7th.—Have stayed away as I said. It is a pity to ruin such an interesting investigation, but it would be a greater pity still to ruin my life, and I *know* that I cannot trust myself with that woman.

11 P.M.—God help me! What is the matter with me? Am I going mad? Let me try and be calm and reason with myself. First of all I shall set down exactly what occurred.

It was nearly eight when I wrote the lines with which this day begins. Feeling strangely restless and uneasy, I left my rooms and walked round to spend the evening with Agatha and her mother. They both remarked that I was pale and haggard. About nine Professor Pratt-Haldane came in, and we played a game of whist. I tried hard to concentrate my attention upon the cards, but the feeling of restlessness grew and grew until I found it impossible to struggle against it. I simply *could* not sit still at the table. At last, in the very middle of a hand, I threw my cards down, and with some sort of an incoherent apology about having an appointment, I rushed from the room. As if in a dream, I have a vague recollection of tearing through the hall, snatching my hat from the stand, and slamming the door behind me. As in a dream, too, I have the impression of the double line of gas lamps, and my bespattered boots tell me that I must have run down the middle of the road. It was all misty and strange and unnatural. I came to Wilson's house; I saw Mrs. Wilson, and I saw Miss Penclosa. I hardly recall what we talked about, but I do remember that Miss P. shook the head of her crutch at me in a playful way, and accused me of being late and of losing interest in our experiments. There was no mesmerism, but I stayed some time, and have only just returned.

My brain is quite clear again now, and I can think over what has occurred. It is absurd to suppose that it is merely weakness and force of habit. I tried to explain it in that way the other night, but it will no longer suffice. It is something much deeper and more terrible than that. Why, when I was at the Mardens' whist table I was dragged away as if the noose of a rope had been cast round me. I can no longer disguise it from myself. The woman has her grip upon me. I am in her clutch. But I must keep my head and reason it out, and see what is best to be done.

But what a blind fool I have been! In my enthusiasm over my research I have walked straight into the pit, although it lay gaping before me. Did she not herself warn me? Did she not tell me, as I can read in my own journal, that when she has acquired power over a subject she can make him do her will? And she has acquired that power over me, and I am for the moment at the beck and call of this creature with the crutch. I must come when she wills it. I must do as she wills. Worst of all, I must feel as she wills. I loathe her and fear her, yet while I am under the spell she can doubtless make me love her.

There is some consolation in the thought, then, that these odious impulses for which I have blamed myself do not really come from me at all. They are all transferred from her, little as I could have guessed it at the time. I feel cleaner and lighter for the thought.

April 8th.—Yes, now in broad daylight, writing coolly and with time for reflection, I am compelled to confirm everything which I find in my journal of last night. I am in a horrible position; but, above all, I must not lose my head. I must pit my intellect against her powers. After all, I am no silly puppet to dance at the end of a string. I have energy, brains, courage. For all her devil's tricks I may beat her yet. May! I *must* or what is to become of me?

Let me try to reason it out. This woman, by her own explanation, can dominate my nervous organism. She can project herself into my body and take command of it. She

has a parasite soul—yes, she is a parasite, a monstrous parasite. She creeps into my frame as the hermit crab does into the whelk's shell. I am powerless. What can I do? I am dealing with forces of which I know nothing. And I can tell no one of my trouble. They would set me down as a madman. Certainly if it got noised abroad, the university would say that they had no need of a devil-ridden professor. And Agatha! No, no; I must face it alone.

I read over my notes of what the woman said when she spoke of her powers. There is one point which fills me with dismay. She implies that when the influence is slight the subject knows what he is doing, but cannot control himself, whereas when it is strongly exerted he is absolutely unconscious. Now I have always known what I did, though less so last night than on the previous occasion. That seems to mean that she has never yet exerted her full powers upon me. Was ever a man so placed before?

Yes, perhaps there was, and very near me, too. Charles Sadler must know something of this. His vague words of warning take a meaning now. Oh, if I had only listened to him then before I helped by these repeated sittings to forge the links of the chain which binds me! But I will see him today. I will apologize to him for having treated his warning so lightly. I will see if he can advise me.

4 P.M.—No, he cannot. I have talked with him, and he showed some surprise at the first words in which I tried to express my unspeakable secret that I went no further. As far as I can gather—by hints and inferences rather than by any statement—his own experience was limited to some words or looks such as I have myself endured. His abandonment of Miss Penclosa is in itself a sign that he was never really in her toils. Oh, if he only knew his escape! He has to thank his phlegmatic Saxon temperament for it. I am black and Celtic, and this hag's clutch is deep in my nerves. Shall I ever get it out? Shall I ever be the same man that I was just one short fortnight ago?

Let me consider what I had better do. I cannot leave the university in the middle of the term. If I were free, my course would be obvious. I should start at once and travel in Persia. But would she allow me to start? And could her influence not reach me in Persia, and bring me back to within touch of her crutch? I can only find out the limits of this hellish power by my own bitter experience. I will fight and fight and fight—and what can I do more?

I know very well that about eight o'clock tonight that craving for her society—that irresistible restlessness—will come upon me. How shall I overcome it? What shall I do? I must make it impossible for me to leave the room. I shall lock the door and throw the key out of the window. But then what am I to do in the morning? Never mind about the morning. I must at all costs break this chain which holds me.

April 9th.—Victory! I have done splendidly! At seven o'clock last night I took a hasty dinner, and then locked myself up in my bedroom and dropped the key into the garden. I chose a cheery novel and lay in bed for three hours trying to read it, but really in a horrible state of trepidation, expecting every instant that I should become conscious of the impulse. Nothing of the sort occurred, however, and I woke this morning with the feeling that a black nightmare had been lifted off me. Perhaps the creature realized what I had done, and understood that it was useless to try to influence me. At any rate, I have beaten her once, and if I can do it once I can do it again.

It was most awkward about the key in the morning. Luckily there was an undergraduate below, and I asked him to throw it up. No doubt he thought I had just dropped it. I will have doors and windows screwed up, and six stout men to hold me down in my bed, before I will surrender myself to be hag-ridden in this way.

I had a note from Mrs. Marden this afternoon, asking me to go round and see her. I intended to do so in any case, but had not expected to find bad news waiting for me. It seems

that the Armstrongs, from whom Agatha has expectations, are due home from Adelaide in the *Aurora*, and that they have written to Mrs. Marden and her to meet them in town. They will probably be away for a month or six weeks, and as the *Aurora* is due on Wednesday, they must go at once—tomorrow if they are ready in time. My consolation is that when we meet again there will be no more parting between Agatha and me.

“I want you to do one thing, Agatha,” said I, when we were alone together; “if you should happen to meet Miss Penclosa, either in town or here, you must promise me never again to allow her to mesmerize you.”

Agatha opened her eyes.

“Why, it was only the other day that you were saying how interesting it all was, and how determined you were to finish your experiments.”

“I know. But I have changed my mind since then.”

“And you won’t have it any more?”

“No.”

“I am so glad, Austin. You can’t think how pale and worn you have been lately. It was really our principal objection to going to London now, that we did not wish to leave you, when you were so pulled down. And your manner has been so strange occasionally—especially that night when you left poor Professor Pratt-Haldane to play dummy. I am convinced that these experiments are very bad for your nerves.”

“I think so too, dear.”

“And for Miss Penclosa’s nerves as well. You have heard that she is ill?”

“No.”

“Mrs. Wilson told us so last night. She described it as nervous fever. Professor Wilson is coming back this week, and of course Mrs. Wilson is very anxious that Miss Penclosa should be well again then, for he has quite a program of experiments which he is anxious to carry out.”

I was glad to have Agatha’s promise, for it was enough that this woman should have one of us in her clutch. On the

other hand, I was disturbed to hear about Miss Penclosa's illness. It rather discounts the victory which I appeared to win last night. I remember that she said that loss of health interfered with her power. That may be why I was able to hold my own so easily. Well, well, I must take the same precautions tonight, and see what comes of it. I am childishly frightened when I think of her.

April 10th.—All went very well last night. I was amused at the gardener's face when I had again to hail him this morning and ask him to throw up my key. I shall get the same among the servants if this sort of thing goes on. But the great point is that I stayed in my room without the slightest inclination to leave it. I do believe that I am getting myself clear of this incredible bond—or is it only that the woman's power is in abeyance until she recovers her strength? I can but pray for the best.

The Mardens left this morning, and the brightness seems to have gone out of the spring sunshine. And yet it is very beautiful also, as it gleams on the green chestnuts opposite my windows, and gives a touch of gaiety to the heavy lichen-mottled walls of the old colleges. How sweet and gentle and soothing is Nature! Who would think that there lurked in her also such vile forces, such odious possibilities? For of course I understand that this dreadful thing which has sprung out at me is neither supernatural nor even preternatural. No; it is a natural force which this woman can use, and society is ignorant of. The mere fact that it ebbs with her strength shows how entirely it is subject to physical laws. If I had time I might probe it to the bottom, and lay my hands upon its antidote. But you cannot tame the tiger when you are beneath his claws. You can but try to writhe away from him. Ah! when I look in the glass and see my own dark eyes and clear-cut Spanish face, I long for a vitriol splash or a bout of the smallpox. One or the other might have saved me from this calamity.

I am inclined to think that I may have trouble tonight. There are two things which make me fear so. One is that I

met Mrs. Wilson in the street, and that she tells me that Miss Penclosa is better, though still weak. I find myself wishing in my heart that the illness had been her last. The other is that Professor Wilson comes back in a day or two, and his presence would act as a constraint upon her. I should not fear our interviews if a third person were present. For both these reasons I have a presentiment of trouble tonight, and I shall take the same precautions as before.

April 11th.—No, thank God, all went well last night. I really could not face the gardener again. I locked my door and thrust the key underneath it so that I had to ask the maid to let me out in the morning. But the precaution was really not needed, for I never had any inclination to go out at all. Three evenings in succession at home! I am surely near the end of my troubles, for Wilson will be home again either today or tomorrow. Shall I tell him of what I have gone through or not? I am convinced that I should not have the slightest sympathy from him. He would look upon me as an interesting case, and read a paper about me at the next meeting of the Psychological Society, in which he would gravely discuss the possibility of my being a deliberate liar, and weigh it against the chances of my being in an early stage of lunacy. No, I shall get no comfort out of Wilson.

I am feeling wonderfully fit and well. I don't think I ever lectured with greater spirit. Oh, if I could only get this shadow off my life, how happy I should be! Young, fairly wealthy, in the front rank of my profession, engaged to a beautiful and charming girl—have I not everything which a man could ask for? Only one thing to trouble me; but what a thing it is!

Midnight.—I shall go mad. Yes, that will be the end of it. I shall go mad. I am not far from it now. My head throbs as I rest it on my hot hand. I am quivering all over like a scared horse. Oh, what a night I have had! And yet I have some cause to be satisfied also.

At the risk of becoming the laughing stock of my own servant, I again slipped my key under the door, imprisoning

myself for the night. Then, finding it too early to go to bed, I lay down with my clothes on and began to read one of Dumas's novels. Suddenly I was gripped—gripped and dragged from the couch. It is only thus that I can describe the overpowering nature of the force which pounced upon me. I clawed at the coverlet. I clung to the woodwork. I believe that I screamed out in my frenzy. It was all useless—hopeless. I *must* go. There was no way out of it. It was only at the outset that I resisted. The force soon became too overmastering for that. I thank goodness that there were no watchers there to interfere with me. I could not have answered for myself if there had been. And besides the determination to get out, there came to me also the keenest and coolest judgment in choosing my means. I lit a candle and endeavored, kneeling in front of the door, to pull the key through with the feather end of a quill pen. It was just too short, and pushed it further away. Then with quiet persistence I got a paper knife out of one of the drawers, and with that I managed to draw the key back. I opened the door, stepped into my study, took a photograph of myself from the bureau, wrote something across it, placed it in the inside pocket of my coat, and then started off for Wilson's.

It was all wonderfully clear, and yet disassociated from the rest of my life, as the incidents of even the most vivid dream might be. A peculiar double consciousness possessed me. There was the predominant alien will which was bent upon drawing me to the side of its owner, and there was the feebler protesting personality, which I recognized as being myself, tugging feebly at the overmastering impulse as a led terrier might at its chain. I can remember recognizing these two conflicting forces, but I recall nothing of my walk, nor of how I was admitted to the house.

Very vivid, however, is my recollection of how I met Miss Penclosa. She was reclining on the sofa in the little boudoir in which our experiments had usually been carried out. Her head was rested on her hand, and a tiger-skin rug had been partly drawn over her. She looked up expectantly as I

entered, and as the lamplight fell upon her face I could see that she was very pale and thin, with dark hollows under her eyes. She smiled at me, and pointed to a stool beside her. It was with her left hand that she pointed, and I, running eagerly forward, seized it—I loathe myself as I think of it—and pressed it passionately to my lips. Then seating myself upon the stool, and still retaining her hand, I gave her the photograph which I had brought with me, and talked and talked and talked, of my love for her, of my grief over her illness, of my joy at her recovery, of the misery it was to me to be absent a single evening from her side. She lay quietly looking down at me with imperious eyes and her provocative smile. Once I remember that she passed her hand over my hair, as one caresses a dog; and it gave me pleasure—the caress. I thrilled under it. I was her slave, body and soul, and for the moment I rejoiced in my slavery.

And then came the blessed change. Never tell me that there is not a Providence. I was on the brink of perdition. My feet were on the edge. Was it a coincidence that at that very instant help should come? No, no, no; there is a Providence, and Its hand has drawn me back. There is something in the universe stronger than this devil woman with her tricks. Ah, what a balm to my heart it is to think so!

As I looked up at her I was conscious of a change in her. Her face which had been pale before, was now ghastly. Her eyes were dull, and the lids drooped heavily over them. Above all, the look of serene confidence had gone from her features. Her mouth had weakened. Her forehead had puckered. She was frightened and undecided. And as I watched the change my own spirit fluttered and struggled, trying hard to clear itself from the grip which held it—a grip which from moment to moment grew less secure.

“Austin,” she whispered. “I have tried to do too much. I was not strong enough. I have not recovered yet from my illness. But I could not live longer without seeing you. You won’t leave me, Austin. This is only a passing weakness. If

you will only give me five minutes, I shall be myself again. Give me the small decanter from the table in the window.”

But I had regained my soul. With her waning strength the influence had cleared away from me and left me free. And I was aggressive—bitterly, fiercely aggressive. For once, at least, I could make this woman understand what my real feelings toward her were. My soul was filled with a hatred as bestial as the love against which it was a reaction. It was the savage murderous passion of the revolted serf. I could have taken the crutch from her side and beaten her face in with it. She threw her hands up as if to avoid a blow, and cowered away from me into the corner of the settee.

“The brandy!” she gasped. “The brandy!”

I took the decanter and poured it over the roots of a palm in the window. Then I snatched the photograph from her hands and tore it into a hundred pieces.

“You vile woman!” I said. “If I did my duty to society you would never leave this room alive.”

“I love you, Austin—I love you,” she wailed.

“Yes,” I cried, “and Charles Sadler before. And how many others before that?”

“Charles Sadler!” she gasped. “He has spoken to you! So, Charles Sadler—Charles Sadler!” Her voice came through her white lips like a snake hiss.

“Yes, I know you, and others shall know you too. You shameless creature! You knew how I stood. And yet you used your vile power to bring me to your side. You may perhaps do so again, but at least you will remember that you have heard me say that I love Miss Marden from the bottom of my soul, and that I loathe you, abhor you. The very sight of you and the sound of your voice fill me with horror and disgust. The thought of you is repulsive. That is how I feel toward you, and if it pleases you by your tricks to draw me again to your side as you have done tonight you will at least, I should think, have little satisfaction in trying to make a lover out of a man who has told you his real

opinion of you. You may put what words you will into my mouth, but you cannot help remembering.”

I stopped, for the woman’s head had fallen back, and she had fainted. She could not bear to hear what I had to say to her. What a glow of satisfaction it gives me to think that, come what may, in the future she can never misunderstand my true feelings toward her! But what will occur in the future? What will she do next? I dare not think of it. Oh, if only I could hope that she will leave me alone! But when I think of what I said to her—Never mind: I have been stronger than she for once.

April 12th.—I hardly slept last night and found myself in the morning so unstrung and feverish that I was compelled to ask Pratt-Haldane to do my lecture for me. It is the first I have ever missed. I rose at midday, but my head is aching, my hands quivering, and my nerves in a pitiable state.

Who should come round this evening but Wilson! He has just come back from London, where he has lectured, read papers, convened meetings, exposed a medium, conducted a series of experiments on thought transference, entertained Professor Richet of Paris, spent hours gazing into a crystal, and obtained some evidence as to the passage of matter through matter. All this he poured into my ears in a single gust.

“But you?” he cried at last. “You are not looking well. And Miss Penclosa is quite prostrated today. How about the experiments?”

“I have abandoned them.”

“Tut, tut! Why?”

“The subject seems to me to be a dangerous one.”

Out came his big brown notebook.

“This is of great interest,” said he. “What are your grounds for saying that it is a dangerous one? Please give me your facts in chronological order, with approximate dates, and names of reliable witnesses, with their permanent addresses.”

“First of all,” I asked, “would you tell me whether you have collected any cases where the mesmerist has gained a command over the subject and has used it for evil purposes?”

“Dozens!” he cried, exultantly. “Crime by suggestion—”

“I don’t mean suggestion. I mean where a sudden impulse comes from a person at a distance—an uncontrollable impulse.”

“Obsession!” he shrieked, in an ecstasy of delight. “It is the rarest condition. We have eight cases, five well attested. You don’t mean to say—” his exultation made him hardly articulate.

“No, I don’t,” said I. “Good evening. You will excuse me, but I am not very well tonight.” And so at last I got rid of him, still brandishing his pencil and his notebook. My troubles may be hard to bear, but at least it is better to hug them to myself than to have myself exhibited by Wilson like a freak at a fair. He has lost sight of human beings. Everything to him is a case and a phenomenon. I will die before I speak to him again upon the matter.

April 14th.—My nerves have quite recovered their tone. I really believe that I have conquered the creature. But I must confess to living in some suspense. She is well again, for I hear that she was driving with Mrs. Wilson in the High Street in the afternoon.

April 15th.—I do wish I could get away from the place altogether. I shall fly to Agatha’s side the very day that the term closes. I suppose it is pitiably weak of me, but this woman gets upon my nerves most terribly. I have seen her again, and I have spoken with her.

It was just after lunch, and I was smoking a cigarette in my study, when I heard the step of my servant Murray in the passage. I was languidly conscious that a second step was audible behind, and had hardly troubled myself to speculate who it might be, when suddenly a slight noise brought me out of my chair with my skin creeping with apprehension. I had never particularly observed before what sort of sound

the tapping of a crutch was, but my quivering nerves told me that I heard it now in the sharp wooden clacks which alternated with the muffled thud of the foot fall. Another instant and my servant had shown her in.

I did not attempt the usual conventions of society, nor did she. I simply stood with the smoldering cigarette in my hand and gazed at her. She in turn looked silently at me, and at her look I remembered how in these very pages I had tried to define the expression of her eyes, whether they were furtive or fierce. Today they were fierce, coldly and inexorably so.

“Well,” said she at last, “are you still of the same mind as when I saw you last?”

“I have always been of the same mind.”

“Let us understand each other, Professor Gilroy,” said she slowly. “I am not a very safe person to trifle with, as you should realize by now. It was you who asked me to enter into a series of experiments with you, it was you who won my affections, it was you who professed your love for me, it was you who brought me your own photograph with words of affection upon it, and finally, it was you who on the very same evening thought fit to insult me most outrageously, addressing me as no man has ever dared to speak to me yet. Tell me that those words came from you in a moment of passion, and I am prepared to forget and to forgive them. You did not mean what you said, Austin. You do not really hate me?”

I might have pitied this deformed woman—such a longing for love broke suddenly through the menace of her eyes. But then I thought of what I had gone through and my heart set like flint.

“If ever you heard me speak of love,” said I, “you knew very well that it was your voice which spoke, and not mine. The only words of truth which I have ever been able to say to you are those which you heard when last we met.”

“I know. Someone has set you against me. It was he.” She tapped with her crutch upon the floor. “Well, you know very

well that I could bring you this instant crouching like a spaniel to my feet. You will not find me again in my hour of weakness when you can insult me with impunity. Have a care what you are doing, Professor Gilroy. You stand in a terrible position. You have not yet really felt the hold which I have upon you.”

I shrugged my shoulders and turned away.

“Well,” said she, after a pause, “if you despise my love I must see what can be done with fear. You smile, but the day will come when you will come screaming to me for pardon. Yes, you will grovel on the ground before me, proud as you are, and you will curse the day that ever you turned me from your best friend into your most bitter enemy. Have a care, Professor Gilroy.” I saw a white hand shaking in the air, and a face which was scarcely human, so convulsed was it with passion. An instant later she was gone, and I heard the quick hobble and tap receding down the passage.

But she has left a weight upon my heart. Vague presentiments of coming misfortune lie heavily upon me. I try in vain to persuade myself that these are only words of empty anger. I can remember those relentless eyes too clearly to think so. What shall I do?—ah, what shall I do? I am no longer master of my own soul. At any moment this loathsome parasite may creep into me, and then—? I must tell someone of my hideous secret—I must tell it or go mad. If I had someone to sympathize and advise! Wilson is out of the question. Charles Sadler would understand me only so far as his own experience carries him. Pratt-Haldane! he is a well-balanced man, a man of great common sense and resource. I will go to him. I will tell him everything. God grant that he may be able to advise me!

6:45 P.M.—No, it is useless. There is no human help for me. I must fight this out single-handed. Two courses lie before me. I might become this woman’s lover. Or I must endure such persecutions as she can inflict upon me. Even if none come, I shall live in a hell of apprehension. But she may torture me, she may drive me mad, she may kill me—I will

never, never, never give in. What can she inflict which would be worse than the loss of Agatha, and the knowledge that I am a perjured liar and have forfeited the name of gentleman?

Pratt-Haldane was most amiable, and listened with all politeness to my story. But when I looked at his heavy-set features, his slow eyes, and the ponderous study furniture which surrounded him, I could hardly tell him what I had come to say. It was all so substantial, so material. And besides, what would I myself have said, a short month ago, if one of my colleagues had come to me with a story of demoniac possession. Perhaps I should have been less patient than he was. As it was, he took notes of my statement, asked me how much tea I drink, how many hours I slept, whether I had been overworking much, had I had sudden pains in the head, evil dreams, singing in the ears, flashes before the eyes—all questions which pointed to his belief that brain congestion was at the bottom of my trouble. Finally he dismissed me with a great many platitudes about open-air exercise and avoidance of nervous excitement. His prescription, which was for chloral and bromide, I rolled up and threw into the gutter.

No, I can look for no help from any human being. If I consult any more, they may put their heads together, and I may find myself in an asylum. I can but grip my courage with both hands and pray that an honest man may not be abandoned.

April 15th.—It is the sweetest spring within the memory of man—so green, so mild, so beautiful! Ah, what a contrast between nature without, and my own soul so torn with doubt and terror! It has been an uneventful day, but I know that I am on the edge of an abyss. I know it, and yet I go on with the routine of my life. The one bright spot is that Agatha is happy and well, and out of all danger. If this creature had a hand on each of us, what might she not do?

April 16th.—The woman is ingenious in her torments. She knows how fond I am of my work, and how highly my lectures are thought of. So it is from that point that she now attacks me. It will end, I can see, in my losing my professorship, but I will fight it to the finish. She shall not drive me out of it without a struggle.

I was not conscious of any change during my lecture this morning save that for a minute or two I had a dizziness and swimminess, which rapidly passed away. On the contrary, I congratulated myself upon having made my subject (the functions of the red corpuscles) both interesting and clear. I was surprised, therefore, when a student came into my laboratory immediately after the lecture and complained of being puzzled by the discrepancy between my statements and those in the textbooks. He showed me his notebook, in which I was reported as having in one portion of the lecture championed the most outrageous and unscientific heresies. Of course, I denied it, and declared that he had misunderstood me; but on comparing his notes with those of his companions, it became clear that he was right, and that I really had made some most preposterous statements. Of course, I shall explain it away as being the result of a moment of aberration, but I feel only too sure that it will be the first of a series. It is but a month now to the end of the session, and I pray that I may be able to hold out till then.

April 26th.—Ten days have elapsed since I have had the heart to make any entry in my journal. Why should I record my own humiliation and degradation? I had vowed never to open it again. And yet the force of habit is strong, and here I find myself taking up once more the record of my own dreadful experiences—in much the same spirit in which a suicide has been known to take notes of the effects of the poison which killed him.

Well, the crash which I had foreseen has come—and that no further back than yesterday. The university authorities have taken my lectureship from me. It has been done in the most delicate way, purporting to be a temporary measure to

relieve me from the effects of overwork, and to give me the opportunity of recovering my health. Nonetheless it has been done, and I am no longer Professor Gilroy. The laboratory is still in my charge, but I have little doubt that that also will soon go.

The fact is that my lectures had become the laughingstock of the university. My class was crowded with students who came to see and hear what the eccentric professor would do or say next. I cannot go into the detail of my humiliation. Oh, that devilish woman! There is no depth of buffoonery and imbecility to which she has not forced me. I would begin my lecture clearly and well—but always with a sense of a coming eclipse. Then, as I felt the influence, I would struggle against it, striving with clinched hands and beads of sweat upon my brow to get the better of it, while the students, hearing my incoherent words and watching my contortions, would roar with laughter at the antics of their professor. And then, when she had once fairly mastered me, out would come the most outrageous things: silly jokes, sentiments as though I were proposing a toast, snatches of ballads, personal abuse even against some member of my class. And then, in a moment my brain would clear again, and my lecture would proceed decorously to the end. No wonder that my conduct has been the talk of colleges! No wonder that the university senate has been compelled to take official notice of such a scandal! Oh, that devilish woman!

And the most dreadful part of it all is my own loneliness. Here I sit in a commonplace English bow window looking out upon a commonplace English street, with its garish 'buses and its lounging policeman, and behind me there hangs a shadow which is out of all keeping with the age and place. In the home of knowledge I am weighed down and tortured by a power of which science knows nothing. No magistrate would listen to me. No paper would discuss my case. No doctor would believe my symptoms. My own most intimate friends would only look upon it as a sign of brain derangement. I am out of all touch with my kind. Oh, that

devilish woman! Let her have a care! She may push me too far. When the law cannot help a man, he may make a law for himself.

She met me in the High Street yesterday evening and spoke to me. It was as well for her perhaps that it was not between the hedges of a lonely country road. She asked me with her cold smile whether I had been chastened yet. I did not deign to answer her. "We must try another turn of the screw," said she. Have a care, my lady—have a care! I had her at my mercy once. Perhaps another chance may come.

April 28th.—The suspension of my lectureship has had the effect also of taking away her means of annoying me, and so I have enjoyed two blessed days of peace. After all, there is no reason to despair. Sympathy pours in to me from all sides, and every one agrees that it is my devotion to science and the arduous nature of my researches which have shaken my nervous system. I have had the kindest message from the council, advising me to travel abroad, and expressing the confident hope that I may be able to resume all my duties by the beginning of the summer term. Nothing could be more flattering than their allusions to my career and to my services to the university. It is only in misfortune that one can test one's own popularity. This creature may weary of tormenting me, and then all may yet be well. May God grant it!

April 29th.—Our sleepy little town has had a small sensation. The only knowledge of crime which we ever have is when a rowdy undergraduate breaks a few lamps or comes to blows with a policeman. Last night, however, there was an attempt to break into the branch of the Bank of England, and we are all in a flutter in consequence.

Parkenson the manager is an intimate friend of mine, and I found him very much excited when I walked round there after breakfast. Had the thieves broken into the countinghouse they would still have had the safes to reckon with, so that the defence was considerably stronger than the attack. Indeed, the latter does not appear to have been

very formidable. Two of the lower windows have marks as if a chisel or some such instrument had been pushed under them to force them open. The police should have a good clue, for the woodwork had been done with green paint only the day before, and from the smears it is evident that some of it has found its way onto the criminal's hands or clothes.

4:30 P.M.—Ah, that accursed woman! That thrice-accursed woman! Never mind! She shall not beat me! No, she shall not! But oh, the she-devil! She has taken my professorship. Now she would take my honor. Is there nothing I can do against her, nothing save— Ah, but hard pushed as I am, I cannot bring myself to think of that!

It was about an hour ago that I went into my bedroom, and was brushing my hair before the glass, when suddenly my eyes lit upon something which left me so sick and cold that I sat down upon the edge of the bed and began to cry. It is many a long year since I shed tears, but all my nerve was gone, and I could but sob and sob in impotent grief and anger. There was my house jacket, the coat I usually wear after dinner, hanging on its peg by the wardrobe, with the right sleeve thickly crusted from wrist to elbow with daubs of green paint.

So this was what she meant by another turn of the screw! She had made a public imbecile of me. Now she would brand me as a criminal. This time she has failed. But how about the next? I dare not think of it—and of Agatha and my poor old mother! I wish that I were dead!

Yes, this is the other turn of the screw. And this is also what she meant, no doubt, when she said that I had not realized yet the power she has over me. I look back at my account of my conversation with her, and I see how she declared that with a slight exertion of her will her subject would be conscious, and with a stronger one unconscious. Last night I was unconscious. I could have sworn I slept soundly in my bed without so much as a dream. And yet those stains tell me that I dressed, made my way out, attempted to open the bank windows, and returned. Was I

observed? Is it possible that someone saw me do it and followed me home? Ah, what a hell my life has become! I have no peace, no rest. But my patience is nearing its end.

10 P.M.—I have cleaned my coat with turpentine. I do not think that any one could have seen me. It was with my screwdriver that I made the marks. I found it all crusted with paint, and I have cleaned it. My head aches as if it would burst, and I have taken five grains of antipyrine. If it were not for Agatha, I should have taken fifty and had an end of it.

May 3rd.—Three quiet days. This hell fiend is like a cat with a mouse. She lets me loose only to pounce upon me again. I am never so frightened as when everything is still. My physical state is deplorable—perpetual hiccough and ptosis of the left eyelid.

I have heard from the Mardens that they will be back the day after tomorrow. I do not know whether I am glad or sorry. They were safe in London. Once here, they may be drawn into the miserable network in which I am myself struggling. And I must tell them of it. I cannot marry Agatha so long as I know that I am not responsible for my own actions. Yes, I must tell them, even if it brings everything to an end between us.

Tonight is the university ball, and I must go. God knows I never felt less in the humor for festivity, but I must not have it said that I am unfit to appear in public. If I am seen there, and have speech with some of the elders of the university, it will go a long way toward showing them that it would be unjust to take my chair away from me.

11:30 P.M.—I have been to the ball. Charles Sadler and I went together, but I have come away before him. I shall wait up for him, however, for, indeed, I fear to go to sleep these nights. He is a cheery, practical fellow, and a chat with him will steady my nerves. On the whole, the evening was a great success. I talked to everyone who has influence, and I think that I made them realize that my chair is not vacant quite yet. The creature was at the ball—unable to dance, of

course, but sitting with Mrs. Wilson. Again and again her eyes rested upon me. They were almost the last things I saw before I left the room. Once as I sat sideways to her I watched her, and saw that her gaze was following someone else. It was Sadler, who was dancing at the time with the second Miss Thurston. To judge by her expression, it is well for him that he is not in her grip as I am. He does not know the escape he has had. I think I hear his step in the street now, and I will go down and let him in. If he will—

May 4th.—Why did I break off in this way last night? I never went downstairs after all—at least, I have no recollection of doing so. But, on the other hand, I cannot remember going to bed. One of my hands is greatly swollen this morning, and yet I have no remembrance of injuring it yesterday. Otherwise, I am feeling all the better for last night's festivity. But I cannot understand how it is that I did not meet Charles Sadler when I so fully intended to do so. Is it possible—my God, it is only too probable! Has she been leading me in some devil's dance again? I will go down to Sadler and ask him.

Midday.—The thing has come to a crisis. My life is not worth living. But, if I am to die, then she shall come also. I will not leave her behind to drive some other man mad as she has me. No, I have come to the limit of my endurance. She has made me as desperate and dangerous a man as walks the earth. God knows I have never had the heart to hurt a fly, and yet if I had my hands now upon that woman she should never leave this room alive. I shall see her this very day, and she shall learn what she has to expect from me.

I went to Sadler, and found him to my surprise in bed. As I entered he sat up and turned a face toward me which sickened me as I looked at it.

“Why, Sadler, what has happened?” I cried, but my heart turned cold as I said it.

“Gilroy,” he answered, mumbling with his swollen lips, “I have for some weeks been under the impression that you

are a madman. Now I know it, and that you are a dangerous one as well. If it were not that I am unwilling to make a scandal in the college, you would now be in the hands of the police.”

“Do you mean—” I cried.

“I mean that as I opened the door last night you rushed out upon me, struck me with both of your fists in the face, knocked me down, kicked me furiously in the side, and left me lying almost unconscious in the street. Look at your own hand bearing witness against you.”

Yes, there it was, puffed up with spongelike knuckles as after some terrific blow. What could I do? Though he put me down as a madman, I must tell him all. I sat by his bed, and went over all my troubles from the beginning. I poured them out with quivering hands and burning words, which might have carried conviction to the most skeptical.

“She hates you and she hates me,” I cried. “She revenged herself last night on both of us at once. She saw me leave the ball, and she must have seen you also. She knew how long it would take you to reach home. Then she had but to use her wicked will. Ah, your bruised face is a small thing beside my bruised soul!”

He was struck by my story. That was evident. “Yes, yes; she watched me out of the room,” he muttered. “She is capable of it. But is it possible that she has really reduced you to this? What do you intend to do?”

“To stop it,” I cried. “I am perfectly desperate; I shall give her fair warning today, and the next time will be the last.”

“Do nothing rash,” said he.

“Rash!” I cried. “The only rash thing is that I should postpone it another hour.” With that I rushed to my room, and here I am on the eve of what may be the great crisis of my life. I shall start at once. I have gained one thing today, for I have made one man, at least, realize the truth of this monstrous experience of mine. And, if the worst should happen, this diary remains as proof of the good that has driven me.

Evening.—When I came to Wilson's I was shown up, and found that he was sitting with Miss Penclosa. For half an hour I had to endure his fussy talk about his recent research into the exact nature of the spiritualistic rap, while the creature and I sat in silence looking across the room at each other. I read a sinister amusement in her eyes, and she must have seen hatred and menace in mine. I had almost despaired of having speech with her, when he was called from the room and we were left for a few minutes together.

"Well, Professor Gilroy—or is it Mr. Gilroy?" said she, with that bitter smile of hers. "How is your friend Mr. Charles Sadler after the ball?"

"You fiend!" I cried. "You have come to the end of your tricks now. I will have no more of them. Listen to what I say"—I strode across and shook her roughly by the shoulder—"as sure as there is a God in heaven, I swear that if you try another of your devilries upon me I will have your life for it. Come what may, I will have your life. I have come to the end of what a man can endure."

"Accounts are not quite settled between us," said she, with a passion that equaled my own; "I can love and I can hate. You had your choice. You chose to spurn the first; now you must test the other. It will take a little more to break your spirit, I see, but broken it shall be. Miss Marden comes back tomorrow, as I understand."

"What has that to do with you?" I cried. "It is a pollution that you should dare even to think of her. If I thought that you would harm her—"

She was frightened, I could see, though she tried to brazen it out. She read the black thought in my mind, and cowered away from me.

"She is fortunate in having such a companion," said she. "He actually dares to threaten a lonely woman. I must really congratulate Miss Marden upon her protector."

The words were bitter, but the voice and manner were more acid still.

“There is no use talking,” said I. “I only came here to tell you, and to tell you most solemnly, that your next outrage upon me will be your last.” With that, as I heard Wilson’s step upon the stair, I walked from the room. Ay, she may look venomous and deadly, but for all that, she is beginning to see now that she has as much to fear from me as I can have from her. Murder! It has an ugly sound. But you don’t talk of murdering a snake or of murdering a tiger. Let her have a care now.

May 5th.—I met Agatha and her mother at the station at eleven o’clock. She is looking so bright, so happy, so beautiful. And was so overjoyed to see me. What have I done to deserve such love! I went back home with them, and we lunched together. All the troubles seem in a moment to have been shredded back from my life. She tells me that I am looking pale and worried and ill. The dear child puts it down to my loneliness, and the perfunctory attentions of a housekeeper. I pray that she may never know the truth! May the shadow, if shadow there must be, lie ever black across my life, and leave hers in the sunshine! I have just come back from them, feeling a new man. With her by my side I think that I could show a bold face to anything which life might send.

5 P.M.—Now let me try to be accurate. Let me try to say exactly how it occurred. It is fresh in my mind, and I can set it down correctly, though it is not likely that the time will ever come when I shall forget the doings of today.

I had returned from the Mardens’ after lunch, and was cutting some microscopic sections in my freezing microtome when in an instant I lost consciousness in the sudden hateful fashion which has become only too familiar to me of late.

When my senses came back to me I was sitting in a small chamber, very different from the one in which I had been working. It was cozy and bright, with chintz-covered settees, colored hangings, and a thousand pretty little trifles upon the wall. A small ornamental clock ticked in front of me, and the hands pointed to half past three. It was all quite familiar

to me, and yet I stared about for a moment in a half-dazed way until my eyes fell upon a cabinet photograph of myself upon the top of the piano. On the other side stood one of Mrs. Marden. Then, of course, I remembered where I was. It was Agatha's boudoir.

But how came I there, and what did I want? A horrible sinking came to my heart. Had I been sent here on some devilish errand? Had the errand already been done? Surely it must, otherwise why should I be allowed to come back to consciousness? Oh, the agony of that moment! What had I done? I sprang to my feet in my despair, and as I did so a small glass bottle fell from my knees on to the carpet.

It was unbroken, and I picked it up. Outside was written "Sulphuric Acid, Fort." When I drew the round glass stopper a thick fume rose slowly up, and a pungent, choking smell pervaded the room. I recognized it as one which I kept for chemical testing in my chambers. But why had I brought a bottle of vitriol into Agatha's chamber? Was it not this thick reeking liquid with which jealous women had been known to mar the beauty of their rivals? My heart stood still as I held the bottle to the light. Thank God, it was full! No mischief had been done as yet. But had Agatha come in a minute sooner, was it not certain that the hellish parasite within me would have dashed the stuff onto her? Ah, it will not bear to be thought of. But it must have been for that. Why else should I have brought it? At the thought of what I might have done my worn nerves broke down, and I sat shivering and twitching, the pitiable wreck of a man.

It was the sound of Agatha's voice and the rustle of her dress which restored me. I looked up and saw her blue eyes, so full of tenderness and pity, gazing down at me.

"We must take you away to the country, Austin," she said. "You want rest and quiet. You look wretchedly ill."

"Oh, it is nothing," said I, trying to smile. "It was only a momentary weakness. I am all right again now."

"I am sorry to keep you waiting. Poor boy, you must have been here for quite half an hour! The vicar was in the

drawing room, and as I knew that you did not care for him I thought it better that Jane should show you up here. I thought the man would never go."

"Thank God he stayed!—thank God he stayed!" I cried, hysterically.

"Why, what is the matter with you, Austin?" she asked, holding my arm as I staggered up from the chair. "Why are you glad that the vicar stayed? And what is this little bottle in your hand?"

"Nothing," I cried, thrusting it into my pocket. "But I must go. I have something important to do."

"How stern you look, Austin. I have never seen your face like that. You are angry?"

"Yes, I am angry."

"But not with me?"

"No, no, my darling. You would not understand."

"But you have not told me why you came."

"I came to ask you whether you would always love me—no matter what I did or what shadow might fall on my name. Would you believe in me and trust me, however black appearances might be against me?"

"You know I would, Austin."

"Yes, I know that you would. What I do I shall do for you. I am driven to it. There is no other way out, my darling!" I kissed her and rushed from the room.

The time for indecision was at an end. As long as the creature threatened my own prospects and my honor there might be a question as to what I should do. But now when Agatha—my innocent Agatha—was endangered, my duty lay before me like a turnpike road. I had no weapon, but I never paused for that. What weapon should I need, when I felt every muscle quivering with the strength of a frenzied man? I ran through the streets so set upon what I had to do that I was only dimly conscious of the faces of friends whom I met—dimly conscious also that Professor Wilson met me, running with equal precipitance in the opposite direction. Breathless but resolute I reached the house and rang the

bell. A white-cheeked maid opened the door, and turned whiter yet when she saw the face that looked in at her.

“Show me up at once to Miss Penclosa,” I demanded.

“Sir,” she gasped, “Miss Penclosa died this afternoon at half past three.”

OUR MIDNIGHT VISITOR

On the western side of the island of Arran, seldom visited, and almost unknown to tourists, is the little island named Uffa. Between the two lies a strait or roost, two miles and a half broad, with a dangerous current which sets in from the north. Even on the calmest day there are ripples, and swirls, and dimples on the surface of the roost, which suggest hidden influences, but when the wind blows from the west, and the great Atlantic waves choke up the inlet and meet their brethren which have raced round the other side of the island, there is such seething and turmoil that old sailors say they have never seen the like. God help the boat that is caught there on such a day!

My father owned one third part of the island of Uffa, and I was born and bred there. Our farm or croft was a small one enough, for if a good thrower were to pick up a stone on the shore at Carracuil (which was our place) he could manage, in three shies, to clear all our arable land, and it was hardly longer than it was broad. Behind this narrow track, on which we grew corn and potatoes, was the homesteading of Carracuil—a rather bleak-looking gray stone house with a red-tiled byre buttressed against one side of it, and behind this again the barren undulating moorland stretched away up to Beh-na-sacher and Beg-na-phail, two rugged knowes which marked the center of the island. We had grazing ground for a couple of cows, and eight or ten sheep, and we had our boat anchored down in Carravoe. When the fishing failed, there was more time to devote to the crops, and if the season was bad, as likely as not the herring would be thick on the coast. Taking one thing with another a crofter in Uffa had as much chance of laying by a penny or two as most men on the mainland.

Besides our own family, the McDonalds of Carracuil, there were two others on the island. These were the Gibbs of Arden and the Fullartons of Corriemains. There was no priority claimed among us, for none had any legend of the coming of the others. We had all three held our farms by direct descent for many generations, paying rent to the Duke of Hamilton and all prospering in a moderate way. My father had been enabled to send me to begin the study of medicine at the University of Glasgow, and I had attended lectures there for two winter sessions, but whether from caprice or from some lessening in his funds, he had recalled me, and in the year 1865 I found myself cribbed up in this island with just education enough to wish for more, and with no associate at home but the grim, stern old man, for my mother had been dead some years, and I had neither brother nor sister.

There were two youths about my own age in the island, Geordie and Jock Gibbs, but they were rough, loutish fellows, good-hearted enough, but with no ideas above fishing and farming. More to my taste was the society of Minnie Fullarton, the pretty daughter of old Fullarton of Corriemains. We had been children together, and it was natural that when she blossomed into a buxom, fresh-faced girl, and I into a square-shouldered, long-legged youth there should be something warmer than friendship between us. Her elder brother was a corn chandler in Ardrrossan, and was said to be doing well, so that the match was an eligible one, but for some reason my father objected very strongly to our intimacy and even forbade me entirely to meet her. I laughed at his commands, for I was a hot-headed, irreverent youngster, and continued to see Minnie, but when it came to his ears, it caused many violent scenes between us, which nearly went the length of blows. We had a quarrel of this sort just before the equinoctial gales in the spring of the year in which my story begins, and I left the old man with his face flushed, and his great bony hands shaking with passion, while I went jauntily off to our usual trysting place. I

have often regretted since that I was not more submissive, but how was I to guess the dark things which were to come upon us?

I can remember that day well. Many bitter thoughts rose in my heart as I strode along the narrow pathway, cutting savagely at the thistles on either side with my stick. One side of our little estate was bordered by the Combera cliffs, which rose straight out of the water to the height of a couple of hundred feet. The top of these cliffs was covered with green sward and commanded a noble view on every side. I stretched myself on the turf there and watched the breakers dancing over the Winners sands and listened to the gurgling of the water down beneath me in the caves of Combera. We faced the western side of the island, and from where I lay I could see the whole stretch of the Irish Sea, right across to where a long hazy line upon the horizon marked the northern coast of the sister isle. The wind was blowing freshly from the northwest and the great Atlantic rollers were racing merrily in, one behind the other, dark brown below, light green above, and breaking with a sullen roar at the base of the cliffs. Now and again a sluggish one would be overtaken by its successor, and the two would come crashing in together and send the spray right over me as I lay. The whole air was prickly with the smack of the sea. Away to the north there was a piling up of clouds, and the peak of Goatfell in Arran looked lurid and distinct. There were no craft in the offing except one little eager, panting steamer making for the shelter of the Clyde, and a trim brigantine tacking along the coast. I was speculating as to her destination when I heard a light spring footstep, and Minnie Fullarton was standing beside me, her face rosy with exercise and her brown hair floating behind her.

“Wha’s been vexing you, Archie?” she asked with the quick intuition of womanhood. “The auld man has been speaking aboot me again; has he no’?”

It was strange how pretty and mellow the accents were in her mouth which came so raspingly from my father. We sat

down on a little green hillock together, her hand in mine, while I told her of our quarrel in the morning.

"You see they're bent on parting us," I said; "but indeed they'll find they have the wrong man to deal with if they try to frighten me away from you."

"I'm no' worth it, Archie," she answered, sighing. "I'm ower hamely and simple for one like you that speaks well and is a scholar forbye."

"You're too good and true for any one, Minnie," I answered, though in my heart I thought there was some truth in what she said.

"I'll no' trouble anyone lang," she continued, looking earnestly into my face. "I got my call last night; I saw a ghaist, Archie."

"Saw a ghost!" I ejaculated.

"Yes, and I doubt it was a call for me. When my cousin Steevie deed he saw one the same way."

"Tell me about it, dear," I said, impressed by her solemnity.

"There's no' much to tell: it was last nicht about twelve, or maybe one o'clock. I was lying awake thinking o' this and that wi' my een fixed on the window. Suddenly I saw a face looking in at me through the glass—an awfu'like face, Archie. It was na the face of anyone on the island. I canna tell what it was like—it was just awfu'. It was there maybe a minute looking tae way and tither into the room. I could see the glint o' his very een—for it was a man's face—and his nose was white where it was pressed against the glass. My very blood ran cauld and I couldna scream for fright. Then it went awa' as quickly and as sudden as it came."

"Who could it have been?" I exclaimed.

"A wraith or a bogle," said Minnie positively.

"Are you sure it wasn't Tommy Gibbs?" I suggested.

"Na, na, it wasna Tammy. It was a dark, hard, dour sort of face."

"Well," I said, laughing, "I hope the fellow will give me a look up, whoever he is. I'll soon learn who he is and where

he comes from. But we won't talk of it, or you'll be frightening yourself tonight again. It'll be a dreary night as it is."

"A bad night for the puir sailors," she answered sadly, glancing at the dark wrack hurrying up from the northward, and at the white line of breakers on the Winners sands. "I wonder what yon brig is after! Unless it gets roond to Lamash or Brodick Bay, it'll find itself on a nasty coast."

She was watching the trim brigantine which had already attracted my attention. She was still standing off the coast, and evidently expected rough weather, for her foresail had been taken in and her topsail reefed down.

"It's too cold for you up here!" I exclaimed at last, as the clouds covered the sun, and the keen north wind came in more frequent gusts. We walked back together, until we were close to Carracuil, when she left me, taking the footpath to Corriemains, which was about a mile from our bothy. I hoped that my father had not observed us together, but he met me at the door, fuming with passion. His face was quite livid with rage, and he held his shotgun in his hands. I forget if I mentioned that in spite of his age he was one of the most powerful men I ever met in my life.

"So you've come!" he roared, shaking the gun at me. "You great gowk—" I did not wait for the string of adjectives which I knew was coming.

"You keep a civil tongue in your head," I said.

"You dare!" he shouted, raising his arm as if to strike me. "You wanna come in here. You can gang back where you come frae!"

"You can go to the devil!" I answered, losing my temper completely, on which he jabbed at me with the butt end of the gun, but I warded it off with my stick. For a moment the devil was busy in me, and my throat was full of oaths, but I choked them down, and, turning on my heel, walked back to Corriemains, where I spent the day with the Fullartons. It seemed to me that my father, who had long been a miser,

was rapidly becoming a madman—and a dangerous one to boot.

My mind was so busy with my grievance that I was poor company, I fear, and drank perhaps more whisky than was good for me. I remember that I stumbled over a stool once and that Minnie looked surprised and tearful, while old Fullarton sniggered to himself and coughed to hide it. I did not set out for home till half past nine, which was a very late hour for the island. I knew my father would be asleep, and that if I climbed through my bedroom window I should have one night in peace.

It was blowing great guns by this time, and I had put my shoulder against the gale as I came along the winding path which led down to Carracuil. I must still have been under the influence of liquor, for I remember that I sang uproariously and joined my feeble pipe to the howling of the wind. I had just got to the enclosure of our croft when a little incident occurred which helped to sober me.

White is a color so rare in nature that in an island like ours, where even paper was a precious commodity, it would arrest the attention at once. Something white fluttered across my path and stuck flapping upon a furze bush. I lifted it up and discovered, to my very great surprise, that it was a linen pocket-handkerchief—and scented. Now I was very sure that beyond my own there was no such thing as a white pocket-handkerchief in the island. A small community like ours knew each other's wardrobes to a nicety. But as to scent in Uffa—it was preposterous! Who did the handkerchief belong to then? Was Minnie right, and was there really a stranger in the island? I walked on very thoughtfully, holding my discovery in my hand and thinking of what Minnie had seen the night before.

When I got into my bedroom and lit my rushlight I examined it again. It was clean and new, with the initials A. W. worked in red silk in the corner. There was no other indication as to who it might belong to, though from its size

it was evidently a man's. The incident struck me as so extraordinary that I sat for some time on the side of my bed turning it over in my befuddled mind, but without getting any nearer a conclusion. I might even have taken my father into confidence, but his hoarse snoring in the adjoining room showed that he was fast asleep. It is as well that it was so, for I was in no humor to be bullied, and we might have had words. The old man had little longer to live, and it is some solace to me now that that little was unmarred by any further strife between us.

I did not take my clothes off, for my brain was getting swimmy after its temporary clearness, so I dropped my head upon the pillow and sank into profound slumber. I must have slept about four hours when I woke with a violent start. To this day I have never known what it was that roused me. Everything was perfectly still, and yet I found all my faculties in a state of extreme tension. Was there someone in the room? It was very dark, but I peered about, leaning on my elbow. There was nothing to be seen, but still that eerie feeling haunted me. At that moment the flying scud passed away from the face of the moon and a flood of cold light was poured into my chamber. I turned my eyes up instinctively, and—good God!—there at the window was the face, an evil, malicious face, hard-cut, and distinct against the silvery radiance, glaring in at me as Minnie had seen it the night before. For one moment I tingled and palpitated like a frightened child, the next both glass and sash were gone and I was rolling over and over on the gravel path with my arms round a tall strong man—the two of us worrying each other like a pair of dogs. Almost by intuition I knew as we went down together that he had slipped his hand into his side pocket, and I clung to that wrist like grim death. He tried hard to free it but I was too strong for him, and we staggered on to our feet again in the same position, panting and snarling.

“Let go my hand, damn you!” he said.

“Let go the pistol then,” I gasped.

We looked hard at each other in the moonlight and then he laughed and opened his fingers. A heavy glittering object, which I could see was a revolver, dropped with a clink on to the gravel. I put my foot on it and let go my grip of him.

“Well, matey, how now?” he said with another laugh. “Is that an end of a round, or the end of the battle? You islanders seem a hospitable lot. You’re so ready to welcome a stranger, that you can’t wait to find the door, but must come flying through the window like infernal fireworks.”

“What do you want to come prowling round people’s houses at night for, with weapons in your pocket?” I asked sternly.

“I should think I needed a weapon,” he answered, “when there are young devils like you knocking around. Hullo! here’s another of the family.”

I turned my head, and there was my father, almost at my elbow. He had come round from the front door. His gray woolen nightdress and grizzled hair were streaming in the wind, and he was evidently much excited. He had in his hand the double-barreled gun with which he had threatened me in the morning. He put this to his shoulder, and would most certainly have blown out either my brains or those of the stranger, had I not turned away the barrel with my hand.

“Wait a bit, father,” I said, “let us hear what he has to say for himself. And you,” I continued, turning to the stranger, “can come inside with us and justify yourself if you can. But remember we are in a majority, so keep your tongue between your teeth.”

“Not so fast, my young bantam,” he grumbled; “you’ve got my six-shooter, but I have a Derringer in my pocket. I learned in Colorado to carry them both. However, come along into this shanty of yours, and let us get the damned palaver over. I’m wet through, and most infernally hungry.”

My father was still mumbling to himself, and fidgeting with his gun, but he did not oppose my taking the stranger into the house. I struck a match, and lit the oil lamp in the

kitchen, on which our prisoner stooped down to it and began smoking a cigarette. As the light fell full on his face, both my father and I took a good look at him. He was a man of about forty, remarkably handsome, of rather a Spanish type, with blue-black hair and beard, and sunburned features. His eyes were very bright, and their gaze so intense that you would think they projected somewhat, unless you saw him in profile. There was a dash of recklessness and devilry about them, which, with his wiry, powerful frame and jaunty manner, gave the impression of a man whose past had been an adventurous one. He was elegantly dressed in a velveteen jacket, and grayish trousers of a foreign cut. Without in the least resenting our prolonged scrutiny, he seated himself upon the dresser, swinging his legs, and blowing little blue wreaths from his cigarette. His appearance seemed to reassure my father, or perhaps it was the sight of the rings which flashed on the stranger's left hand every time he raised it to his lips.

"Ye munna mind Archie, sir," he said in a cringing voice. "He was aye a fashious bairn, ower quick wi' his hands, and wi' mair muscle than brains. I was fashed mysel' wi' the sudden stour, but as tae shootin' at ye, sir, that was a' an auld man's havers. Nae doobt ye're a veesitor, or maybe it's a shipwreck—it's no a shipwreck, is't?" The idea awoke the covetous devil in my father's soul, and it looked out through his glistening eyes, and set his long stringy hands a-shaking.

"I came here in a boat," said the stranger shortly. "This was the first house I came to after I left the shore, and I'm not likely to forget the reception you have given me. That young hopeful of yours has nearly broken my back."

"A good job too!" I interrupted hotly, "why couldn't you come up to the door like a man, instead of skulking at the window?"

"Hush, Archie, hush!" said my father imploringly; while our visitor grinned across at me as amicably as if my speech had been most conciliatory.

“I don’t blame you,” he said—he spoke with a strange mixture of accents, sometimes with a foreign lisp, sometimes with a slight Yankee intonation, and at other times very purely indeed. “I have done the same, mate. Maybe you noticed a brigantine standing on and off the shore yesterday?”

I nodded my head.

“That was mine,” he said. “I’m owner, skipper, and everything else. Why shouldn’t a man spend his money in his own way? I like cruising about, and I like new experiences. I suppose there’s no harm in that. I was in the Mediterranean last month, but I’m sick of blue skies and fine weather. Chios is a damnable paradise of a place. I’ve come up here for a little fresh air and freedom. I cruised all down the western isles, and when we came abreast of this place of yours it rather took my fancy, so I hauled the foreyard aback and came ashore last night to prospect. It wasn’t this house I struck, but another farther to the west’ard; however, I saw enough to be sure it was a place after my own heart—a real quiet corner. So I went back and set everything straight aboard yesterday, and now here I am. You can put me up for a few weeks, I suppose. I’m not hard to please, and I can pay my way; suppose we say ten dollars a week for board and lodging, and a fortnight to be paid in advance.”

He put his hand in his pocket and produced four shining napoleons, which he pushed along the dresser to my father, who grabbed them up eagerly.

“I’m sorry I gave such a rough reception,” I said, rather awkwardly. “I was hardly awake at the time.”

“Say no more, mate, say no more!” he shouted heartily, holding out his hand and clasping mine. “Hard knocks are nothing new to me. I suppose we may consider the bargain settled then?”

“Ye can bide as lang as ye wull, sir,” answered my father, still fingering the four coins. “Archie and me’ll do a’ we can to mak’ your veesit a pleasant ane. It’s no’ such a dreary

place as ye might think. When the Lamlash boats come in we get the papers and a' the news."

It struck me that the stranger looked anything but overjoyed by this piece of information. "You don't mean to say that you get the papers here," he said.

"Oo aye, the *Scotsman* an' the *Glasgey Herald*. But maybe you would like Archie and me to row ower to your ship in the morn, an' fetch your luggage."

"The brig is fifty miles away by this time," said our visitor. "She is running before the wind of Marseilles. I told the mate to bring her round again in a month or so. As to the luggage, I always travel light in that matter. If a man's purse is only full he can do with very little else. All I have is in a bundle under your window. By the way, my name is Digby—Charles Digby."

"I thought your initials were A. W.," I remarked.

He sprang off the dresser as if he had been stung, and his face turned quite gray for a moment. "What the devil do you mean by that?" he said.

"I thought this might be yours," I answered, handing him the handkerchief I had found.

"Oh, is that all!" he said with rather a forced laugh. "I didn't quite see what you were driving at. That's all right. It belongs to Whittingdale, my second officer. I'll keep it until I see him again. And now suppose you give me something to eat, for I'm about famished."

We brought him out such rough fare as was to be found in our larder, and he ate ravenously, and tossed off a stiff glass of whisky and water. Afterward my father showed him into the solitary spare bedroom, with which he professed himself well pleased, and we all settled down for the night. As I went back to my couch I noticed that the gale had freshened up, and I saw long streamers of seaweed flying past my broken window in the moonlight. A great bat fluttered into the room, which is reckoned a sure sign of misfortune in the islands—but I was never superstitious, and let the poor thing find its way out again unmolested.

In the morning it was still blowing a whole gale, though the sky was blue for the most part. Our guest was up betimes and we walked down to the beach together. It was a sight to see the great rollers sweeping in, overtopping one another like a herd of oxen, and then bursting with a roar, sending the Carracuil pebbles flying before them like grapeshot, and filling the whole air with drifting spume.

We were standing together watching the scene, when looking round I saw my father hurrying toward us. He had been up and out since early dawn. When he saw us looking, he began waving his hands and shouting, but the wind carried his voice away. We ran toward him however, seeing that he was heavy with news.

"The brig's wrecked, and they're a' drowned!" he cried as we met him.

"What!" roared our visitor.

If ever I heard exceedingly great joy compressed into a monosyllable it vibrated in that one.

"They're a' drowned and naething saved!" repeated my father. "Come yoursel' and see."

We followed him across the Combera to the level sands on the other side. They were strewn with wreckage, broken pieces of bulwark and handrail, paneling of a cabin, and an occasional cask. A single large spar was tossing in the waves close to the shore, occasionally shooting up toward the sky like some giant's javelin, then sinking and disappearing in the trough of the great scooping seas. Digby hurried up to the nearest pieces of timber, and stooping over it examined it intently.

"By God!" he said at last, taking in a long breath between his teeth, "you are right. It's the *Proserpine*, and all hands are lost. What a terrible thing!"

His face was very solemn as he spoke, but his eyes danced and glittered. I was beginning to conceive a great repugnance and distrust toward this man.

"Is there no chance of anyone having got ashore?" he said.

“Na, na, nor cargo neither,” my father answered with real grief in his voice. “Ye dinna ken this coast. There’s an awful undertow outside the Winners, and it’s a’ swept round to Holy Isle. De’il take it, if there was to be a shipwreck what for should they no’ run their ship aground to the east’ard o’ the point and let an honest mun have the pickings instead o’ the rascally loons in Arran? An empty barrel might float in here, but there’s no chance o’ a seachest, let alane a body.”

“Poor fellows!” said Digby. “But there—we must meet it some day, and why not here and now? I’ve lost my ship, but thank Heaven I can buy another. It is sad about them, though—very sad. I warned Lamarck that he was waiting too long with a low barometer and an ugly shore under his lee. He has himself to thank. He was my first officer, a prying, covetous, meddlesome hound.”

“Don’t call him names,” I said. “He’s dead.”

“Well said, my young prig!” he answered. “Perhaps you wouldn’t be so mealymouthed yourself if you lost five thousand pounds before breakfast. But there—there’s no use crying over spilt milk. *Vogue la galère!* as the French say. Things are never so bad that they might be worse.”

My father and Digby stayed at the scene of the wreck, but I walked over to Corriemains to reassure Minnie’s mind as to the apparition at the window. Her opinion, when I had told her all, coincided with mine, that perhaps the crew of the brig knew more about the stranger than he cared for. We agreed that I should keep a close eye upon him without letting him know that he was watched.

“But oh, Archie,” she said, “ye munna cross him or anger him while he carries them awfu’ weapons. Ye maun be douce and saft, and no’ gainsay him.”

I laughed, and promised her to be very prudent, which reassured her a little. Old Fullarton walked back with me in the hope of picking a piece of timber, and both he and my father patrolled the shore for many days, without, however, finding any prize of importance, for the undercurrent off the

Winners was very strong, and everything had probably drifted right round to Lamlash Bay in Arran.

It was wonderful how quickly the stranger accommodated himself to our insular ways, and how useful he made himself about the homesteading. Within a fortnight he knew the island almost as well as I did myself. Had it not been for that one unpleasant recollection of the shipwreck which rankled in my remembrance, I could have found it in my heart to become fond of him. His nature was a tropical one—fiercely depressed at times, but sunny as a rule, bursting continually into jest and song from pure instinct, in a manner which is unknown among us Northerners. In his graver moments he was a most interesting companion, talking shrewdly and eloquently of men and manners, and his own innumerable and strange adventures. I have seldom heard a more brilliant conversationalist. Of an evening he would keep my father and myself spellbound by the kitchen fire for hours and hours, while he chatted away in a desultory fashion and smoked his cigarettes. It seemed to me that the packet he had brought with him on the first night must have consisted entirely of tobacco. I noticed that in these conversations, which were mostly addressed to my father, he used, unconsciously perhaps, to play upon the weak side of the old man's nature. Tales of cunning, of smartness, of various ways in which mankind had been cheated and money gained, came most readily to his lips, and were relished by an eager listener. I could not help one night remarking upon it, when my father had gone out of the room, laughing hoarsely, and vibrating with amusement over some story of how the Biscayan peasants will strap lanterns to a bullock's horns, and taking the beast some distance inland on a stormy night, will make it prance and rear so that the ships at sea may imagine it to be the lights of a vessel, and steer fearlessly in that direction, only to find themselves on a rockbound coast.

“You shouldn't tell such tales to an old man,” I said.

“My dear fellow,” he answered very kindly, “you have seen nothing of the world yet. You have formed fine ideas no doubt, and notions of delicacy and such things, and you are very dogmatic about them, as clever men of your age always are. I had notions of the right and wrong once, but it has been all knocked out of me. It’s just a sort of varnish which the rough friction of the world soon rubs off. I started with a whole soul, but there are more gashes and seams and scars in it now than there are in my body, and that’s pretty fair as you’ll allow”—with which he pulled open his tunic and showed me his chest.

“Good heavens!” I said, “How on earth did you get those?”

“This was a bullet,” he said, pointing to a deep bluish pucker underneath his collarbone. “I got it behind the barricades in Berlin in ’48. Langenback said it just missed the subclavian artery. And this,” he went on, indicating a pair of curious elliptical scars upon his throat, “was a bite from a Sioux chief, when I was under Custer on the plains—I’ve got an arrow wound on my leg from the same party. This is from a mutinous Lascar aboard ship, and the others are mere scratches—Californian vaccination marks. You can excuse my being a little ready with my own irons, though, when I’ve been dropped so often.”

“What’s this?” I asked, pointing to a little chamois leather bag which was hung by a strong cord round his neck. “It looks like a charm.”

He buttoned up his tunic again hastily, looking extremely disconcerted. “It is nothing,” he said brusquely. “I am a Roman Catholic, and it is what we call a scapular.” I could hardly get another word out of him that night, and even next day he was reserved and appeared to avoid me. This little incident made me very thoughtful, the more so as I noticed shortly afterward when standing over him, that the string was no longer round his neck. Apparently he had taken it off after my remark about it. What could there be in that leather bag which needed such secrecy and precaution!

Had I but known it, I would sooner have put my left hand in the fire than have pursued that inquiry.

One of the peculiarities of our visitor was that in all his plans for the future, with which he often regaled us, he seemed entirely untrammelled by any monetary considerations. He would talk in the lightest and most offhand way of schemes which would involve the outlay of much wealth. My father's eyes would glisten as he heard him talk carelessly of sums which to our frugal minds appeared enormous. It seemed strange to both of us that a man who by his own confession had been a vagabond and adventurer all his life, should be in possession of such a fortune. My father was inclined to put it down to some stroke of luck on the American goldfields. I had my own ideas even then—chaotic and half-formed as yet, but tending in the right direction.

It was not long before these suspicions began to assume a more definite shape, which came about in this way. Minnie and I made the summit of the Combera cliff a favorite trysting place, as I think I mentioned before, and it was rare for a day to pass without our spending two or three hours there. One morning, not long after my chat with our guest, we were seated together in a little nook there, which we had chosen as sheltering us from the wind as well as my father's observation, when Minnie caught sight of Digby walking along the Carracuil beach. He sauntered up to the base of the cliff, which was boulder studded and slimy from the receding tide, but instead of turning back he kept on climbing over the great green slippery stones, and threading his way among the pools until he was standing immediately beneath us so that we looked straight down at him. To him the spot must have seemed the very acme of seclusion, with the great sea in front, the rocks on each side, and the precipice behind. Even had he looked up, he could hardly have made out the two human faces, which peered down at him from the distant ledge. He gave a hurried glance round, and then slipping his hand into his pocket, he pulled out the

leather bag which I had noticed, and took out of it a small object which he held in the palm of his hand and looked at long, and, as it were, lovingly. We both had an excellent view of it from where we lay. He then replaced it in the bag, and shoving it down to the very bottom of his pocket picked his way back more cheerily than he had come.

Minnie and I looked at each other. She was smiling; I was serious.

“Did you see it?” I asked.

“Yon? Aye, I saw it.”

“What did you think it was, then?”

“A wee bit of glass,” she answered, looking at me with wondering eyes.

“No,” I cried excitedly, “glass could never catch the sun’s rays so. It was a diamond, and if I mistake not, one of extraordinary value. It was as large as all I have seen put together, and must be worth a fortune.”

A diamond was a mere name to poor, simple Minnie, who had never seen one before, nor had any conception of their value, and she prattled away to me about this and that, but I hardly heard her. In vain she exhausted all her little wiles in attempting to recall my attention. My mind was full of what I had seen. Look where I would, the glistening of the breakers, or the sparkling of the mica-laden rocks, recalled the brilliant facets of the gem which I had seen. I was moody and distraught, and eventually let Minnie walk back to Corriemains by herself, while I made my way to the homesteading. My father and Digby were just sitting down to the midday meal, and the latter hailed me cheerily.

“Come along, mate,” he cried, pushing over a stool, “we were just wondering what had become of you. Ah! you rogue, I’ll bet my bottom dollar it was that pretty wench I saw the other day who kept you.”

“Mind your own affairs,” I answered angrily.

“Don’t be thin-skinned,” he said; “young people should control their tempers, and you’ve got a mighty bad one, my lad. Have you heard that I am going to leave you?”

“I’m sorry to hear it,” I said frankly; “when do you intend to go?”

“Next week,” he answered, “but don’t be afraid; you’ll see me again. I’ve had too good a time here to forget you easily. I’m going to buy a good steam yacht—250 tons or thereabouts—and I’ll bring her round in a few months and give you a cruise.”

“What would be a fair price for a craft of that sort?” I asked.

“Forty thousand dollars,” said our visitor, carelessly.

“You must be very rich,” I remarked, “to throw away so much money on pleasure.”

“Rich!” echoed my companion, his Southern blood mantling up for a moment. “Rich, why man, there is hardly a limit—but there, I was romancing a bit. I’m fairly well off, or shall be very shortly.”

“How did you make your money?” I asked. The question came so glibly to my lips that I had no time to check it, though I felt the moment afterward that I had made a mistake. Our guest drew himself into himself at once, and took no notice of my query, while my father said:

“Hush, Archie laddie, ye munna speer they questions o’ the gentleman!” I could see, however, from the old man’s eager gray eyes, looking out from under the great thatch of his brows, that he was meditating over the same problem himself.

During the next couple of days I hesitated very often as to whether I should tell my father of what I had seen and the opinions I had formed about our visitor; but he forestalled me by making a discovery himself which supplemented mine and explained all that had been dark. It was one day when the stranger was out for a ramble, that, entering the kitchen, I found my father sitting by the fire deeply engaged in perusing a newspaper, spelling out the words laboriously, and following the lines with his great forefinger. As I came in he crumpled up the paper as if his instinct were to conceal

it, but then spreading it out again on his knee he beckoned me over to him.

“What d’ye think this chiel Digby is?” he asked. I could see by his manner that he was much excited.

“No good,” I answered.

“Come here, laddie, come here!” he croaked. “You’re a braw scholar. Read this tae me alood—read it and tell me if you dinna think I’ve fitted the cap on the right heid. It’s a *Glasgey Herald* only four days auld—a Loch Ranza feeshin’ boat brought it in the morn. Begin frae here—‘Oor Paris Letter.’ Here it is, ‘Fuller details’; read it a’ to me.”

I began at the spot indicated, which was a paragraph of the ordinary French correspondence of the Glasgow paper. It ran in this way. “Fuller details have now come before the public of the diamond robbery by which the Duchesse de Rochevieille lost her celebrated gem. The diamond is a pure brilliant weighing eighty three and a half carats, and is supposed to be the third largest in France, and the seventeenth in Europe. It came into the possession of the family through the great grand-uncle of the Duchess, who fought under Bussy in India, and brought it back to Europe with him. It represented a fortune then, but its value now is simply enormous. It was taken, as will be remembered, from the jewel case of the Duchess two months ago during the night, and though the police have made every effort, no real clue has been obtained as to the thief. They are very reticent upon the subject, but it seems that they have reason to suspect one Achille Wolff, an Americanized native of Lorraine, who had called at the Château a short time before. He is an eccentric man, of Bohemian habits, and it is just possible that his sudden disappearance at the time of the robbery may have been a coincidence. In appearance he is described as romantic looking, with an artistic face, dark eyes and hair, and a brusque manner. A large reward is offered for his capture.”

When I finished reading this, my father and I sat looking at each other in silence for a minute or so. Then my father

jerked his finger over his shoulder. "Yon's him," he said.

"Yes, it must be he," I answered, thinking of the initials on the handkerchief.

Again we were silent for a time. My father took one of the faggots out of the grate and twisted it about in his hands. "It maun be a muckle stane," he said. "He canna hae it aboot him. Likely he's left it in France."

"No, he has it with him," I said, like a cursed fool as I was.

"Hoo d'ye ken that?" asked the old man, looking up quickly with eager eyes.

"Because I have seen it."

The faggot which he held broke in two in his grip, but he said nothing more. Shortly afterward our guest came in, and we had dinner, but neither of us alluded to the arrival of the paper.

I have often been amused, when reading stories told in the first person, to see how the narrator makes himself out as a matter of course to be a perfect and spotless man. All around may have their passions and weaknesses, and vices, but he remains a cold and blameless nonentity, running like a colorless thread through the tangled skein of the story. I shall not fall into this error. I see myself as I was in those days, shallow-hearted, hot-headed, and with little principle of any kind. Such I was, and such I depict myself.

From the time that I finally identified our visitor Digby with Achille Wolff the diamond robber, my resolution was taken. Some might have been squeamish in the matter, and thought that because he had shaken their hand and broken their bread he had earned some sort of grace from them. I was not troubled with sentimentality of this sort. He was a criminal escaping from justice. Some providence had thrown him into our hands, and an enormous reward awaited his betrayers. I never hesitated for a moment as to what was to be done.

The more I thought of it the more I admired the cleverness with which he had managed the whole business. It was clear

that he had had a vessel ready, manned either by confederates or by unsuspecting fishermen. Hence he would be independent of all those parts where the police would be on the lookout for him. Again, if he had made for England or for America, he could hardly have escaped ultimate capture, but by choosing one of the most desolate and lonely spots in Europe he had thrown them off his track for a time, while the destruction of the brig seemed to destroy the last clue as to his whereabouts. At present he was entirely at our mercy, since he could not move from the island without our help. There was no necessity for us to hurry therefore, and we could mature our plans at our leisure.

Both my father and I showed no change in our manner toward our guest, and he himself was as cheery and lighthearted as ever. It was pleasant to hear him singing as we mended the nets or caulked the boat. His voice was a very high tenor and one of the most melodious I ever listened to. I am convinced that he could have made a name upon the operatic stage, but like most versatile scoundrels, he placed small account upon the genuine talents which he possessed, and cultivated the worse portion of his nature. My father used sometimes to eye him sideways in a strange manner, and I thought I knew what he was thinking about—but there I made a mistake.

One day, about a week after our conversation, I was fixing up one of the rails of our fence which had been snapped in the gale, when my father came long the seashore, plodding heavily among the pebbles, and sat down on a stone at my elbow. I went on knocking in the nails, but looked at him from the corner of my eye, as he pulled away at his short black pipe. I could see that he had something weighty on his mind, for he knitted his brows, and his lips projected.

“D’ye mind what was in yon paper?” he said at last, knocking his ashes out against the stone.

“Yes,” I answered shortly.

“Well, what’s your opeenion?” he asked.

“Why, that we should have the reward, of course!” I replied.

“The reward!” he said, with a fierce snarl. “You would tak’ the reward. You’d let the stane that’s worth thousands an’ thousands gang awa’ back tae some furrin Papist, an’ a’ for the sake o’ a few pund that they’d fling till ye, as they fling a bane to a dog when the meat’s a’ gone. It’s a clean flingin’ awa’ o’ the gifts o’ Providence.”

“Well, father,” I said, laying down the hammer, “you must be satisfied with what you can get. You can only have what is offered.”

“But if we got the stone itsel’,” whispered my father, with a leer on his face.

“He’d never give it up,” I said.

“But if he deed while he’s here—if he was suddenly—”

“Drop it, father, drop it!” I cried, for the old man looked like a fiend out of the pit. I saw now what he was aiming at.

“If he deed,” he shouted, “wha saw him come, and wha was speer where he’d ganged till? If an accident happened, if he came by a dud on the heid, or woke some nicht to find a knife at his thrapple, wha wad be the wiser?”

“You mustn’t speak so, father,” I said, though I was thinking many things at the same time.

“It may as well be oot as in,” he answered, and went away rather sulkily, turning round after a few yards and holding up his finger toward me to impress the necessity of caution.

My father did not speak of this matter to me again, but what he said rankled in my mind. I could hardly realize that he meant his words, for he had always, as far as I knew, been an upright, righteous man, hard in his ways, and grasping in his nature, but guiltless of any great sin. Perhaps it was that he was removed from temptation, for isothermal lines of crime might be drawn on the map through places where it is hard to walk straight, and there are others where it is as hard to fall. It was easy to be a saint in the island of Uffa.

One day we were finishing breakfast when our guest asked if the boat was mended (one of the tholepins had been broken). I answered that it was.

“I want you two,” he said, “to take me round to Lamlash today. You shall have a couple of sovereigns for the job. I don’t know that I may not come back with you—but I may stay.”

My eyes met those of my father for a flash. “There’s no’ vera much wind,” he said.

“What there is, is in the right direction,” returned Digby, as I must call him.

“The new foresail has no’ been bent,” persisted my father.

“There’s no use throwing difficulties in the way,” said our visitor angrily. “If you won’t come, I’ll get Tommy Gibbs and his father, but go I shall. Is it a bargain or not?”

“I’ll gang,” my father replied sullenly, and went down to get the boat ready. I followed, and helped him to bend on the new foresail. I felt nervous and excited.

“What do you intend to do?” I asked.

“I dinna ken,” he said irritably. “Gin the worst come to the worst we can gie him up at Lamlash—but oh, it wad be a peety, an awfu’ peety. You’re young an’ strong, laddie; can we no’ master him between us?”

“No,” I said, “I’m ready to give him up, but I’m damned if I lay a hand on him.”

“You’re a cooardly, white-livered loon!” he cried, but I was not to be moved by taunts, and left him mumbling to himself and picking at the sail with nervous fingers.

It was about two o’clock before the boat was ready, but as there was a slight breeze from the north we reckoned on reaching Lamlash before nightfall. There was just a pleasant ripple upon the dark blue water, and as we stood on the beach before shoving off, we could see the Carlin’s leap and Goatfell bathed in a purple mist, while beyond them along the horizon loomed the long line of the Argyleshire hills. Away to the south the great bald summit of Ailsa crag glittered in the sun, and a single white fleck showed where a

fishing boat was beating up from the Scotch coast. Digby and I stepped into the boat, but my father ran back to where I had been mending the rails, and came back with the hatchet in his hand, which he stowed away under the thwarts.

“What d’ye want with the axe?” our visitor asked.

“It’s a handy thing to hae about a boat,” my father answered with averted eyes, and shoved us off. We set the foresail, jib, and mainsail, and shot away across the Roost, with blue water splashing merrily under our bows. Looking back, I saw the coastline of our little island extend rapidly on either side. There was Carravoe which we had left, and our own beach of Carracuil and the steep brown face of the Combera, and away behind the rugged crests of Beg-naphail and Beg-na-sacher. I could see the red tiles of the byre of our homesteading, and across the moor a thin blue reek in the air which marked the position of Corriemains. My heart warmed toward the place which had been my home since childhood.

We were about halfway across the Roost when it fell a dead calm, and the sails flapped against the mast. We were perfectly motionless except for the drift of the current, which runs from north to south. I had been steering and my father managing the sails, while the stranger smoked his eternal cigarettes and admired the scenery; but at his suggestion we now got the sculls out to row. I shall never know how it began, but as I was stooping down to pick up an oar I heard our visitor give a great scream that he was murdered, and looking up I saw him with his face all in a sputter of blood leaning against the mast, while my father made at him with the hatchet. Before I could move hand or foot Digby rushed at the old man and caught him round the waist. “You gray-headed devil,” he cried in a husky voice. “I feel that you have done for me. But you’ll never get what you want. No—never! never! never!” Nothing can ever erase from my memory the intense and concentrated malice of those words. My father gave a raucous cry, they

swayed and balanced for a moment and then over they went into the sea. I rushed to the side, boathook in hand, but they never came up. As the long rings caused by the splash widened out however and left an unruffled space in the center, I saw them once again. The water was very clear, and far down I could see the shimmer of two white faces coming and going, faces which seemed to look up at me with an expression of unutterable horror. Slowly they went down, revolving in each other's embrace until they were nothing but a dark loom, and then faded from my view forever. There they shall lie, the Frenchman and the Scot, till the great trumpet shall sound and the sea give up its dead. Storms may rage above them and great ships labor and creak, but their slumber shall be dreamless and unruffled in the silent green depths of the Roost of Uffa. I trust when the great day shall come that they will bring up the cursed stone with them, that they may show the sore temptation which the devil had placed in their way, as some slight extenuation of their errors while in this mortal flesh.

It was a weary and waesome journey back to Carravoe. I remember tug-tugging at the oars as though to snap them in trying to relieve the tension in my mind. Toward evening a breeze sprang up and helped me on my way, and before nightfall I was back in the lonely homesteading once more, and all that had passed that spring afternoon lay behind me like some horrible nightmare.

I did not remain in Uffa. The croft and the boat were sold by public roup in the marketplace of Ardrossan, and the sum realized was sufficient to enable me to continue my medical studies at the University. I fled from the island as from a cursed place, nor did I ever set foot on it again. Gibbs and his son, and even Minnie Fullarton too, passed out of my life completely and for ever. She missed me for a time, no doubt, but I have heard that young McBane, who took the farm, went a-wooing to Corriemains after the white fishing, and as he was a comely fellow enough he may have consoled her for my loss. As for myself, I have settled

quietly down into a large middle-class practice in Paisley. It has been in the brief intervals of professional work that I have jotted down these reminiscences of the events which led up to my father's death. Achille Wolff and the Rochevieille diamond are things of the past now, but there may be some who will care to hear of how they visited the island of Uffa.

THROUGH THE VEIL

He was a great shock-headed, freckle-faced Borderer, the lineal descendant of a cattle-thieving clan in Liddesdale. In spite of his ancestry he was as solid and sober a citizen as one would wish to see, a town councillor of Melrose, an elder of the Church, and the chairman of the local branch of the Young Men's Christian Association. Brown was his name—and you saw it printed up as “Brown and Handiside” over the great grocery stores in the High Street. His wife, Maggie Brown, was an Armstrong before her marriage, and came from an old farming stock in the wilds of Teviothead. She was small, swarthy, and dark-eyed, with a strangely nervous temperament for a Scotch woman. No greater contrast could be found than the big tawny man and the dark little woman, but both were of the soil as far back as any memory could extend.

One day—it was the first anniversary of their wedding—they had driven over together to see the excavations of the Roman Fort at Newstead. It was not a particularly picturesque spot. From the northern bank of the Tweed, just where the river forms a loop, there extends a gentle slope of arable land. Across it run the trenches of the excavators, with here and there an exposure of old stonework to show the foundation of the ancient walls. It had been a huge place, for the camp was fifty acres in extent, and the fort fifteen. However, it was all made easy for them since Mr. Brown knew the farmer to whom the land belonged. Under his guidance they spent a long summer evening inspecting the trenches, the pits, the ramparts, and all the strange variety of objects which were waiting to be transported to the Edinburgh Museum of Antiquities. The buckle of a woman's belt had been dug up that very day, and the

farmer was discoursing upon it when his eyes fell upon Mrs. Brown's face.

"Your good leddy's tired," said he. "Maybe you'd best rest a wee before we gang further."

Brown looked at his wife. She was certainly very pale, and her dark eyes were bright and wild.

"What is it, Maggie? I've wearied you. I'm thinkin' it's time we went back."

"No, no, John, let us go on. It's wonderful! It's like a dreamland place. It all seems so close and so near to me. How long were the Romans here, Mr. Cunningham?"

"A fair time, mam. If you saw the kitchen midden pits you would guess it took a long time to fill them."

"And why did they leave?"

"Well, mam, by all accounts they left because they had to. The folk round could thole them no longer, so they just up and burned the fort aboot their lugs. You can see the fire marks on the stanes."

The woman gave a quick little shudder. "A wild night—a fearsome night," said she. "The sky must have been red that night—and these gray stones, they may have been red also."

"Aye, I think they were red," said her husband. "It's a queer thing, Maggie, and it may be your words that have done it; but I seem to see that business aboot as clear as ever I saw anything in my life. The light shone on the water."

"Aye, the light shone on the water. And the smoke gripped you by the throat. And all the savages were yelling."

The old farmer began to laugh. "The leddy will be writin' a story about the old fort," said he. "I've shown many a one ower it, but I never heard it put so clear afore. Some folk have the gift."

They had strolled along the edge of the foss, and a pit yawned upon the right of them.

"That pit was fourteen foot deep," said the farmer. "What d'ye think we dug oot from the bottom o't? Weel, it was just

the skeleton of a man wi' a spear by his side. I'm thinkin' he was grippin' it when he died. Now, how cam' a man wi' a spear doon a hole fourteen foot deep. He wasna' buried there, for they aye burned their dead. What make ye o' that, mam?"

"He sprang doon to get clear of the savages," said the woman.

"Weel, it's likely enough, and a' the professors from Edinburgh coulda gie a better reason. I wish you were aye here, mam, to answer a' oor deeficulties sae readily. Now, here's the altar that we foond last week. There's an inscreeption. They tell me it's Latin, and it means that the men o' this fort give thanks to God for their safety."

They examined the old worn stone. There was a large deeply-cut "VV" upon the top of it.

"What does 'VV' stand for?" asked Brown.

"Naebody kens," the guide answered.

"*Valeria Victrix*," said the lady softly. Her face was paler than ever, her eyes far away, as one who peers down the dim aisles of overarching centuries.

"What's that?" asked her husband sharply.

She started as one who wakes from sleep. "What were we talking about?" she asked.

"About this 'VV' upon the stone."

"No doubt it was just the name of the Legion which put the altar up."

"Aye, but you gave some special name."

"Did I? How absurd! How should I ken what the name was?"

"You said something—'*Victrix*,' I think."

"I suppose I was guessing. It gives me the queerest feeling, this place, as if I were not myself, but someone else."

"Aye, it's an uncanny place," said her husband, looking round with an expression almost of fear in his bold gray eyes. "I feel it mysel'. I think we'll just be wishin' you good-

evenin', Mr. Cunningham, and get back to Melrose before the dark sets in."

Neither of them could shake off the strange impression which had been left upon them by their visit to the excavations. It was as if some miasma had risen from those damp trenches and passed into their blood. All the evening they were silent and thoughtful, but such remarks as they did make showed that the same subject was in the minds of each. Brown had a restless night, in which he dreamed a strange connected dream, so vivid that he woke sweating and shivering like a frightened horse. He tried to convey it all to his wife as they sat together at breakfast in the morning.

"It was the clearest thing, Maggie," said he. "Nothing that has ever come to me in my waking life has been more clear than that. I feel as if these hands were sticky with blood."

"Tell me of it—tell me slow," said she.

"When it began, I was oot on a braeside. I was laying flat on the ground. It was rough, and there were clumps of heather. All round me was just darkness, but I could hear the rustle and the breathin' of men. There seemed a great multitude on every side of me, but I could see no one. There was a low chink of steel sometimes, and then a number of voices would whisper 'Hush!' I had a ragged club in my hand, and it had spikes o' iron near the end of it. My heart was beatin' quickly, and I felt that a moment of great danger and excitement was at hand. Once I dropped my club, and again from all round me the voices in the darkness cried, 'Hush!' I put oot my hand, and it touched the foot of another man lying in front of me. There was someone at my very elbow on either side. But they said nothin'.

"Then we all began to move. The whole braeside seemed to be crawlin' downward. There was a river at the bottom and a high-arched wooden bridge. Beyond the bridges were many lights—torches on a wall. The creepin' men all flowed toward the bridge. There had been no sound of any kind, just a velvet stillness. And then there was a cry in the

darkness, the cry of a man who has been stabbed suddenly to the heart. That one cry swelled out for a moment, and then the roar of a thousand furious voices. I was runnin'. Every one was runnin'. A bright red light shone out, and the river was a scarlet streak. I could see my companions now. They were all mad with rage, jumpin' as they ran, their mouths open, their arms wavin', the red light beatin' on their faces. I ran, too, and yelled out curses like the rest. Then I heard a great cracklin' of wood, and I knew that the palisades were doon. There was a loud whistlin' in my ears, and I was aware that arrows were flyin' past me. I got to the bottom of a dyke, and I saw a hand stretched doon from above. I took it, and was dragged to the top. We looked doon, and there were silver men beneath us holdin' up their spears. Some of our folk sprang on to the spears. Then we others followed, and we killed the soldiers before they could draw the spears oot again. They shouted loud in some foreign tongue, but no mercy was shown them. We went ower them like a wave, and trampled them doon into the mud, for they were few, and there was no end to our numbers.

"I found myself among buildings, and one of them was on fire. I saw the flames spoutin' through the roof. I ran on, and then I was alone among the buildings. Someone ran across in front o' me. It was a woman. I caught her by the arm, and I took her chin and turned her face so as the light of the fire would strike it. Whom think you that it was, Maggie?"

His wife moistened her dry lips. "It was I," she said.

He looked at her in surprise. "That's a good guess," said he. "Yes, it was just you. Not merely like you, you understand. It was you—you yourself. I saw the same soul in your frightened eyes. You looked white and bonny and wonderful in the firelight. I had just one thought in my head—to get you awa' with me; to keep you all to mysel' in my own home somewhere beyond the hills. You clawed at my face with your nails. I heaved you over my shoulder, and I

tried to find a way out of the light of the burning hoose and back into the darkness.

“Then came the thing that I mind best of all. You’re ill, Maggie. Shall I stop? My God! you have the very look on your face that you had last night in my dream. You screamed. He came runnin’ in the firelight. His head was bare; his hair was black and curled; he had a naked sword in his hand, short and broad, little more than a dagger. He stabbed at me, but he tripped and fell. I held you with one hand, and with the other—”

His wife had sprung to her feet with writhing features.

“Marcus!” she cried. “My beautiful Marcus! Oh, you brute! you brute! you brute!” There was a clatter of tea cups as she fell forward senseless upon the table.

They never talk about that strange isolated incident in their married life. For an instant the curtain of the past had swung aside, and some strange glimpse of a forgotten life had come to them. But it closed down; never to open again. They live their narrow round—he in his shop, she in her household—and yet new and wider horizons have vaguely formed themselves around them since that summer evening by the crumbling Roman fort.

DE PROFUNDIS

As long as the oceans are the ligaments which bind together the great broad-cast British Empire, so long there will be a dash of romance in our slow old Frisian minds. For the soul is swayed by the waters, as the waters are by the moon, and when the great highways of an Empire are along such roads as those, so full of strange sights and sounds, with danger ever running like a hedge on either side of the course, it is a dull mind indeed which does not bear away with it some trace of such a passage. And now, Britain lies far beyond herself, for in truth the three-mile limit of every seaboard is her frontier, which has been won by hammer and loom and pick, rather than by arts of war. For it is written in history that neither a king in his might, nor an army with banners, can bar the path to the man who having twopence in his strongbox, and knowing well where he can turn it to threepence, sets his mind to that one end. And as the Empire has broadened, the mind of Britain has broadened too, spreading out into free speech, free press, free trade, until all men can see that the ways of the island are Continental, even as those of the Continent are insular.

But for this a price must be paid, and the price is a grievous one. As the beast of old must have one young human life as a tribute every year, so to our Empire we throw from day to day the pick and flower of our youth. The engine is worldwide and strong, but the only fuel that will drive it is the lives of British men. Thus it is that in the gray old cathedrals, as we look round upon the brasses on the walls, we see strange names, such names as they who reared those walls had never heard, for it is in Peshawur, and Umballah, and Korti, and Fort Pearson that the

youngsters die, leaving only a precedent and a brass behind them. But if every man had his obelisk, even where he lay, then no frontier line need be drawn, for a cordon of British graves would ever show how high the Anglo-Saxon tide had lapped.

And this too, as well as the waters which separate us from France, and join us to the world, has done something to tinge us with romance. For when so many have their loved ones over the seas, walking amid hillman's bullets, or swamp malaria, where death is sudden and distance great, then mind communes with mind, and strange stories arise of dream, presentiment or vision, where the mother sees her dying son, and is past the first bitterness of her grief ere the message comes which should have broke the news. The learned have of late looked into the matter, and have even labeled it with a name, but what can we know more of it save that a poor stricken soul, when hard-pressed and driven, can shoot across the earth some ten-thousand-mile-long picture of its trouble to the mind which is most akin to it. Far be it from me to say that there lies no such power within us, for of all things which the brain will grasp the last will be itself, but yet it is well to be very cautious over such matters, for once at least I have known that which was within the laws of nature to seem to be far upon the further side of them.

John Vansittart was the younger partner of the firm of Hudson and Vansittart, coffee exporters of the Island of Ceylon, three-quarters Dutchmen by descent, but wholly English in his sympathies. For years I had been his agent in London, and when in '72 he came over to England for a three months' holiday, he turned to me for the introductions which would enable him to see something of town and country life. Armed with seven letters he left my offices, and for many weeks scrappy notes from different parts of the country let me know that he had found favor in the eyes of my friends. Then came word of his engagement to Emily Lawson, of a cadet branch of the Hereford Lawsons, and at

the very tail of the first flying rumor the news of his absolute marriage, for the wooing of a wanderer must be short, and the days were already crowding on toward the date when he must be upon his homeward journey. They were to return together to Colombo in one of the firm's own thousand ton barque-rigged sailing ships, and this was to be their princely honeymoon, at once a necessity and a delight.

Those were the royal days of coffee planting in Ceylon, before a single season and a rotting fungus drove a whole community through years of despair to one of the greatest commercial victories which pluck and ingenuity ever won. Not often is it that men have the heart when their one great industry is withered to rear up in a few years another as rich to take its place, and the tea fields of Ceylon are as true a monument to courage as is the lion at Waterloo. But in '72 there was no cloud yet above the skyline, and the hopes of the planters were as high and as bright as the hillsides on which they reared their crops. Vansittart came down to London with his young and beautiful wife. I was introduced, dined with them, and it was finally arranged that I, since business called me also to Ceylon, should be a fellow passenger with them on the *Eastern Star*, which was timed to sail upon the following Monday.

It was on the Sunday evening that I saw him again. He was shown up into my rooms about nine o'clock at night, with the air of a man who is bothered and out of sorts. His hand, as I shook it, was hot and dry.

"I wish, Atkinson," said he, "that you could give me a little lime juice and water. I have a beastly thirst upon me, and the more I take the more I seem to want."

I rang and ordered in a carafe and glasses. "You are flushed," said I. "You don't look the thing."

"No, I'm clean off color. Got a touch of rheumatism in my back, and don't seem to taste my food. It is this vile London that is choking me. I'm not used to breathing air which has been used up by four million lungs all sucking away on

every side of you.” He flapped his crooked hands before his face, like a man who really struggles for his breath.

“A touch of the sea will soon set you right.”

“Yes, I’m of one mind with you there. That’s the thing for me. I want no other doctor. If I don’t get to sea tomorrow I’ll have an illness. There are no two ways about it.” He drank off a tumbler of lime juice, and clapped his two hands with his knuckles doubled up into the small of his back.

“That seems to ease me,” said he, looking at me with a filmy eye. “Now I want your help, Atkinson, for I am rather awkwardly placed.”

“As how?”

“This way. My wife’s mother got ill and wired for her. I couldn’t go—you know best yourself how tied I have been—so she had to go alone. Now I’ve had another wire to say that she can’t come tomorrow, but that she will pick up the ship at Falmouth on Wednesday. We put in there, you know, and in, and in, though I count it hard, Atkinson, that a man should be asked to believe in a mystery, and cursed if he can’t do it. Cursed, mind you, no less.” He leaned forward and began to draw a catchy breath like a man who is poised on the very edge of a sob.

Then first it came into my mind that I had heard much of the hard drinking life of the island, and that from brandy came these wild words and fevered hands. The flushed cheek and the glazing eye were those of one whose drink is strong upon him. Sad it was to see so noble a young man in the grip of that most bestial of all the devils.

“You should lie down,” I said, with some severity.

He screwed up his eyes, like a man who is striving to wake himself, and looked up with an air of surprise.

“So I shall presently,” said he, quite rationally. “I felt quite swimmy just now, but I am my own man again now. Let me see, what was I talking about? Oh ah, of course, about the wife. She joins the ship at Falmouth. Now I want to go round by water. I believe my health depends upon it. I just want a little clean firsthand air to set me on my feet again. Now I

want you, like a good fellow, to go to Falmouth by rail, so that in case we should be late you may be there to look after the wife. Put up at the Royal Hotel, and I will wire her that you are there. Her sister will bring her down, so that it will be all plain sailing."

"I'll do it with pleasure," said I. "In fact, I should rather go by rail, for we shall have enough and to spare of the sea before we reach Colombo. I believe too that you badly need a change. Now I should go and turn in, if I were you."

"Yes, I will. I sleep aboard tonight. You know," he continued, as the film settled down again over his eyes, "I've not slept well the last few nights. I've been troubled with theololog—that is to say, theological—hang it," with a desperate effort, "with the doubts of theologicians. Wondering why the Almighty made us, you know, and why He made our heads swimmy, and fixed little pains into the small of our backs. Maybe I'll do better tonight." He rose, and steadied himself with an effort against the corner of the chair back.

"Look here, Vansittart," said I gravely, stepping up to him, and laying my hand upon his sleeve, "I can give you a shakedown here. You are not fit to go out. You are all over the place. You've been mixing your drinks."

"Drinks!" he stared at me stupidly.

"You used to carry your liquor better than this."

"I give you my word, Atkinson, that I have not had a drain for two days. It's not drink. I don't know what it is. I suppose you think this is drink." He took up my hand in his burning grasp, and passed it over his own forehead.

"Great Lord!" said I.

His skin felt like a thin sheet of velvet beneath which lies a close packed layer of small shot. It was smooth to the touch at any one place, but, to a finger passed along it, rough as a nutmeg grater.

"It's all right," said he, smiling at my startled face. "I've had the prickly heat nearly as bad."

"But this is never prickly heat."

“No, it’s London. It’s breathing bad air. But tomorrow it’ll be all right. There’s a surgeon aboard, so I shall be in safe hands. I must be off now.”

“Not you,” said I, pushing him back into a chair. “This is past a joke. You don’t move from here until a doctor sees you. Just stay where you are.” I caught up my hat, and rushing round to the house of a neighboring physician, I brought him back with me. The room was empty and Vansittart gone. I rang the bell. The servant said that the gentleman had ordered a cab the instant that I had left, and had gone off in it. He had told the cabman to drive to the docks.

“Did the gentleman seem ill?” I asked.

“Ill!” The man smiled. “No, sir, he was singin’ his ‘ardest all the time.”

The information was not as reassuring as my servant seemed to think, but I reflected that he was going straight back to the *Eastern Star*, and that there was a doctor aboard of her, so that there was nothing which I could do in the matter. Nonetheless, when I thought of his thirst, his burning hands, his heavy eye, his tripping speech, and lastly, of that leprous forehead, I carried with me to bed an unpleasant memory of my visitor and his visit.

At eleven o’clock next day I was at the docks, but the *Eastern Star* had already moved down the river, and was nearly at Gravesend. To Gravesend I went by train, but only to see her topmasts far off, with a plume of smoke from a tug in front of her. I would hear no more of my friend until I rejoined him at Falmouth. When I got back to my offices a telegram was awaiting for me from Mrs. Vansittart, asking me to meet her, and next evening found us both at the Royal Hotel, Falmouth, where we were to wait for the *Eastern Star*. Ten days passed, and there came no news of her.

They were ten days which I am not likely to forget. On the very day that the *Eastern Star* had cleared from the Thames, a furious easterly gale had sprung up, and blew on

from day to day for the greater part of a week without the sign of a lull. Such a screaming, raving, long-drawn storm has never been known on the southerly coast. From our hotel windows the sea view was all banked in with haze, with a little rainswept half circle under our very eyes, churned and lashed into one tossing stretch of foam. So heavy was the wind upon the waves that little sea could rise, for the crest of each billow was torn shrieking from it, and lashed broadcast over the bay. Clouds, wind, sea, all were rushing to the west, and there, looking down at this mad jumble of elements, I waited on day after day, my sole companion a white, silent woman, with terror in her eyes, her forehead pressed ever against the bar of the window, her gaze from early morning to the fall of night fixed upon the wall of gray haze through which the loom of a vessel might come. She said nothing, but that face of hers was one long wail of fear.

On the fifth day I took counsel with an old seaman. I should have preferred to have done so alone, but she saw me speak with him, and was at our side in an instant, with parted lips and a prayer in her eyes.

“Seven days out from London,” said he, “and five in the gale. Well, the Channel’s swept as clear as clear by this wind. There’s three things for it. She may have popped into port on the French side. That’s like enough.”

“No, no, he knew we were here. He would have telegraphed.”

“Ah, yes, so he would. Well then, he might have run for it, and if he did that he won’t be very far from Madeira by now. That’ll be it, marm, you may depend.”

“Or else? You said there was a third chance.”

“Did I, marm? No, only two, I think. I don’t think I said anything of a third. Your ship’s out there, depend upon it, away out in the Atlantic, and you’ll hear of it time enough, for the weather is breaking; now don’t you fret, marm, and wait quiet, and you’ll find a real blue Cornish sky tomorrow.”

The old seaman was right in his surmise, for the next day broke calm and bright, with only a low dwindling cloud in the west to mark the last trailing wreaths of the storm wrack. But still there came no word from the sea, and no sign of the ship. Three more weary days had passed, the weariest that I have ever spent, when there came a seafaring man to the hotel with a letter. I gave a shout of joy. It was from the Captain of the *Eastern Star*. As I read the first lines of it I whisked my hand over it, but she laid her own upon it and drew it away. "I have seen it," said she, in a cold, quiet voice; "I may as well see the rest, too."

Dear Sir [said the letter], Mr. Vansittart is down with the smallpox, and we are blown so far on our course that we don't know what to do, he being off his head and unfit to tell us. By dead reckoning we are but three hundred miles from Funchal, so I take it that it is best that we should push on there, get Mr. V. into hospital, and wait in the Bay until you come. There's a sailing ship due from Falmouth to Funchal in a few days time, as I understand. This goes by the brig *Marian*, of Falmouth, and five pounds is due to the master.

Yours respectfully, JNO HINES.

She was a wonderful woman that, only a chit of a girl fresh from school, but as quiet and strong as a man. She said nothing—only pressed her lips together tight, and put on her bonnet.

"You are going out?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Can I be of use?"

"No, I am going to the Doctor's."

"To the Doctor's?"

"Yes. To learn how to nurse a smallpox case."

She was busy at that all evening, and next morning we were off with a fine ten-knot breeze in the barque *Rose of Sharon* for Madeira. For five days we made good time, and

were no great way from the island, but on the sixth there fell a calm, and we lay without motion on a sea of oil, heaving slowly, but making not a foot of weigh.

At ten o'clock that night Emily Vansittart and I stood leaning on the starboard railing of the poop, with a full moon shining at our backs, and casting a black shadow of the barque, and of our own two heads upon the shining water. From the shadow on, a broadening path of moonshine stretched away to the lonely skyline, flickering and shimmering in the gentle heave of the swell. We were talking with bent heads, chatting of the calm, of the chances of wind, of the look of the sky, when there came a sudden plop, like a rising salmon, and there in the clear light John Vansittart sprang out of the water and looked up at us.

I never saw anything clearer in my life than I saw that man. The moon shone full upon him, and he was but three oars' lengths away. His face was more puffed than when I had seen him last, mottled here and there with dark scabs, his mouth and eyes open as one who is struck with some overpowering surprise. He had some white stuff streaming from his shoulders, and one hand was raised to his ear, the other crooked across his breast. I saw him leap from the water into the air, and in the dead calm the waves of his coming lapped up against the sides of the vessel. Then his figure sank back into the waters again, and I heard a rending, crackling sound like a bundle of brushwood snapping in the fire upon a frosty night. There were no signs of him when I looked again, but a swift swirl and eddy on the still sea still marked the spot where he had been. How long I stood there, tingling to my fingertips, holding up an unconscious woman with one hand, clutching at the rail of the vessel with the other, was more than I could afterward tell. I had been noted as a man of slow and unresponsive emotions, but this time at least I was shaken to the core. Once and twice I struck my foot upon the deck to be certain that I was indeed the master of my own senses, and that this was not some mad prank of an unruly brain. As I stood,

still marveling, the woman shivered, opened her eyes, gasped, and then standing erect with her hands upon the rail, looked out over the moonlit sea with a face which had aged ten years in a summer night.

"You saw his vision?" she murmured.

"I saw something."

"It was he. It was John. He is dead."

I muttered some lame words of doubt.

"Doubtless he died at this hour," she whispered. "In hospital at Madeira. I have read of such things. His thoughts were with me. His vision came to me. Oh, my John, my dear, dear, lost John!"

She broke out suddenly in a storm of weeping, and I led her down into her cabin, where I left her with her sorrow. That night a brisk breeze blew up from the east, and in the evening of the next day we passed the two islets of Los Desertos, and dropped anchor at sundown in the Bay of Funchal. The *Eastern Star* lay no great distance from us, with the quarantine flag flying from her main, and her Jack halfway up her peak.

"You see," said Mrs. Vansittart quickly. She was dry-eyed now, for she had known how it would be.

That night we received permission from the authorities to move on board the *Eastern Star*. The Captain, Hines, was waiting upon deck with confusion and grief contending upon his bluff face as he sought for words with which to break this heavy tidings, but she took the story from his lips.

"I know that my husband is dead," she said. "He died yesterday night, about ten o'clock, in hospital at Madeira, did he not?"

The seaman stared aghast. "No, marm, he died eight days ago at sea, and we had to bury him out there, for we lay in a belt of calm, and could not say when we might make the land."

Well, those are the main facts about the death of John Vansittart, and his appearance to his wife somewhere about latitude 35° N. and longitude 15° W. A clearer case of a

wraith has seldom been made out, and since then it has been told as such, and put into print as such, and endorsed by a learned society as such, and so floated off with many others to support the recent theory of telepathy. For myself I hold telepathy to be proved, but I would snatch this one case from amid the evidence, and say that I do not think that it was the wraith of John Vansittart, but John Vansittart himself whom we saw that night leaping into the moonlight out of the depths of the Atlantic. It has ever been my belief that some strange chance, one of these chances which seem so improbable and yet so constantly occur, had becalmed us over the very spot where the man had been buried a week before. For the rest the surgeon tells me that the leaden weight was not too firmly fixed and that seven days bring about changes which are wont to fetch a body to the surface. Coming from the depth which the weight would have sunk it to, he explains that it might well attain such a velocity as to carry it clear of the water. Such is my own explanation of the matter, and if you ask me what then became of the body, I must recall to you that snapping, crackling sound, with the swirl in the water. The shark is a surface feeder and is plentiful in those parts.

THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT

Of all the sciences which have puzzled sons of men, none had such an attraction for the learned Professor von Baumgarten as those which relate to psychology and the ill-defined relations between mind and matter. A celebrated anatomist, a profound chemist, and one of the first physiologists in Europe, it was a relief for him to turn from these subjects and to bring his varied knowledge to bear upon the study of the soul and the mysterious relationship of spirits. At first, when as a young man he began to dip into the secrets of mesmerism, his mind seemed to be wandering in a strange land where all was chaos and darkness, save that here and there some great unexplainable and disconnected fact loomed out in front of him. As the years passed, however, and as the worthy Professor's stock of knowledge increased, for knowledge begets knowledge as money bears interest, much which had seemed strange and unaccountable began to take another shape in his eyes. New trains of reasoning became familiar to him, and he perceived connecting links where all had been incomprehensible and startling. By experiments which extended over twenty years, he obtained a basis of facts upon which it was his ambition to build up a new exact science which should embrace mesmerism, spiritualism, and all cognate subjects. In this he was much helped by his intimate knowledge of the more intricate parts of animal physiology which treat of nerve currents and the working of the brain; for Alexis von Baumgarten was Regius Professor of Physiology at the University of Keinplatz, and had all the resources of the laboratory to aid him in his profound researches.

Professor von Baumgarten was tall and thin, with a hatchet face and steel-gray eyes, which were singularly bright and penetrating. Much thought had furrowed his forehead and contracted his heavy eyebrows, so that he appeared to wear a perpetual frown, which often misled people as to his character, for though austere he was tenderhearted. He was popular among the students, who would gather round him after his lectures and listen eagerly to his strange theories. Often he would call for volunteers from amongst them in order to conduct some experiment, so that eventually there was hardly a lad in the class who had not, at one time or another, been thrown into a mesmeric trance by his Professor.

Of all these young devotees of science there was none who equaled in enthusiasm Fritz von Hartmann. It had often seemed strange to his fellow students that wild, reckless Fritz, as dashing a young fellow as ever hailed from the Rhinelands, should devote the time and trouble which he did in reading up abstruse works and in assisting the Professor in his strange experiments. The fact was, however, that Fritz was a knowing and long-headed fellow. Months before he had lost his heart to young Elise, the blue-eyed, yellow-haired daughter of the lecturer. Although he had succeeded in learning from her lips that she was not indifferent to his suit, he had never dared to announce himself to her family as a formal suitor. Hence he would have found it a difficult matter to see his young lady had he not adopted the expedient of making himself useful to the Professor. By this means he frequently was asked to the old man's house, where he willingly submitted to be experimented upon in any way as long as there was the chance of his receiving one bright glance from the eyes of Elise or one touch of her little hand.

Young Fritz von Hartmann was a handsome lad enough. There were broad acres, too, which would descend to him when his father died. To many he would have seemed an eligible suitor; but Madame frowned upon his presence in

the house, and lectured the Professor at times on his allowing such a wolf to prowl around their lamb. To tell the truth, Fritz had an evil name in Keinplatz. Never was there a riot or a duel, or any other mischief aloof, but the young Rhinelander figured as a ringleader in it. No one used more free and violent language, no one drank more, no one played cards more habitually, no one was more idle, save in the one solitary subject. No wonder, then, that the good Frau Professorin gathered her Fräulein under her wing, and resented the attentions of such a *mauvais sujet*. As to the worthy lecturer, he was too much engrossed by his strange studies to form an opinion upon the subject one way or the other.

For many years there was one question which had continually obtruded itself upon his thoughts. All his experiments and his theories turned upon a single point. A hundred times a day the Professor asked himself whether it was possible for the human spirit to exist apart from the body for a time and then to return to it once again. When the possibility first suggested itself to him his scientific mind had revolted from it. It clashed too violently with preconceived ideas and the prejudices of his early training. Gradually, however, as he proceeded farther and farther along the pathway of original research, his mind shook off its old fetters and became ready to face any conclusion which could reconcile the facts. There were many things which made him believe that it was possible for mind to exist apart from matter. At last it occurred to him that by a daring and original experiment the question might be definitely decided.

“It is evident,” he remarked in his celebrated article upon invisible entities, which appeared in the *Keinplatz wochenliche Medicalschrift* about this time, and which surprised the whole scientific world—“it is evident that under certain conditions the soul or mind does separate itself from the body. In the case of a mesmerized person, the body lies in a cataleptic condition, but the spirit has left it.

Perhaps you reply that the soul is there, but in a dormant condition. I answer that this is not so, otherwise how can one account for the condition of clairvoyance, which has fallen into disrepute through the knavery of certain scoundrels, but which can easily be shown to be an undoubted fact. I have been able myself, with a sensitive subject, to obtain an accurate description of what was going on in another room or another house. How can such knowledge be accounted for on any hypothesis save that the soul of the subject has left the body and is wandering through space? For a moment it is recalled by the voice of the operator and says what it has seen, and then wings its way once more through the air. Since the spirit is by its very nature invisible, we cannot see these comings and goings, but we see their effect in the body of the subject, now rigid and inert, now struggling to narrate impressions which could never have come to it by natural means. There is only one way which I can see by which the fact can be demonstrated. Although we in the flesh are unable to see these spirits, yet our own spirits, could we separate them from the body, would be conscious of the presence of others. It is my intention, therefore, shortly to mesmerize one of my pupils. I shall then mesmerize myself in a manner which has become easy to me. After that, if my theory holds good, my spirit will have no difficulty in meeting and communing with the spirit of my pupil, both being separated from the body. I hope to be able to communicate the result of this interesting experiment in an early number of the *Keinplatz wochenliche Medicalschrift*."

When the good Professor finally fulfilled his promise, and published an account of what occurred, the narrative was so extraordinary that it was received with general incredulity. The tone of some of the papers was so offensive in their comments upon the matter that the angry savant declared that he would never open his mouth again or refer to the subject in any way—a promise which he has faithfully kept. This narrative has been compiled, however, from the most

authentic sources, and the events cited in it may be relied upon as substantially correct.

It happened, then, that shortly after the time when Professor von Baumgarten conceived the idea of the above-mentioned experiment, he was walking thoughtfully homeward after a long day in the laboratory, when he met a crowd of roistering students who had just streamed out from a beerhouse. At the head of them, half-intoxicated and very noisy, was young Fritz von Hartmann. The Professor would have passed them, but his pupil ran across and intercepted him.

“Heh ! my worthy master,” he said, taking the old man by the sleeve, and leading him down the road with him. “There is something that I have to say to you, and it is easier for me to say it now, when the good beer is humming in my head, than at another time.”

“What is it, then, Fritz?” the physiologist asked, looking at him in mild surprise.

“I hear, mein herr, that you are about to do some wondrous experiment in which you hope to take a man’s soul out of his body, and then to put it back again. Is it not so?”

“It is true, Fritz.”

“And have you considered, my dear sir, that you may have some difficulty in finding someone on whom to try this? Potztausend! Suppose that the soul went out and would not come back. That would be a bad business. Who is to take the risk?”

“But, Fritz,” the Professor cried, very much startled by this view of the matter, “I had relied upon your assistance in the attempt. Surely you will not desert me. Consider the honor and glory.”

“Consider the fiddlesticks!” the student cried angrily. “Am I to be paid always thus? Did I not stand two hours upon a glass insulator while you poured electricity into my body? Have you not stimulated my phrenic nerves, besides ruining my digestion with a galvanic current round my stomach?”

Four-and-thirty times you have mesmerized me, and what have I got from all this? Nothing. And now you wish to take my soul out, as you would take the works from a watch. It is more than flesh and blood can stand."

"Dear, dear!" the Professor cried in great distress. "That is very true, Fritz. I never thought of it before. If you can but suggest how I can compensate you, you will find me ready and willing."

"Then listen," said Fritz solemnly. "If you will pledge your word that after this experiment I may have the hand of your daughter, then I am willing to assist you; but if not, I shall have nothing to do with it. These are my only terms."

"And what would my daughter say to this?" the Professor exclaimed, after a pause of astonishment.

"Elise would welcome it," the young man replied. "We have loved each other long."

"Then she shall be yours," the physiologist said with decision, "for you are a good-hearted man, and one of the best neurotic subjects that I have ever known—that is when you are not under the influence of alcohol. My experiment is to be performed upon the fourth of next month. You will attend at the physiological laboratory at twelve o'clock. It will be a great occasion, Fritz. Von Gruben is coming from Jena, and Hinterstein from Basle. The chief men of science of all South Germany will be there."

"I shall be punctual," the student said briefly; and so the two parted. The Professor plodded homeward, thinking of the great coming event, while the young man staggered along after his noisy companions, with his mind full of the blue-eyed Elise, and of the bargain which he had concluded with her father.

The Professor did not exaggerate when he spoke of the widespread interest excited by his novel psycho-physiological experiment. Long before the hour had arrived the room was filled by a galaxy of talent. Besides the celebrities whom he had mentioned, there had come from London the great Professor Lurcher, who had just

established his reputation by a remarkable treatise upon cerebral centers. Several great lights of the Spiritualistic body had also come a long distance to be present, as had a Swedenborgian minister, who considered that the proceedings might throw some light upon the doctrines of the Rosy Cross.

There was considerable applause from this eminent assembly upon the appearance of Professor von Baumgarten and his subject upon the platform. The lecturer, in a few well-chosen words, explained what his views were, and how he proposed to test them. "I hold," he said, "that when a person is under the influence of mesmerism, his spirit is for the time released from his body, and I challenge anyone to put forward any other hypothesis which will account for the fact of clairvoyance. I therefore hope that upon mesmerizing my young friend here, and then putting myself into a trance, our spirits may be able to commune together, though our bodies lie still and inert. After a time nature will resume her sway, our spirits will return into our respective bodies, and all will be as before. With your kind permission, we shall now proceed to attempt the experiment."

The applause was renewed at this speech, and the audience settled down in expectant silence. With a few rapid passes the Professor mesmerized the young man, who sank back in his chair, pale and rigid. He then took a bright globe of glass from his pocket, and by concentrating his gaze upon it and making a strong mental effort, he succeeded in throwing himself into the same condition. It was a strange and impressive sight to see the old man and the young sitting together in the same cataleptic condition. Whither, then, had their souls fled? That was the question which presented itself to each and every one of the spectators.

Five minutes passed, and then ten, and then fifteen, and then fifteen more, while the Professor and his pupil sat stiff and stark upon the platform. During that time not a sound

was heard from the assembled savants, but every eye was bent upon the two pale faces, in search of the first signs of returning consciousness. Nearly an hour had elapsed before the patient watchers were rewarded. A faint flush came back to the cheeks of Professor von Baumgarten. The soul was coming back once more to its earthly tenement. Suddenly he stretched out his long thin arms, as one awaking from sleep, and rubbing his eyes, stood up from his chair and gazed about him as though he hardly realized where he was. "Tausend Teufel!" he exclaimed, rapping out a tremendous South German oath, to the great astonishment of his audience and to the disgust of the Swedenborgian. "Where the Henker am I then, and what in thunder has occurred? Oh yes, I remember now. One of these nonsensical mesmeric experiments. There is no result this time, for I remember nothing at all since I became unconscious; so you have had all your long journeys for nothing, my learned friends, and a very good joke too;" at which the Regius Professor of Physiology burst into a roar of laughter and slapped his thigh in a highly indecorous fashion. The audience were so enraged at this unseemly behavior on the part of their host, that there might have been a considerable disturbance, had it not been for the judicious interference of young Fritz von Hartmann, who had now recovered from his lethargy. Stepping to the front of the platform, the young man apologized for the conduct of his companion. "I am sorry to say," he said, "that this is a harum-scarum sort of fellow, although he appeared so grave at the commencement of this experiment. He is still suffering from mesmeric reaction, and is hardly accountable for his words. As to the experiment itself, I do not consider it to be a failure. It is very possible that our spirits may have been communing in space during this hour; but, unfortunately, our gross bodily memory is distinct from our spirit, and we cannot recall what has occurred. My energies shall now be devoted to devising some means by which spirits may be able to recollect what occurs to them in their

free state, and I trust that when I have worked this out, I may have the pleasure of meeting you all once again in this hall, and demonstrating to you the result." This address, coming from so young a student, caused considerable astonishment among the audience, and some were inclined to be offended, thinking that he assumed rather too much importance. The majority, however, looked upon him as a young man of great promise, and many comparisons were made as they left the hall between his dignified conduct and the levity of his professor, who during the above remarks was laughing heartily in a corner, by no means abashed at the failure of the experiment.

Now although all these learned men were filing out of the lecture room under the impression that they had seen nothing of note, as a matter of fact one of the most wonderful things in the whole history of the world had just occurred before their very eyes. Professor von Baumgarten had been so far correct in his theory that both his spirit and that of his pupil had been for a time absent from his body. But here a strange and unforeseen complication had occurred. In their return the spirit of Fritz von Hartmann had entered into the body of Alexis von Baumgarten, and that of Alexis von Baumgarten had taken up its abode in the frame of Fritz von Hartmann. Hence the slang and scurrility which issued from the lips of the serious Professor, and hence also the weighty words and grave statements which fell from the careless student. It was an unprecedented event, yet no one knew of it, least of all those whom it concerned.

The body of the Professor, feeling conscious suddenly of a great dryness about the back of the throat, sallied out into the street, still chuckling to himself over the result of the experiment, for the soul of Fritz within was reckless at the thought of the bride whom he had won so easily. His first impulse was to go up to the house and see her, but on second thoughts he came to the conclusion that it would be best to stay away until Madame Baumgarten should be informed by her husband of the agreement which had been

made. He therefore made his way down to the Grüner Mann, which was one of the favorite trysting places of the wilder students, and ran, boisterously waving his cane in the air, into the little parlor, where sat Spiegler and Müller and half a dozen other boon companions.

“Ha, ha! my boys,” he shouted. “I knew I should find you here. Drink up, everyone of you, and call for what you like, for I’m going to stand treat today.”

Had the green man who is depicted upon the signpost of that well-known inn suddenly marched into the room and called for a bottle of wine, the students could not have been more amazed than they were by this unexpected entry of their revered professor. They were so astonished that for a minute or two they glared at him in utter bewilderment without being able to make any reply to his hearty invitation.

“Donner und Blitzen!” shouted the Professor angrily. “What the deuce is the matter with you, then? You sit there like a set of stuck pigs staring at me. What is it, then?”

“It is the unexpected honor,” stammered Spiegel, who was in the chair.

“Honor—rubbish!” said the Professor testily. “Do you think that just because I happen to have been exhibiting mesmerism to a parcel of old fossils, I am therefore too proud to associate with dear old friends like you? Come out of that chair, Spiegel my boy, for I shall preside now. Beer, or wine, or schnapps, my lads—call for what you like, and put it all down to me.”

Never was there such an afternoon in the Grüner Mann. The foaming flagons of lager and the green-necked bottles of Rhenish circulated merrily. By degrees the students lost their shyness in the presence of their Professor. As for him, he shouted, he sang, he roared, he balanced a long tobacco pipe upon his nose, and offered to run a hundred yards against any member of the company. The Kellner and the barmaid whispered to each other outside the door their astonishment at such proceedings on the part of a Regius

Professor of the ancient university of Keinplatz. They had still more to whisper about afterward, for the learned man cracked the Kellner's crown, and kissed the barmaid behind the kitchen door.

"Gentleman," said the Professor, standing up, albeit somewhat tot-teringly, at the end of the table, and balancing his high old-fashioned wineglass in his bony hand, "I must now explain to you what is the cause of this festivity."

"Hear! hear!" roared the students, hammering their beer glasses against the table; "a speech, a speech—silence for the speech!"

"That fact is, my friends," said the Professor, beaming through his spectacles, "I hope very soon to be married."

"Married!" cried a student, bolder than the others. "Is Madame dead, then?"

"Madame who?"

"Why, Madame von Baumgarten, of course."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the Professor; "I can see, then, that you know all about my former difficulties. No, she is not dead, but I have reason to believe that she will not oppose my marriage."

"That is very accommodating of her," remarked one of the company.

"In fact," said the Professor, "I hope that she will now be induced to aid me in getting a wife. She and I never took to each other very much; but now I hope all that may be ended, and when I marry she will come and stay with me."

"What a happy family!" exclaimed some wag.

"Yes, indeed; and I hope you will come to my wedding, all of you. I won't mention names, but here is to my little bride!" and the Professor waved his glass in the air.

"Here's to his little bride!" roared the roisterers, with shouts of laughter. "Here's her health. Sie soll leben—Hoch!" And so the fun waxed still more fast and furious, while each young fellow followed the Professor's example, and drank a toast to the girl of his heart.

While all this festivity had been going on at the Grüner Mann, a very different scene had been enacted elsewhere. Young Fritz von Hartmann, with a solemn face and a reserved manner, had, after the experiment, consulted and adjusted some mathematical instruments; after which with a few peremptory words to the janitors, he had walked out into the street and wended his way slowly in the direction of the house of the Professor. As he walked he saw Von Althaus, the professor of anatomy, in front of him, and quickening his pace he overtook him.

"I say, Von Althaus," he exclaimed, tapping him on the sleeve, "you were asking me for some information the other day concerning the middle coat of the cerebral arteries. Now I find—"

"Donnerwetter!" shouted Von Althaus, who was a peppery old fellow. "What the deuce do you mean by your impertinence! I'll have you up before the Academical Senate for this, sir;" with which threat he turned on his heel and hurried away. Von Hartmann was much surprised at this reception. "It's on account of this failure of my experiment," he said to himself, and continued moodily on his way.

Fresh surprises were in store for him, however. He was hurrying along when he was overtaken by two students. These youths, instead of raising their caps or showing any other sign of respect, gave a wild whoop of delight the instant that they saw him, and rushing at him, seized him by each arm and commenced dragging him along with them.

"Gott in himmel!" roared Von Hartmann. "What is the meaning of this unparalleled insult? Where are you taking me?"

"To crack a bottle of wine with us," said the two students. "Come along! That is an invitation which you have never refused."

"I never heard of such insolence in my life!" cried Von Hartmann. "Let go my arms! I shall certainly have you restituted for this. Let me go, I say!" and he kicked furiously at his captors.

“Oh, if you choose to turn ill-tempered, you may go where you like,” the students said, releasing him. “We can do very well without you.”

“I know you. I’ll pay you out,” said Von Hartmann furiously, and continued in the direction which he imagined to be his own home, much incensed at the two episodes which had occurred to him on the way.

Now, Madame von Baumgarten, who was looking out of the window and wondering why her husband was late for dinner, was considerably astonished to see the young student come stalking down the road. As already remarked, she had a great antipathy to him, and if ever he ventured into the house it was on sufferance, and under the protection of the Professor. Still more astonished was she, therefore, when she beheld him undo the wicket gate and stride up the garden path with the air of one who is master of the situation. She could hardly believe her eyes, and hastened to the door with all her maternal instincts up in arms. From the upper windows the fair Elise had also observed this daring move upon the part of her lover, and her heart beat quick with mingled pride and consternation.

“Good day, sir,” Madame Baumgarten remarked to the intruder, as she stood in gloomy majesty in the open doorway.

“A very fine day, indeed, Martha,” returned the other. “Now, don’t stand there like a statue of Juno, but bustle about and get the dinner ready, for I am well-nigh starved.”

“Martha! Dinner!” ejaculated the lady, falling back in astonishment.

“Yes, dinner, Martha, dinner!” howled Von Hartmann, who was becoming irritable. “Is there anything wonderful in that request when a man has been out all day? I’ll wait in the dining room. Anything will do. Schinken, and sausage, and prunes—any little thing that happens to be about. There you are, standing staring again. Woman, will you or will you not stir your legs?”

This last address, delivered with a perfect shriek of rage, had the effect of sending good Madame Baumgarten flying along the passage and through the kitchen, where she locked herself up in the scullery and went into violent hysterics. In the meantime Von Hartmann strode into the room and threw himself down upon the sofa in the worst of tempers.

“Elise!” he shouted. “Confound the girl! Elise!”

Thus roughly summoned, the young lady came timidly downstairs and into the presence of her lover. “Dearest!” she cried, throwing her arms round him, “I know this is all done for my sake! It is a *ruse* in order to see me.”

Von Hartmann’s indignation at this fresh attack upon him was so great that he became speechless for a minute with rage, and could only glare and shake his fists, while he struggled in her embrace. When he at last regained his utterance, he indulged in such a bellow of passion that the young lady dropped back, petrified with fear, into an armchair.

“Never have I passed such a day in my life,” Von Hartmann cried, stamping upon the floor. “My experiment failed. Von Althaus has insulted me. Two students have dragged me along the public road. My wife nearly faints when I ask her for dinner, and my daughter flies at me and hugs me like a grizzly bear.”

“You are ill, dear,” the young lady cried. “Your mind is wandering. You have not even kissed me once.”

“No, and I don’t intend to either,” Von Hartmann said with decision. “You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Why don’t you go and fetch my slippers, and help your mother to dish the dinner?”

“And is it for this,” Elise cried, burying her face in her handkerchief—“is it for this that I have loved you passionately for upward of ten months? Is it for this that I have braved my mother’s wrath? Oh, you have broken my heart; I am sure you have!” and she sobbed hysterically.

“I can’t stand much more of this,” roared Von Hartmann furiously. “What the deuce does the girl mean? What did I do ten months ago which inspired you with such a particular affection for me? If you are really so very fond, you would do better to run away down and find the schinken and some bread, instead of talking all this nonsense.”

“Oh, my darling!” cried the unhappy maiden, throwing herself into the arms of what she imagined to be her lover, “you do but joke in order to frighten your little Elise.”

Now it chanced that at the moment of this unexpected embrace Von Hartmann was still leaning back against the end of the sofa, which, like much German furniture, was in a somewhat rickety condition. It also chanced that beneath this end of the sofa there stood a tank full of water in which the physiologist was conducting certain experiments upon the ova of fish, and which he kept in his drawing room in order to insure an equable temperature. The additional weight of the maiden, combined with the impetus with which she hurled herself upon him, caused the precarious piece of furniture to give way, and the body of the unfortunate student was hurled backward into the tank, in which his head and shoulders were firmly wedged, while his lower extremities flapped helplessly about in the air. This was the last straw. Extricating himself with some difficulty from his unpleasant position, Von Hartmann gave an inarticulate yell of fury, and dashing out of the room, in spite of the entreaties of Elise, he seized his hat and rushed off into the town, all dripping and disheveled, with the intention of seeking in some inn the food and comfort which he could not find at home.

As the spirit of Von Baumgarten encased in the body of Von Hartmann strode down the winding pathway which led down to the little town, brooding angrily over his many wrongs, he became aware that an elderly man was approaching him who appeared to be in an advanced state of intoxication. Von Hartmann waited by the side of the road and watched this individual, who came stumbling along,

reeling from one side of the road to the other, and singing a student song in a very husky and drunken voice. At first his interest was merely excited by the fact of seeing a man of so venerable an appearance in such a disgraceful condition, but as he approached nearer, he became convinced that he knew the other well, though he could not recall when or where he had met him. This impression became so strong with him, that when the stranger came abreast of him he stepped in front of him and took a good look at his features.

“Well, sonny,” said the drunken man, surveying Von Hartmann and swaying about in front of him, “where the Henker have I seen you before? I know you as well as I know myself. Who the deuce are you?”

“I am Professor von Baumgarten,” said the student. “May I ask who you are? I am strongly familiar with your features.”

“You should never tell lies, young man,” said the other. “You’re certainly not the Professor, for he is an ugly snuffy old chap, and you are a big broad-shouldered young fellow. As to myself, I am Fritz von Hartmann at your service.”

“That you certainly are not,” exclaimed the body of Von Hartmann. “You might very well be his father. But hullo, sir, are you aware that you are wearing my studs and my watch chain?”

“Donnerwetter!” hiccoughed the other. “If those are not the trousers for which my tailor is about to sue me, may I never taste beer again.”

Now as Von Hartmann, overwhelmed by the many strange things which had occurred to him that day, passed his hand over his forehead and cast his eyes downward, he chanced to catch the reflection of his own face in a pool which the rain had left upon the road. To his utter astonishment he perceived that his face was that of a youth, that his dress was that of a fashionable young student, and that in every way he was the antithesis of the grave and scholarly figure in which his mind was wont to dwell. In an instant his active brain ran over the series of events which had occurred and sprang to the conclusion. He fairly reeled under the blow.

“Himmel!” he cried, “I see it all. Our souls are in the wrong bodies. I am you and you are I. My theory is proved—but at what an expense! Is the most scholarly mind in Europe to go about with this frivolous exterior? Oh the labors of a lifetime are ruined!” and he smote his breast in his despair.

“I say,” remarked the real Von Hartmann from the body of the Professor, “I quite see the force of your remarks, but don’t go knocking my body about like that. You received it in excellent condition, but I perceive that you have wet it and bruised it, and spilled snuff over my ruffled shirtfront.”

“It matters little,” the other said moodily. “Such as we are so must we stay. My theory is triumphantly proved, but the cost is terrible.”

“If I thought so,” said the spirit of the student, “it would be hard indeed. What could I do with these stiff old limbs, and how could I woo Elise and persuade her that I was not her father? No, thank Heaven, in spite of the beer which has upset me more than ever it could upset my real self, I can see a way out of it.”

“How?” gasped the Professor.

“Why, by repeating the experiment. Liberate our souls once more, and the chances are that they will find their way back into their respective bodies.”

No drowning man could clutch more eagerly to a straw than did Von Baumgarten’s spirit at this suggestion. In feverish haste he dragged his own frame to the side of the road and threw it into a mesmeric trance; he then extracted the crystal ball from the pocket, and managed to bring himself into the same condition.

Some students and peasants who chanced to pass during the next hour were much astonished to see the worthy Professor of Physiology and his favorite student both sitting upon a very muddy bank and both completely insensible. Before the hour was up quite a crowd had assembled, and they were discussing the advisability of sending for an ambulance to convey the pair to hospital, when the learned savant opened his eyes and gazed vacantly around him. For

an instant he seemed to forget how he had come there, but next moment he astonished his audience by waving his skinny arms above his head and crying in a voice of rapture, "Gott sei gedanket! I am myself again. I feel I am!" Nor was the amazement lessened when the student, springing to his feet, burst into the same cry, and the two performed a sort of *pas de joie* in the middle of the road.

For sometime after that people had some suspicion of the sanity of both the actors in this strange episode. When the Professor published his experiences in the *Medicalschrift* as he had promised, he was met by an intimation, even from his colleagues, that he would do well to have his mind cared for, and that another such publication would certainly consign him to a madhouse. The student also found by experience that it was wisest to be silent about the matter.

When the worthy lecturer returned home that night he did not receive the cordial welcome which he might have looked for after his strange adventures. On the contrary, he was roundly upbraided by both his female relatives for smelling of drink and tobacco, and also for being absent while a young scapegrace invaded the house and insulted its occupants. It was long before the domestic atmosphere of the lecturer's house resumed its normal quiet, and longer still before the genial face of Von Hartmann was seen beneath its roof. Perseverance, however, conquers every obstacle, and the student eventually succeeded in pacifying the enraged ladies and in establishing himself upon the old footing. He has now no longer any cause to fear the enmity of Madame, for he is Hauptmann von Hartmann of the Emperor's own Uhlans, and his loving wife Elise has already presented him with two little Uhlans as a visible sign and token of her affection.

DANGER!

It is an amazing thing that the English, who have the reputation of being a practical nation, never saw the danger to which they were exposed. For many years they had been spending nearly a hundred millions a year upon their army and their fleet. Squadrons of dreadnoughts costing two millions each had been launched. They had spent enormous sums upon cruisers, and both their torpedo and their submarine squadrons were exceptionally strong. They were also by no means weak in their aerial power, especially in the matter of hydroplanes. Besides all this, their army was very efficient in spite of its limited numbers, and it was the most expensive in Europe. Yet when the day of trial came, all this imposing force was of no use whatever, and might as well have not existed. Their ruin could not have been more complete or more rapid if they had not possessed an ironclad or a regiment. And all this was accomplished by me, Captain John Sirius, belonging to the navy of one of the smallest powers in Europe, and having under my command a flotilla of eight vessels, the collective cost of which was eighteen hundred thousand pounds. No one has a better right to tell the story than I.

I will not trouble you about the dispute concerning the Colonial frontier, embittered, as it was, by the subsequent death of the two missionaries. A naval officer has nothing to do with politics. I only came upon the scene after the ultimatum had been actually received. Admiral Horli had been summoned to the Presence, and he asked that I should be allowed to accompany him, because he happened to know that I had some clear ideas as to the weak points of England and also some schemes as to how to take advantage of them. There were only four of us present at

this meeting—the King, the Foreign Secretary, Admiral Horli, and myself. The time allowed by the ultimatum expired in forty-eight hours.

I am not breaking any confidence when I say that both the King and the Minister were in favor of a surrender. They saw no possibility of standing up against the colossal power of Great Britain. The Minister had drawn up an acceptance of the British terms, and the King sat with it before him on the table. I saw the tears of anger and humiliation run down his cheeks as he looked at it.

“I fear that there is no possible alternative, Sire,” said the Minister. “Our envoy in London has just sent this report, which shows that the public and the Press are more united than he has ever known them. The feeling is intense, especially since the rash act of Malort in desecrating the flag. We must give way.”

The King looked sadly at Admiral Horli.

“What is your effective fleet, Admiral?” he asked.

“Two battleships, four cruisers, twenty torpedo boats, and eight submarines,” said the Admiral.

The King shook his head.

“It would be madness to resist,” said he.

“And yet, Sire,” said the Admiral, “before you come to a decision I should wish you to hear Captain Sirius, who has a very definite plan of campaign against the English.”

“Absurd!” said the King, impatiently. “What is the use? Do you imagine that you could defeat their vast armada?”

“Sire,” I answered, “I will stake my life that if you will follow my advice you will, within a month or six weeks at the utmost, bring proud England to her knees.” There was an assurance in my voice which arrested the attention of the King.

“You seem self-confident, Captain Sirius.”

“I have no doubt at all, Sire.”

“What then would you advise?”

“I would advise, Sire, that the whole fleet be gathered under the forts of Blankenberg and be protected from attack by booms and piles. There they can stay till the war is over. The eight submarines, however, you will leave in my charge to use as I think fit.”

“Ah, you would attack the English battleships with submarines?”

“Sire, I would never go near an English battleship.”

“And why not?”

“Because they might injure me, Sire.”

“What, a sailor and afraid?”

“My life belongs to the country, Sire. It is nothing. But these eight ships—everything depends upon them. I could not risk them. Nothing would induce me to fight.”

“Then what will you do?”

“I will tell you, Sire.”

And I did so. For half an hour I spoke. I was clear and strong and definite, for many an hour on a lonely watch I had spent in thinking out every detail. I held them enthralled. The King never took his eyes from my face. The Minister sat as if turned to stone.

“Are you sure of all this?”

“Perfectly, Sire.”

The King rose from the table.

“Send no answer to the ultimatum,” said he. “Announce in both Houses that we stand firm in the face of menace. Admiral Horli, you will in all respects carry out that which Captain Sirius may demand in furtherance of his plan. Captain Sirius, the field is clear. Go forth and do as you have said. A grateful King will know how to reward you.”

I need not trouble you by telling you the measures which were taken at Blankenberg, since, as you are aware, the fortress and the entire fleet were destroyed by the British within a week of the declaration of war. I will confine myself to my own plans, which had so glorious and final a result.

The fame of my eight submarines, *Alpha*, *Beta*, *Gamma*, *Theta*, *Delta*, *Epsilon*, *Iota*, and *Kappa*, has spread through the world to such an extent that people have begun to think that there was something peculiar in their form and capabilities. This is not so. Four of them, the *Delta*, *Epsilon*, *Iota*, and *Kappa*, were, it is true, of the very latest model, but had their equals (though not their superiors) in the navies of all the great powers. As to *Alpha*, *Beta*, *Gamma*, and *Theta*, they were by no means modern vessels, and found their prototypes in the old F class of British boats, having a submerged displacement of eight hundred tons, with heavy oil engines of sixteen hundred horsepower, giving them a speed of eighteen knots on the surface and of twelve knots submerged. Their length was one hundred and eighty-six and their breadth twenty-four feet. They had a radius of action of four thousand miles and a submerged endurance of nine hours. These were considered the latest word in 1915, but the four new boats exceeded them in all respects. Without troubling you with precise figures, I may say that they represented roughly a 25 percent advance upon the older boats, and were fitted with several auxiliary engines which were wanting in the others. At my suggestion, instead of carrying eight of the very large Bakdorf torpedoes, which are nineteen feet long, weigh half a ton, and are charged with two hundred pounds of wet guncotton, we had tubes designed for eighteen of less than half the size. It was my design to make myself independent of my base.

And yet it was clear that I must have a base, so I made arrangements at once with that object. Blankenberg was the last place I would have chosen. Why should I have a *port* of any kind? Ports would be watched or occupied. Anyplace would do for me. I finally chose a small villa standing alone nearly five miles from any village and thirty miles from any port. To this I ordered them to convey, secretly by night, oil, spare parts, extra torpedoes, storage batteries, reserve periscopes, and everything that I could need for refitting.

The little whitewashed villa of a retired confectioner—that was the base from which I operated against England.

The boats lay at Blankenberg, and thither I went. They were working frantically at the defenses, and they had only to look seaward to be spurred to fresh exertions. The British fleet was assembling. The ultimatum had not yet expired, but it was evident that a blow would be struck the instant that it did. Four of their airplanes, circling at an immense height, were surveying our defences. From the top of the lighthouse I counted thirty battleships and cruisers in the offing, with a number of the trawlers with which in the British service they break through the minefields. The approaches were actually sown with two hundred mines, half contact and half observation, but the result showed that they were insufficient to hold off the enemy, since three days later both town and fleet were speedily destroyed.

However, I am not here to tell you the incidents of the war, but to explain my own part in it, which had such a decisive effect upon the result. My first action was to send my four second-class boats away instantly to the point which I had chosen for my base. There they were to wait submerged, lying with negative buoyancy upon the sands in twenty feet of water, and rising only at night. My strict orders were that they were to attempt nothing upon the enemy, however tempting the opportunity. All they had to do was to remain intact and unseen until they received further orders. Having made this clear to Commander Panza, who had charge of this reserve flotilla, I shook him by the hand and bade him farewell, leaving with him a sheet of notepaper upon which I had explained the tactics to be used and given him certain general principles which he could apply as circumstances demanded.

My whole attention was now given to my own flotilla, which I divided into two divisions, keeping *Iota* and *Kappa* under my own command, while Captain Miriam had *Delta* and *Epsilon*. He was to operate separately in the British

Channel, while my station was the Straits of Dover. I made the whole plan of campaign clear to him. Then I saw that each ship was provided with all it could carry. Each had forty tons of heavy oil for surface propulsion and charging the dynamo which supplied the electric engines under water. Each had also eighteen torpedoes, as explained, and five hundred rounds for the collapsible quick-firing twelve-pounder which we carried on deck, and which, of course, disappeared into a watertight tank when we were submerged. We carried spare periscopes and a wireless mast, which could be elevated above the conning tower when necessary. There were provisions for sixteen days for the ten men who manned each craft. Such was the equipment of the four boats which were destined to bring to naught all the navies and armies of Britain. At sundown that day—it was April 10th—we set forth upon our historic voyage.

Miriam had got away in the afternoon, since he had so much farther to go to reach his station. Stephan of the *Kappa* started with me; but, of course, we realized that we must work independently, and that from that moment when we shut the sliding hatches of our conning towers on the still waters of Blankenberg Harbor it was unlikely that we should ever see each other again, though consorts in the same waters. I waved to Stephan from the side of my conning tower, and he to me. Then I called through the tube to my engineer (our water tanks were already filled and all Kingstons and vents closed) to put her full speed ahead.

Just as we came abreast of the end of the pier and saw the white-capped waves rolling in upon us, I put the horizontal rudder hard down and she slid under water. Through my glass portholes I saw its light green change to a dark blue, while the manometer in front of me indicated twenty feet. I let her go to forty, because I should then be under the warships of the English, though I took the chance of fouling the moorings of our own floating contact mines. Then I brought her on an even keel, and it was music to my

ear to hear the gentle, even ticking of my electric engines and to know that I was speeding at twelve miles an hour on my great task.

At that moment, as I stood controlling my levers in my tower, I could have seen, had my cupola been of glass, the vast shadows of the British blockaders hovering above me. I held my course due westward for ninety minutes, and then, by shutting off the electric engine without blowing out the water tanks, I brought her to the surface. There was a rolling sea and the wind was freshening, so I did not think it safe to keep my hatch open long, for so small is the margin of buoyancy that one must run no risks. But from the crests of the rollers I had a look backward at Blankenberg, and saw the black funnels and upper works of the enemy's fleet with the lighthouse and the castle behind them, all flushed with the pink glow of the setting sun. Even as I looked there was the boom of the great gun, and then another. I glanced at my watch. It was six o'clock. The time of the ultimatum had expired. We were at war.

There was no craft near us, and our surface speed is nearly twice that of our submerged, so I blew out the tanks and our whaleback came over the surface. All night we were steering southwest, making an average of eighteen knots. At about five in the morning, as I stood alone upon my tiny bridge, I saw, low down in the west, the scattered lights of the Norfolk coast. "Ah, Johnny, Johnny Bull," I said, as I looked at them, "you are going to have your lesson, and I am to be your master. It is I who have been chosen to teach you that one cannot live under artificial conditions and yet act as if they were natural ones. More foresight, Johnny, and less party politics—that is my lesson to you." And then I had a wave of pity, too, when I thought of those vast droves of helpless people, Yorkshire miners, Lancashire spinners, Birmingham metalworkers, the dockers and workers of London, over whose little homes I would bring the shadow of starvation. I seemed to see all those wasted, eager hands

held out for food and I, John Sirius, dashing it aside. Ah, well! war is war, and if one is foolish one must pay the price. Just before daybreak I saw the lights of a considerable town, which must have been Yarmouth, bearing about ten miles west-southwest on our starboard bow. I took her farther out, for it is a sandy, dangerous coast, with many shoals. At 5:30 we were abreast of the Lowestoft lightship. A coastguard was sending up flash signals which faded into a pale twinkle as the white dawn crept over the water. There was a good deal of shipping about, mostly fishing boats and small coasting craft, with one large steamer hull down to the west, and a torpedo destroyer between us and the land. It could not harm us, and yet I thought it as well that there should be no word of our presence, so I filled my tanks again and went down to ten feet. I was pleased to find that we got under in one hundred and fifty seconds. The life of one's boat may depend upon this when a swift craft comes suddenly upon you.

We were now within a few hours of our cruising ground, so I determined to snatch a rest, leaving Vornal in charge. When he woke me at ten o'clock we were running on the surface, and had reached the Essex coast off the Maplin Sands. With that charming frankness which is one of their characteristics, our friends of England had informed us by their Press that they had put a cordon of torpedo boats across the Straits of Dover to prevent the passage of submarines, which is about as sensible as to lay a wooden plank across a stream to keep the eels from passing. I knew that Stephan, whose station lay at the western end of the Solent, would have no difficulty in reaching it. My own cruising ground was to be the mouth of the Thames, and here I was at the very spot with my tiny *Iota*, my eighteen torpedoes, my quick-firing gun, and, above all, a brain that knew what should be done and how to do it.

When I resumed my place in the conning tower I saw in the periscope (for we had dived) that a lightship was within

a few hundred yards of us upon the port bow. Two men were sitting on her bulwarks, but neither of them cast an eye upon the little rod that clove the water so close to them. It was an ideal day for submarine action, with enough ripple upon the surface to make us difficult to detect, and yet smooth enough to give me a clear view. Each of my three periscopes had an angle of sixty degrees, so that between them I commanded a complete semicircle of the horizon. Two British cruisers were steaming north from the Thames within half a mile of me. I could easily have cut them off and attacked them had I allowed myself to be diverted from my great plan. Farther south a destroyer was passing westward to Sheerness. A dozen small steamers were moving about. None of these were worthy of my notice. Great countries are not provisioned by small steamers. I kept the engines running at the lowest pace which would hold our position under water, and, moving slowly across the estuary, I waited for what must assuredly come. I had not long to wait.

Shortly after one o'clock I perceived in the periscope a cloud of smoke to the south. Half an hour later a large steamer raised her hull, making for the mouth of the Thames. I ordered Vornal to stand by the starboard torpedo tube, having the other also loaded in case of a miss. Then I advanced slowly, for though the steamer was going very swiftly we could easily cut her off. Presently I laid the *Iota* in a position near which she must pass, and would very gladly have lain to, but could not for fear of rising to the surface. I therefore steered out in the direction from which she was coming. She was a very large ship, fifteen thousand tons at the least, painted black above and red below, with two cream-colored funnels. She lay so low in the water that it was clear she had a full cargo. At her bows were a cluster of men, some of them looking, I dare say, for the first time at the mother country. How little could they have guessed the welcome that was waiting them!

On she came with the great plumes of smoke floating from her funnels, and two white waves foaming from her cutwater. She was within a quarter of a mile. My moment had arrived. I signaled full speed ahead and steered straight for her course. My timing was exact. At a hundred yards I gave the signal, and heard the clank and swish of the discharge. At the same instant I put the helm hard down and flew off at an angle. There was a terrific lurch, which came from the distant explosion. For a moment we were almost on our side. Then, after staggering and trembling, the *Iota* came on an even keel. I stopped the engines, brought her to the surface, and opened the conning, while all my excited crew came crowding to the hatch to know what had happened.

The ship lay within two yards of us, and it was easy to see that she had her deathblow. She was already settling down by the stern. There was a sound of shouting and people running wildly about her decks. Her name was visible, the *Adela* of London, bound, as we afterward learned, from New Zealand with frozen mutton. Strange as it may seem to you, the notion of a submarine had never even now occurred to her people, and all were convinced that they had struck a floating mine. The starboard quarter had been blown in by the explosion, and the ship was sinking rapidly. Their discipline was admirable. We saw boat after boat slip down crowded with people as swiftly and quietly as if it were part of their daily drill. And suddenly, as one of the boats lay off waiting for the others, they caught a glimpse for the first time of my conning tower so close to them. I saw them shouting and pointing, while the men in the other boats got up to have a better look at us. For my part, I cared nothing, for I took it for granted that they already knew that a submarine had destroyed them. One of them clambered back into the sinking ship. I was sure that he was about to send a wireless message as to our presence. It mattered nothing, since, in any case, it must be known; otherwise I could easily have brought him down with a rifle. As it was, I

waved my hand to them, and they waved back at me. War is too big a thing to leave room for personal ill feeling, but it must be remorseless all the same.

I was still looking at the sinking *Adela* when Vornal, who was beside me, gave a sudden cry of warning and surprise, gripping me by the shoulder and turning my head. There behind us, coming up the fairway, was a huge black vessel with black funnels, flying the well-known house flag of the P. and O. Company. She was not a mile distant, and I calculated in an instant that even if she had seen us she would not have time to turn and get away before we could reach her. We went straight for her, therefore, keeping awash just as we were. They saw the sinking vessel in front of them and that little dark speck moving over the surface, and they suddenly understood their danger. I saw a number of men rush to the bows, and there was a rattle of rifle fire. Two bullets were flattened upon our four-inch armor. You might as well try to stop a charging bull with paper pellets as the *Iota* with rifle fire. I had learned my lesson from the *Adela*, and this time I had the torpedo discharged at a safer distance—two hundred and fifty yards. We caught her amidships and the explosion was tremendous, but we were well outside its area. She sank almost instantaneously.

I am sorry for her people, of whom I hear that more than two hundred, including seventy Lascars and forty passengers, were drowned. Yes, I am sorry for them. But when I think of the huge floating granary that went to the bottom, I rejoice as a man does who has carried out that which he plans.

It was a bad afternoon that for the P. and O. Company. The second ship which we destroyed was, as we have since learned, the *Moldavia*, of fifteen thousand tons, one of their finest vessels; but about half past three we blew up the *Cusco*, of eight thousand, of the same line, also from Eastern ports, and laden with corn. Why she came on in face

of the wireless messages, which must have warned her of danger, I cannot imagine. The other two steamers which we blew up that day, the *Maid of Athens* (Robson Line) and the *Cormorant*, were neither of them provided with apparatus, and came blindly to their destruction. Both were small boats of from five thousand to seven thousand tons. In the case of the second, I had to rise to the surface and fire six twelve-pound shells under her waterline before she would sink. In each case the crew took to the boats, and so far as I know no casualties occurred.

After that no more steamers came along, nor did I expect them. Warnings must by this time have been flying in all directions. But we had no reason to be dissatisfied with our first day. Between the Maplin Sands and Nore we had sunk five ships of a total tonnage of about fifty thousand tons. Already the London markets would begin to feel the pinch. And Lloyd's—poor old Lloyd's—what a demented state it would be in! I could imagine the London evening papers and the howling in Fleet Street. We saw the result of our actions, for it was quite laughable to see the torpedo boats buzzing like angry wasps out of Sheerness in the evening. They were darting in every direction across the estuary, and the airplanes and hydroplanes were like flights of crows, black dots against the red western sky. They quartered the whole river mouth, until they discovered us at last. Some sharp-sighted fellow with a telescope on board of a destroyer got a sight of our periscope, and came for us full speed. No doubt he would very gladly have rammed us, even if it had meant his own destruction, but that was not part of our program at all. I sank her and ran her east-southeast with an occasional rise. Finally we brought her to, not very far from the Kentish coast, and the searchlights of our pursuers were far on the western skyline. There we lay quietly all night, for a submarine at night is nothing more than a very third-rate surface torpedo boat. Besides, we were all weary and needed rest. Do not forget, you captains of men, when you

grease and trim your pumps and compressors and rotators, that the human machine needs some tending also.

I had put up the wireless mast above the conning tower, and had no difficulty in calling up Captain Stephan. He was lying, he said, off Ventnor, and had been unable to reach his station on account of engine trouble, which he had now set right. Next morning he proposed to block the Southampton approach. He had destroyed one large Indian boat on his way down Channel. We exchanged good wishes. Like myself, he needed rest. I was up at four in the morning, however, and called all hands to overhaul the boat. She was somewhat up by the head, owing to the forward torpedoes having been used, so we trimmed her by opening the forward compensating tank, admitting as much water as the torpedoes had weighed. We also overhauled the starboard air compressor and one of the periscope motors which had been jarred by the shock of the first explosion. We had hardly got ourselves shipshape when the morning dawned.

I have no doubt that a good many ships which had taken refuge in the French ports at the first alarm had run across and got safely up the river in the night. Of course I could have attacked them, but I do not care to take risks—and there are always risks at night. But one had miscalculated his time, and there she was, just abreast of Warden Point, when the daylight disclosed her to us. In an instant we were after her. It was a near thing, for she was a flyer, and could do two miles to our one; but we just reached her as she went swashing by. She saw us at the last moment, for I attacked her awash, since otherwise we could not have had the pace to reach her. She swung away and the first torpedo missed, but the second took her full under the counter. Heavens, what a smash! The whole stern seemed to go aloft. I drew off and watched her sink. She went down in seven minutes, leaving her masts and funnels over the water and a cluster of her people holding on to them. She was the *Virginia* of the Bibby Line—twelve thousand tons—

and laden, like the others, with foodstuffs from the East. The whole surface of the sea was covered with the floating grain. "John Bull will have to take up a hole or two of his belt if this goes on," said Vornal, as we watched the scene.

And it was at that moment that the very worst danger occurred that could befall us. I tremble now when I think how our glorious voyage might have been nipped in the bud. I had freed the hatch of my tower and was looking at the boats of the *Virginia* with Vornal beside me, when there was a swish and a terrific splash in the water beside us, which covered us both with spray. We looked up, and you can imagine our feelings when we saw an airplane hovering a few hundred feet above us like a hawk. With its silencer, it was perfectly noiseless, and had its bomb not fallen into the sea we should never have known what had destroyed us. She was circling round in the hope of dropping a second one, but we shoved on all speed ahead, crammed down the rudders, and vanished into the side of a roller. I kept the deflection indicator falling until I had put fifty good feet of water between the airplane and ourselves, for I knew well how deep they can see under the surface. However, we soon threw her off our track, and when we came to the surface near Margate there was no sign of her, unless she was one of several which we saw hovering over Herne Bay.

There was not a ship in the offing save a few small coasters and little thousand-ton steamers, which were beneath my notice. For several hours I lay submerged with a blank periscope. Then I had an inspiration. Orders had been Marconied to every food ship to lie in French waters and dash across after dark. I was as sure of it as if they had been recorded in our own receiver. Well, if they were there, that was where I should be also. I blew out the tanks and rose, for there was no sign of any warship near. They had some good system of signaling from the shore, however, for I had not got the North Foreland before three destroyers came foaming after me, all converging from different directions.

They had about as good a chance of catching me as three spaniels would of overtaking a porpoise. Out of pure bravado—I know it was very wrong—I waited until they were actually within gunshot. Then I sank and we saw each other no more.

It is, as I have said, a shallow, sandy coast, and submarine navigation is very difficult. The worst mishap that can befall a boat is to bury its nose in the side of a sand drift and be held there. Such an accident might have been the end of our boat, though with our Fluess cylinders and electric lamps we should have found no difficulty in getting out at the air lock and in walking ashore across the bed of the ocean. As it was, however, I was able, thanks to our excellent charts, to keep the channel and so to gain the open straits. There we rose about midday, but, observing a hydroplane at no great distance, we sank again for half an hour. When we came up for the second time, all was peaceful around us, and the English coast was lining the whole western horizon. We kept outside the Goodwins and straight down Channel until we saw a line of black dots in front of us, which I knew to be the Dover-Calais torpedo-boat cordon. When two miles distant we dived and came up again seven miles to the southwest, without one of them dreaming that we had been within thirty feet of their keels.

When we rose, a large steamer flying the German flag was within half a mile of us. It was the North German Lloyd *Altona*, from New York to Bremen. I raised our whole hull and dipped our flag to her. It was amusing to see the amazement of her people at what they must have regarded as our unparalleled impudence in those English-swept waters. They cheered us heartily, and the tricolor flag was dipped in greeting as they went roaring past us. Then I stood in to the French coast.

It was exactly as I had expected. There were three great British steamers lying at anchor in Boulogne, outer harbor. They were the *Cæsar*, the *King of the East*, and the *Pathfinder*, none less than ten thousand tons. I suppose they

thought they were safe in French waters, but what did I care about three-mile limits and international law! The view of my Government was that England was blockaded, food contraband, and vessels carrying it to be destroyed. The lawyers could argue about it afterward. My business was to starve the enemy anyway I could. Within an hour the three ships were under the waves and the *Iota* was steaming down the Picardy coast, looking for fresh victims. The Channel was covered with English torpedo boats buzzing and whirling like a cloud of midges. How they thought they could hurt me I cannot imagine, unless by accident I were to come up underneath one of them. More dangerous were the airplanes which circled here and there.

The water being calm, I had several times to descend as deep as a hundred feet before I was sure that I was out of their sight. After I had blown up the three ships at Boulogne I saw two airplanes flying down Channel, and I knew that they would head off any vessels which were coming up. There was one very large white steamer lying off Havre, but she steamed west before I could reach her. I dare say Stephan or one of the others would get her before long. But those infernal airplanes spoiled our sport for that day. Not another steamer did I see, save the never-ending torpedo boats. I consoled myself with the reflection, however, that no food was passing me on its way to London. That was what I was there for, after all. If I could do it without spending my torpedoes, all the better. Up to date I had fired ten of them and sunk nine steamers, so I had not wasted my weapons. That night I came back to the Kent coast and lay upon the bottom in shallow water near Dungeness.

We were all trimmed and ready at the first break of day, for I expected to catch some ships which had tried to make the Thames in the darkness and had miscalculated their time. Sure enough, there was a great steamer coming up Channel and flying the American flag. It was all the same to

me what flag she flew so long as she was engaged in conveying contraband of war to the British Isles. There were no torpedo boats about at the moment, so I ran out on the surface and fired a shot across at her bows. She seemed inclined to go on, so I put a second one just above her waterline on her port bow. She stopped then and a very angry man began to gesticulate from the bridge. I ran the *lota* almost alongside. "Are you the captain?" I asked.

"What the———" I won't attempt to reproduce his language.

"You have foodstuffs on board?" I said.

"It's an American ship, you blind beetle!" he cried. "Can't you see the flag? It's the *Vermondia* of Boston."

"Sorry, Captain," I answered. "I have really no time for words. Those shots of mine will bring the torpedo boats, and I dare say at this very moment your wireless is making trouble for me. Get your people into the boats."

I had to show him I was not bluffing, so I drew off and began putting shells into him just on the waterline. When I had knocked six holes in his ship he was very busy on his boats. I fired twenty shots altogether, and no torpedo was needed, for she was lying over with a terrible list to port, and presently came right onto her side. There she lay for two or three minutes before she foundered. There were eight boats crammed with people lying round her when she went down. I believe everybody was saved, but I could not wait to inquire. From all quarters the poor old panting, useless war vessels were hurrying. I filled my tanks, ran our bows under, and came up fifteen miles to the south. Of course, I knew there would be a big row afterward—as there was—but that did not help the starving crowds round the London bakers, who only saved their skins, poor devils, by explaining to the mob that they had nothing to bake.

By this time I was becoming rather anxious, as you can imagine, to know what was going on in the world and what England was thinking about it all. I ran alongside a fishing

boat, therefore, and ordered them to give up their papers. Unfortunately, they had none, except a rag of an evening paper, which was full of nothing but betting news. In a second attempt I came alongside a small yachting party from Eastbourne, who were frightened to death at our sudden appearance out of the depths. From them we were lucky enough to get the London *Courier* of that very morning.

It was interesting reading—so interesting that I had to announce it all to the crew. Of course, you know the British style of headline, which gives you all the news at a glance. It seemed to me that the whole paper was headlines, it was in such a state of excitement. Hardly a word about me and my flotilla. We were on the second page. The first one began something like this:

CAPTURE OF BLANKENBERG!
DESTRUCTION OF ENEMY'S FLEET
BURNING OF TOWN
TRAWLERS DESTROY MINEFIELD LOSS OF TWO BATTLESHIPS
IS IT THE END?

Of course, what I had foreseen had occurred. The town was actually occupied by the British. And they thought it was the end! We would see about that.

On the round-the-corner page, at the back of the glorious resonant leaders, there was a little column which read like this:

HOSTILE SUBMARINES

Several of the enemy's submarines are at sea, and have inflicted some appreciable damage upon our merchant ships. The danger spots upon Monday and the greater part of Tuesday appear to have been the mouth of the Thames and the western entrance to the Solent.

On Monday, between the Nore and Margate, there were sunk five large steamers, the *Adela*, *Moldavia*, *Cuso*, *Cormorant*, and *Maid of Athens*, particulars of which will be found below. Near Ventnor on the same day was sunk the *Verulam*, from Bombay. On Tuesday the *Virginia*, *Cæsar*, *King of the East*, and *Pathfinder* were destroyed between the Foreland and Boulogne. The latter three were actually lying in French waters, and the most energetic representations have been made by the Government of the Republic. On the same day *The Queen of Sheba*, *Orontes*, *Diana*, and *Atalanta* were destroyed near the Needles. Wireless messages have stopped all ingoing cargo ships from coming up Channel, but unfortunately there is evidence that at least two of the enemy's submarines are in the west. Four cattle ships from Dublin to Liverpool were sunk yesterday evening, while three Bristol-bound steamers, *The Hilda*, *Mercury*, and *Maria Toser*, were blown up in the neighborhood of Lundy Island. Commerce has, so far as possible, been diverted into safer channels, but in the meantime, however vexatious these incidents may be, and however grievous the loss both to the owners and to Lloyd's, we may console ourselves by the reflection that since a submarine cannot keep the sea for more than ten days without refitting, and since the base has been captured, there must come a speedy term to these depredations.

So much for the *Courier's* account of our proceedings. Another small paragraph was, however, more eloquent:

The price of wheat [it said], which stood at thirty-five shillings a week before the declaration of war, was quoted yesterday on the Baltic at fifty-two. Maize has gone from twenty-one to thirty-seven, barley from nineteen to thirty-five, sugar (foreign granulated) from

eleven shillings and threepence to nineteen shillings and sixpence.

“Good, my lads!” I said when I read it to the crew. “I can assure you that those few lines will prove to mean more than the whole page about the fall of Blankenberg. Now let us get down Channel and send those prices up a little higher.”

All traffic had stopped from London—not so bad for the little *Iota*—and we did not see a steamer that was worth a torpedo between Dungeness and the Isle of Wight. There I called Stephan up by wireless, and by seven o’clock we were actually lying side by side in a smooth, rolling sea—Hengistbury Head bearing N.N.W. and about five miles distant. The two crews clustered on the whalebacks and shouted their joy at seeing friendly faces once more. Stephan had done extraordinarily well. I had, of course, read in the London paper of his four ships on Tuesday, but he had sunk no fewer than seven since, for many of those which should have come to the Thames had tried to make Southampton. Of the seven, one was of twenty thousand tons, a grain ship from America; a second was a grain ship from the Black Sea; and two others were great liners from South Africa. I congratulated Stephan with all my heart upon his splendid achievement. Then, as we had been seen by a destroyer which was approaching at a great pace, we both dived, coming up again off the Needles, where we spent the night in company. We could not visit each other, since we had no boat, but we lay so nearly alongside that we were able, Stephan and I, to talk from hatch to hatch and so make our plans.

He had shot away more than half his torpedoes and so had I, and yet we were very averse from returning to our base so long as our oil held out. I told him of my experience with the Boston steamer, and we mutually agreed to sink the ships by gunfire in future so far as possible. I remember

old Horli saying: "What use is a gun aboard a submarine?" We were about to show. I read the English paper to Stephan by the light of my electric torch, and we both agreed that few ships would now come up the Channel. That sentence about diverting commerce to safer routes could only mean that the ships would go round the north of Ireland and unload at Glasgow. Oh, for two more ships to stop that entrance! Heavens, what *would* England have done against a foe with thirty or forty submarines, since we only needed six instead of four to complete her destruction!

After much talk we decided that the best plan would be that I should dispatch a cipher telegram next morning from a French port to tell them to send the four second-rate boats to cruise off the north of Ireland and west of Scotland. Then when I had done this I should move down Channel with Stephan and operate at the mouth, while the other two boats could work in the Irish Sea. Having made these plans, I set off across the Channel in the early morning, reaching the small village of Etretat, in Brittany. There I got off my telegram and then laid my course for Falmouth, passing under the keels of two British cruisers which were making eagerly for Etretat, having heard by wireless that we were there.

Halfway down Channel we had trouble with a short circuit in our electric engines, and were compelled to run on the surface for several hours while we replaced one of the camshafts and renewed some washers. It was a ticklish time, for had a torpedo boat come upon us we could not have dived. The perfect submarine of the future will surely have some alternative engines for such an emergency. However, by the skill of Engineer Morrow we got things going once more. All the time we lay there I saw a hydroplane floating between us and the British coast. I can understand how a mouse feels when it is in a tuft of grass and sees a hawk high up in the heavens. However, all went well; the mouse became a water rat, it wagged its tail in

derision at the poor blind old hawk, and it dived down into a nice, safe, green, quiet world where there was nothing to injure it.

It was on Wednesday night that the *Iota* crossed to Etretat. It was Friday afternoon before we had reached our new cruising ground. Only one large steamer did I see upon our way. The terror we had caused had cleared the Channel. This big boat had a clever captain on board. His tactics were excellent and took him in safety to the Thames. He came zigzagging up Channel at twenty-five knots, shooting off from his course at all sorts of unexpected angles. With our slow pace we could not catch him, nor could we calculate his line so as to cut him off. Of course, he had never seen us, but he judged, and judged rightly, that wherever we were those were the tactics by which he had the best chance of getting past. He deserved his success.

But, of course, it is only in a wide channel that such things can be done. Had I met him in the mouth of the Thames there would have been a different story to tell. As I approached Falmouth I destroyed a three-thousand-ton boat from Cork, laden with butter and cheese. It was my only success for three days.

That night (Friday, April 16th) I called up Stephan, but received no reply. As I was within a few miles of our rendezvous, and as he would not be cruising after dark, I was puzzled to account for his silence. I could only imagine that his wireless was deranged. But, alas! I was soon to find the true reason from a copy of the *Western Morning News*, which I obtained from a Brixham trawler. The *Kappa*, with her gallant commander and crew, were at the bottom of the English Channel.

It appeared from this account that after I had parted from him he had met and sunk no fewer than five vessels. I gathered this to be his work, since all of them were by gunfire and all were on the south coast of Dorset or Devon. How he met his fate was stated in a short telegram which

was headed "Sinking of Hostile Submarine." It was marked "Falmouth," and ran thus:

The P. and O. mail steamer *Macedonia* came into this port last night with five shell holes between wind and water. She reports having been attacked by a hostile submarine ten miles to the southeast of the Lizard. Instead of using her torpedoes, the submarine for some reason approached upon the surface and fired five shots from a semiautomatic twelve-pounder gun. She was evidently under the impression that the *Macedonia* was unarmed. As a matter of fact, being warned of the presence of submarines in the Channel, the *Macedonia* had mounted her armament as an auxiliary cruiser. She opened fire with two quick-firers and blew away the conning tower of the submarine. It is probable that the shells went right through her, as she sank at once with her hatches open. The *Macedonia* was only kept afloat by her pumps.

Such was the end of the *Kappa* and my gallant friend, Commander Stephan. His best epitaph was in a corner of the same paper, and was headed, "Mark Lane." It ran: "Wheat (average) 66, maize 48, barley 50."

Well, if Stephan was gone there was the more need for me to show energy. My plans were quickly taken, but they were comprehensive. All that day (Saturday) I passed down the Cornish coast and round Land's End, getting two steamers on the way. I had learned from Stephan's fate that it was better to torpedo the large craft, but I was aware that the auxiliary cruisers of the British Government were all over ten thousand tons, so that for all ships under that size it was safe to use my gun. Both these craft, the *Yelland* and the *Playboy*—the latter an American ship—were perfectly harmless, so I came up within a hundred yards of them and speedily sank them, after allowing their people to get into

the boats. Some other steamers lay farther out, but I was so eager to make my new arrangements that I did not go out of my course to molest them. Just before sunset, however, so magnificent a prey came within my radius of action that I could not possibly refuse her.

No sailor could fail to recognize that glorious monarch of the sea, with her four cream funnels tipped with black, her huge black sides, her red bilges, and her high white top hamper, roaring up channel at twenty-three knots and carrying her forty-five thousand tons as lightly as if she were a five-ton motor boat. It was the queenly *Olympic* of the White Star Line—once the largest and still the comeliest of liners. What a picture she made, with the blue Cornish sea creaming round her giant forefoot, and the pink western sky with one evening star forming the background to her noble lines!

She was about five miles off when we dived to cut her off. My calculation was exact. As we came abreast we loosed our torpedo and struck her fair. We swirled round with the concussion of the water. I saw her in my periscope list over on her side, and I knew that she had her deathblow. She settled down slowly, and there was plenty of time to save her people. The sea was dotted with her boats. When I got about three miles off I rose to the surface, and the whole crew clustered up to see the wonderful sight. She dived bow foremost, and there was a terrific explosion, which sent one of the funnels into the air. I suppose we should have cheered—somehow none of us felt like cheering. We were all keen sailors, and it went to our hearts to see such a ship go down like a broken eggshell. I gave a gruff order, and all were at their posts again while we headed northwest. Once round the Land's End I called up my two consorts, and we met next day at Hartland Point, the south end of Bideford Bay. For the moment the Channel was clear, but the English could not know it, and I reckoned that the loss of the *Olympic* would stop all ships for a day or two at least.

Having assembled the *Delta* and *Epsilon*, one on each side of me, I received reports from Miriam and Var, the respective commanders. Each had expended twelve torpedoes, and between them they had sunk twenty-two steamers. One man had been killed by the machinery on board of the *Delta*, and two had been burned by the ignition of some oil on the *Epsilon*. I took these injured men on board, and I gave each of the boats one of my crew. I also divided my spare oil, my provisions, and my torpedoes among them, though we had the greatest possible difficulty in those crank vessels in transferring them from one to the other. However, by ten o'clock it was done, and the two vessels were in condition to keep the sea for another ten days. For my part, with only two torpedoes left, I headed north up the Irish Sea. One of my torpedoes I expended that evening upon a cattle ship making for Milford Haven. Late at night, being abreast of Holyhead, I called upon my four northern boats, but without reply. Their Marconi range is very limited. About three in the afternoon of the next day I had a feeble answer. It was a great relief to me to find that my telegraphic instructions had reached them and that they were on their station. Before evening we all assembled in the lee of Sanda Island, in the Mull of Kintyre. I felt an admiral indeed when I saw my five whalebacks all in a row. Panza's report was excellent. They had come round by the Pentland Firth and reached their cruising ground on the fourth day. Already they had destroyed twenty vessels without any mishap. I ordered the *Beta* to divide her oil and torpedoes among the other three, so that they were in good condition to continue their cruise. Then the *Beta* and I headed for home, reaching our base upon Sunday, April 25th. Off Cape Wrath I picked up a paper from a small schooner.

"Wheat, 84; maize, 60; barley, 62." What were battles and bombardments compared to that!

The whole coast of Norland was closely blockaded by cordon within cordon, and every port, even the smallest,

held by the British. But why should they suspect my modest confectioner's villa more than any other of the ten thousand houses that face the sea? I was glad when I picked up its homely white front in my periscope. That night I landed and found my stores intact. Before morning the *Beta* reported itself, for we had the windows lit as a guide.

It is not for me to recount the messages which I found waiting for me at my humble headquarters. They shall ever remain as the patents of nobility of my family. Among others was that never-to-be-forgotten salutation from my King. He desired me to present myself at Hauptville, but for once I took it upon myself to disobey his commands. It took me two days—or rather two nights, for we sank ourselves during the daylight hours—to get all our stores on board, but my presence was needful every minute of the time. On the third morning, at four o'clock, the *Beta* and my own little flagship were at sea once more, bound for our original station off the mouth of the Thames.

I had no time to read our papers while I was refitting, but I gathered the news after we got under way. The British occupied all our ports, but otherwise we had not suffered at all, since we have excellent railway communications with Europe. Prices had altered little, and our industries continued as before. There was talk of a British invasion, but this I knew to be absolute nonsense, for the British must have learned by this time that it would be sheer murder to send transports full of soldiers to sea in the face of submarines. When they have a tunnel they can use their fine expeditionary force upon the Continent, but until then it might just as well not exist so far as Europe is concerned. My own country, therefore, was in good case and had nothing to fear. Great Britain, however, was already feeling my grip upon her throat. As in normal times four fifths of her food is imported, prices were rising by leaps and bounds. The supplies in the country were beginning to show signs of depletion, while little was coming in to replace them. The

insurance at Lloyd's had risen to a figure which made the price of food prohibitive to the mass of the people by the time it had reached the market. The loaf, which under ordinary circumstances stood at five-pence, was already at one and twopence. Beef was three shillings and fourpence a pound, and mutton two shillings and ninepence. Everything else was in proportion. The Government had acted with energy and offered a big bounty for corn to be planted at once. It could only be reaped five months hence, however, and long before then, as the papers pointed out, half the island would be dead from starvation.

Strong appeals had been made to the patriotism of the people, and they were assured that the interference with trade was temporary, and that with a little patience all would be well. But already there was a marked rise in the death rate, especially among children, who suffered from want of milk, the cattle being slaughtered for food. There was serious rioting in the Lanarkshire coalfields and in the Midlands, together with a Socialistic upheaval in the East of London, which had assumed the proportions of a civil war. Already there were responsible papers which declared that England was in an impossible position, and that an immediate peace was necessary to prevent one of the greatest tragedies in history. It was my task now to prove to them that they were right.

It was May 2 when I found myself back at the Maplin Sands to the north of the estuary of the Thames. The *Beta* was sent on to the Solent to block it and take the place of the lamented *Kappa*. And now I was throttling Britain indeed—London, Southampton, the Bristol Channel, Liverpool, the North Channel, the Glasgow approaches, each was guarded by my boats. Great liners were, as we learned afterward, pouring their supplies into Galway and the west of Ireland, where provisions were cheaper than has ever been known. Tens of thousands were embarking from Britain for Ireland in order to save themselves from starvation. But you cannot

transplant a whole dense population. The main body of the people, by the middle of May, were actually starving. At that date wheat was at a hundred, maize and barley at eighty. Even the most obstinate had begun to see that the situation could not possibly continue.

In the great towns starving crowds clamored for bread before the municipal offices, and public officials everywhere were attacked and often murdered by frantic mobs, composed largely of desperate women who had seen their infants perish before their eyes. In the country, roots, bark, and weeds of every sort were used as food. In London the private mansions of Ministers were guarded by strong pickets of soldiers, while a battalion of Guards was camped permanently round the Houses of Parliament. The lives of the Prime Minister and of the Foreign Secretary were continually threatened and occasionally attempted. Yet the Government had entered upon the war with the full assent of every party in the state. The true culprits were those, be they politicians or journalists, who had not the foresight to understand that unless Britain grew her own supplies, or unless by means of a tunnel she had some way of conveying them into the island, all her mighty expenditure upon her army and her fleet was a mere waste of money so long as her antagonist had a few submarines and men who could use them. England has often been stupid, but has got off scot free.

This time she was stupid and had to pay the price. You can't expect luck to be your savior always.

It would be a mere repetition of what I have already described if I were to recount all our proceedings during that first ten days after I resumed my station. During my absence the ships had taken heart and had begun to come up again. In the first day I got four. After that I had to go farther afield, and again I picked up several in French waters. Once I had a narrow escape through one of my Kingston valves getting some grit into it and refusing to act

when I was below the surface. Our margin of buoyancy just carried us through. By the end of that week the channel was clear again, and both *Beta* and my own boat were down west once more. There we had encouraging messages from our Bristol consort, who in turn had heard from *Delta* at Liverpool. Our task was completely done. We could not prevent all food from passing into the British Islands, but at least we had raised what did get in to a price which put it far beyond the means of the penniless, workless multitudes. In vain Government commandeered it all and doled it out as a general feeds the garrison of a fortress. The task was too great—the responsibility too horrible. Even the proud and stubborn English could not face it any longer.

I remember well how the news came to me. I was lying at the time off Selsey Bill when I saw a small war vessel coming down channel. It had never been my policy to attack any vessel coming down. My torpedoes and even my shells were too precious for that. I could not help being attracted, however, by the movements of this ship, which came slowly zigzagging in my direction.

“Looking for me,” thought I. “What on earth does the foolish thing hope to do if she could find me?”

I was lying awash at the time and got ready to go below in case she should come for me. But at that moment—she was about half a mile away—she turned her quarter, and there, to my amazement, was the red flag with the blue circle, our own beloved flag, flying from her peak. For a moment I thought that this was some clever dodge of the enemy to tempt me within range. I snatched up my glasses and called on Vornal. Then we both recognized the vessel. It was the *Juno*, the only one left intact of our own cruisers. What could she be doing flying the flag in the enemy’s waters? Then I understood it, and, turning to Vornal, we threw ourselves into each other’s arms. It could only mean an armistice—or peace!

And it was peace. We learned the glad news when we had risen alongside the *Juno*, and the ringing cheers which greeted us had at last died away. Our orders were to report ourselves at once at Blankenberg. Then she passed on down channel to collect the others. We returned to port upon the surface, steaming through the whole British fleet as we passed up the North Sea. The crews clustered thick along the sides of the vessels to watch us. I can see now their sullen, angry faces. Many shook their fists and cursed us as we went by. It was not that we had damaged them—I will do them the justice to say that the English, as the old Boer War has proved, bear no resentment against a brave enemy—but that they thought us cowardly to attack merchant ships and avoid the warships. It is like the Arabs, who think that flank attack is a mean, unmanly device. War is not merely a big game, my English friends. It is a desperate business to gain the upper hand, and one must use one's brain in order to find the weak spot of one's enemy. It is not fair to blame me if I have found yours. It was my duty. Perhaps those officers and sailors who scowled at the little *Iota* that May morning have by this time done me justice when the first bitterness of undeserved defeat was past.

Let others describe my entrance into Blankenberg; the mad enthusiasm of the crowds and the magnificent public reception of each successive boat as it arrived. Surely the men deserved the grant made them by the State which has enabled each of them to be independent for life. As a feat of endurance, that long residence in such a state of mental tension in cramped quarters, breathing an unnatural atmosphere, will long remain as a record. The country may well be proud of such sailors.

The terms of peace were not made onerous, for we were in no condition to make Great Britain our permanent enemy. We knew well that we had won the war by circumstances which would never be allowed to occur again, and that in a few years the island power would be as strong as ever—

stronger, perhaps—for the lesson that she had learned. It would be madness to provoke such an antagonist. A mutual salute of flags was arranged, the colonial boundary was adjusted by arbitration, and we claimed no indemnity beyond an undertaking on the part of Britain that she would pay any damages which an international court might award to France or to the United States for injury received through the operations of our submarines. So ended the war.

Of course England will not be caught napping in such a fashion again! Her foolish blindness is partly explained by her delusion that her enemy would not torpedo merchant vessels. Common sense should have told her that her enemy would play the game that suited them best—that they would not inquire what they could do, but they would do it first and talk about it afterward. The opinion of the whole world now is that if a blockade were proclaimed one might do what one could with those who tried to break it, and that it was as reasonable to prevent food from reaching England in wartime as it would be for a besieger to prevent the victualing of a beleaguered fortress.

I cannot end this account better than by quoting the first few paragraphs of a leader in the *Times*, which appeared shortly after the declaration of peace. It may be taken to epitomize the saner public opinion of England upon the meaning and lessons of the episode:

In all this miserable business [said the writer], which has cost the loss of a considerable portion of our merchant fleet, and more than fifty thousand civilian lives, there is just one consolation to be found. It lies in the fact that our temporary conqueror is a power which is not strong enough to reap the fruits of her victory. Had we endured this humiliation at the hands of any of the first-class powers, it would certainly have entailed the loss of all our Crown colonies and tropical possessions, besides the payment of a huge indemnity.

We were absolutely at the feet of our conqueror, and had no possible alternative but to submit to her terms, however onerous. Norland has had the good sense to understand that she must not abuse her temporary advantage, and has been generous in her dealings. In the grip of any other power we should have ceased to exist as an empire.

Even now we are not out of the wood. Someone may maliciously pick a quarrel with us before we get our house in order and use the easy weapon which has been demonstrated. It is to meet such a contingency that the Government has rushed enormous stores of food at the public expense into the country. In a very few months the new harvest will have appeared. On the whole we can face the immediate future without undue depression, though there remain some causes for anxiety. These will no doubt be energetically handled by this new and efficient Government which has taken the place of those discredited politicians who led us into a war without having foreseen how helpless we were against an obvious form of attack.

Already the lines of our reconstruction are evident. The first and most important is that our party men realize that there is something more vital than their academic disputes about free trade or protection, and that all theory must give way to the fact that a country is in an artificial and dangerous condition if she does not produce within her own borders sufficient food at least to keep life in her population. Whether this should be brought about by a tax upon foreign foodstuffs, or by a bounty upon home products, or by a combination of the two, is now under discussion. But all parties are combined upon the principle, and, though it will undoubtedly entail either a rise in prices or a deterioration in quality in the food of the working classes, they will at least be insured against so terrible a visitation as that which is fresh in our memories. At any

rate, we have got past the stage of argument. It *must* be so. The increased prosperity of the farming interest, and, as we will hope, the cessation of agricultural emigration, will be benefits to be counted against the obvious advantages.

The second lesson is the immediate construction of not one but two double-lined railways under the channel. We stand in a white sheet over the matter, since the project has always been discouraged in these columns, but we are prepared to admit that, had such railway communication been combined with adequate arrangements for forwarding supplies from Marseilles, we should have avoided our recent surrender. We still insist that we cannot trust entirely to a tunnel, since our enemy might have allies in the Mediterranean; but in a single contest with any power of the north of Europe it would certainly be of inestimable benefit. There may be dangers attendant upon the existence of a tunnel, but it must now be admitted that they are trivial compared to those which come from its absence. As to the building of large fleets of merchant submarines for the carriage of food, that is a new departure which will be an additional insurance against the danger which has left so dark a page in the history of our country.

THE AMERICAN'S TALE

It air strange, it air," he was saying as I opened the door of the room where our social little semiliterary society met; "but I could tell you queerer things than that 'ere—almighty queer things. You can't learn everything out of books, sirs, nohow. You see it ain't the men as can string English together and as has had good eddications as find themselves in the queer places I've been in. They're mostly rough men, sirs, as can scarce speak aright, far less tell with pen and ink the things they've seen; but if they could they'd make some of your European's har riz with astonishment. They would, sirs, you bet!"

His name was Jefferson Adams, I believe; I know his initials were J. A., for you may see them yet deeply whittled on the right-hand upper panel of our smoking-room door. He left us this legacy, and also some artistic patterns done in tobacco juice upon our Turkey carpet; but beyond these reminiscences our American storyteller has vanished from our ken. He gleamed across our ordinary quiet conviviality like some brilliant meteor, and then was lost in the outer darkness. That night, however, our Nevada friend was in full swing; and I quietly lit my pipe and dropped into the nearest chair, anxious not to interrupt his story.

"Mind you," he continued, "I hain't got no grudge against your men of science. I likes and respects a chap as can match every beast and plant, from a huckleberry to a grizzly with a jaw-breakin' name; but if you wants real interestin' facts, something a bit juicy, you go to your whalers and your frontiersmen, and your scouts and Hudson Bay men, chaps who mostly can scarce sign their names."

There was a pause here, as Mr. Jefferson Adams produced a long cheroot and lit it. We preserved a strict silence in the

room, for we had already learned that on the slightest interruption our Yankee drew himself into his shell again. He glanced round with a self-satisfied smile as he remarked our expectant looks, and continued through a halo of smoke.

“Now which of you gentlemen has ever been in Arizona? None, I’ll warrant. And of all English or Americans as can put pen to paper, how many has been in Arizona? Precious few, I calc’late. I’ve been there, sirs, lived there for years; and when I think of what I’ve seen there, why, I can scarce get myself to believe it now.

“Ah, there’s a country! I was one of Walker’s filibusters, as they chose to call us; and after we’d busted up, and the chief was shot, some of us made tracks and located down there. A reg’lar English and American colony, we was, with our wives and children, and all complete. I reckon there’s some of the old folk there yet, and that they hain’t forgotten what I’m agoing to tell you. No, I warrant they hain’t, never on this side of the grave, sirs.

“I’ve was talking about the country, though; and I guess I could astonish you considerable if I spoke of nothing else. To think of such a land being built for a few ‘Greasers’ and half-breeds! It’s a misusing of the gifts of Providence, that’s what I calls it. Grass as hung over a chap’s head as he rode through it, and trees so thick that you couldn’t catch a glimpse of blue sky for leagues and leagues, and orchids like umbrellas! Maybe some on you has seen a plant as they calls the ‘fly-catcher,’ in some parts of the States?”

“*Dianœa muscipula*,” murmured Dawson, our scientific man *par excellence*.

“Ah, ‘Die near a municipal,’ that’s him! You’ll see a fly stand on that ’ere plant, and then you’ll see the two sides of a leaf snap up together and catch it between them, and grind it up and mash it to bits, for all the world like some great sea squid with its beak; and hours after, if you open the leaf, you’ll see the body lying half-digested, and in bits. Well, I’ve seen those flytraps in Arizona with leaves eight

and ten feet long, and thorns or teeth a foot or more; why, they could— But darn it, I'm going too fast!

"It's about the death of Joe Hawkins I was going to tell you; 'bout as queer a thing, I reckon, as ever you heard tell on. There wasn't nobody in Montana as didn't know of Joe Hawkins—'Alabama' Joe, as he was called there. A reg'lar out and outer, he was, 'bout the darndest skunk as ever man clapt eyes on. He was a good chap enough, mind ye, as long as you stroked him the right way; but rile him anyhow, and he were worse nor a wildcat. I've seen him empty his six-shooter into a crowd as chanced to jostle him agoing into Simpson's bar when there was a dance on; and he bowied Tom Hooper 'cause he spilt his liquor over his weskit by mistake. No, he didn't stick at murder, Joe didn't; and he weren't a man to be trusted further nor you could see him.

"Now at the time I tell on, when Joe Hawkins was swaggerin' about the town and layin' down the law with his shootin' irons, there was an Englishman there of the name of Scott—Tom Scott, if I rec'lects aright. This chap Scott was a thorough Britisher (beggin' the present company's pardon), and yet he didn't freeze much to the British set there, or they didn't freeze much to him. He was a quiet simple man, Scott was—rather too quiet for a rough set like that; sneakin' they called him, but he weren't that. He kept hisself mostly apart, an' didn't interfere with nobody as long as he were left alone. Some said as how he'd been kinder ill-treated at home—been a Chartist, or something of that sort, and had to up stick and run; but he never spoke of it hisself, an' never complained. Bad luck or good, that chap kept a stiff lip on him.

"This chap Scott was a sort o' butt among the men about Montana, for he was so quiet an' simplelike. There was no party either to take up his grievances; for, as I've been saying, the Britishers hardly counted him one of them, and many a rough joke they played on him. He never cut up rough, but was polite to all hisself. I think the boys got to

think he hadn't much grit in him till he showed 'em their mistake.

"It was in Simpson's bar as the row got up, an' that led to the queer thing I was going to tell you of. Alabama Joe and one or two other rowdies were dead on the Britishers in those days, and they spoke their opinions pretty free, though I warned them as there'd be an almighty muss. That partic'lar night Joe was nigh half drunk, an' he swaggered about the town with his six-shooter, lookin' out for a quarrel. Then he turned into the bar where he know'd he'd find some o' the English as ready for one as he was hisself. Sure enough, there was half a dozen lounging about, an' Tom Scott standin' alone before the stove. Joe sat down by the table, and put his revolver and bowie down in front of him. 'Them's my arguments, Jeff,' he says to me, 'if any white-livered Britisher dares give me the lie.' I tried to stop him, sirs; but he weren't a man as you could easily turn, an' he began to speak in a way as no chap could stand. Why, even a 'Greaser' would flare up if you said as much of Greaserland! There was a commotion at the bar, an' every man laid his hands on his wepin's; but afore they could draw we heard a quiet voice from the stove: 'Say your prayers, Joe Hawkins; for, by Heaven, you're a dead man!' Joe turned round, and looked like grabbin' at his iron; but it weren't no manner of use. Tom Scott was standing up, covering him with his Derringer; a smile on his white face, but the very devil shining in his eye. 'It ain't that the old country has used me overwell,' he says, 'but no man shall speak agin it afore me, and live.' For a second or two I could see his finger tighten round the trigger, an' then he gave a laugh, an' threw the pistol on the floor. 'No,' he says, 'I can't shoot a half-drunk man. Take your dirty life, Joe, an' use it better nor you have done. You've been nearer the grave this night than you will be agin until your time comes. You'd best make tracks now, I guess. Nay, never look black at me, man; I'm not afeard at your shootin' iron. A bully's nigh always a coward.' And he swung contemptuously round, and

relit his half-smoked pipe from the stove; while Alabama slunk out o' the bar, with laughs of the Britishers ringing in his ears. I saw his face as he passed me, and on it I saw murder, sirs—murder, as plain as ever I seed anything in my life.

“I stayed in the bar after the row, and watched Tom Scott as he shook hands with the men about. It seemed kinder queer to me to see him smilin' and cheerfullike; for I knew Joe's bloodthirsty mind, and that the Englishman had small chance of ever seeing the morning. He lived in an out-of-the-way sort of place, you see, clean off the trail, and had to pass through the Flytrap Gulch to get to it. This here gulch was a marshy gloomy place, lonely enough during the day even; for it were always a creepy sort o' thing to see the great eight- and ten-foot leaves snapping up if aught touched them; but at night there were never a soul near. Some parts of the marsh, too, were soft and deep, and a body thrown in would be gone in the morning. I could see Alabama Joe crouchin' under the leaves of the great Flytrap in the darkest part of the gulch, with a scowl on his face and a revolver in his hand; I could see it, sirs, as plain as with my two eyes.

“ 'Bout midnight Simpson shuts up his bar, so out we had to go. Tom Scott started off for his three-mile walk at a slashing pace. I just dropped him a hint as he passed me, for I kinder liked the chap. 'Keep your Derringer loose in your belt, sir,' I says, 'for you might chance to need it.' He looked round at me with his quiet smile, and then I lost sight of him in the gloom. I never thought to see him again. He'd hardly gone afore Simpson comes up to me and says, 'There'll be a nice job in the Flytrap Gulch tonight, Jeff; the boys say that Hawkins started half an hour ago to wait for Scott and shoot him on sight. I calc'late the coroner'll be wanted tomorrow.'

“What passed in the gulch that night? It were a question as were asked pretty free next morning. A half-breed was in Ferguson's store after daybreak, and he said as he'd

chanced to be near the gulch 'bout one in the morning. It warn't easy to get at his story, he seemed so uncommon scared; but he told us, at last, as he'd heard the fearfulest screams in the stillness of the night. There weren't no shots, he said, but scream after scream, kinder muffled, like a man with a serapé over his head, an' in mortal pain. Abner Brandon and me, and a few more, was in the store at the time; so we mounted and rode out to Scott's house, passing through the gulch on the way. There weren't nothing partic'lar to be seen there—no blood nor marks of a fight, nor nothing; and when we gets up to Scott's house, out he comes to meet us as fresh as a lark. 'Hullo, Jeff!' says he, 'no need for the pistols after all. Come in an' have a cocktail, boys.' 'Did ye see or hear nothing as ye came home last night?' says I. 'No,' says he; 'all was quiet enough. An owl kinder moaning in the Flytrap Gulch—that was all. Come, jump off and have a glass.' 'Thank ye,' says Abner. So off we gets, and Tom Scott rode into the settlement with us when we went back.

"An all-fired commotion was on in Main Street as we rode into it. The 'Merican party seemed to have gone clean crazed. Alabama Joe was gone, not a darned particle of him left. Since he went out to the gulch nary eye had seen him. As we got off our horses there was a considerable crowd in front of Simpson's, and some ugly looks at Tom Scott, I can tell you. There was a clickin' of pistols, and I saw as Scott had his hand in his bosom too. There weren't a single English face about. 'Stand aside, Jeff Adams,' says Zebb Humphrey, as great a scoundrel as ever lived, 'you hain't got no hand in this game. Say, boys, are we, free Americans, to be murdered by any darned Britisher?' It was the quickest thing as ever I seed. There was a rush an' a crack; Zebb was down, with Scott's ball in his thigh, and Scott hisself was on the ground with a dozen men holding him. It weren't no use struggling, so he lay quiet. They seemed a bit uncertain what to do with him at first, but then one of Alabama's special chums put them up to it. 'Joe's gone,' he said;

'nothing ain't never surer nor that, an' there lies the man as killed him. Some on you knows as Joe went on business to the gulch last night; he never came back. That 'ere Britisher passed through after he'd gone; they'd had a row, screams is heard 'mong the great flytraps. I say agin he has played poor Joe some o' his sneakin' tricks, an' thrown him into the swamp. It ain't no wonder as the body is gone. But air we to stan' by and see English murderin' our own chums? I guess not. Let Judge Lynch try him, that's what I say.' 'Lynch him!' shouted a hundred angry voices—for all the ragtag an' bobtail o' the settlement was round us by this time. 'Here, boys, fetch a rope, and swing him up. Up with him over Simpson's door!' 'See here though,' says another, coming forward; 'let's hang him by the great flytrap in the gulch. Let Joe see as he's revenged, if so be as he's buried 'bout theer.' There was a shout for this, an' away they went, with Scott tied on his mustang in the middle, and a mounted guard, with cocked revolvers, round him; for we knew as there was a score or so Britishers about, as didn't seem to recognize Judge Lynch, and was dead on a free fight."

"I went out with them, my heart bleedin' for Scott, though he didn't seem a cent put out, he didn't. He were game to the backbone. Seems kinder queer, sirs, hangin' a man to a flytrap; but our'n were a reg'lar tree, and the leaves like a brace of boats with a hinge between 'em and thorns at the bottom.

"We passed down the gulch to the place where the great one grows, and there we seed it with the leaves, some open, some shut. But we seed something worse nor that. Standin' round the tree was some thirty men, Britishers all, an' armed to the teeth. They was waitin' for us evidently, an' had a businesslike look about 'em, as if they'd come for something and meant to have it. There was the raw material there for about as warm a scrimmidge as ever I seed. As we rode up, a great red-bearded Scotchman—Cameron were his name—stood out afore the rest, his revolver cocked in his hand. 'See here, boys,' he says, 'you've got no call to hurt a

hair of that man's head. You hain't proved as Joe is dead yet; and if you had, you hain't proved as Scott killed him. Anyhow, it were in self-defence; for you all know as he was lying in wait for Scott, to shoot him on sight; so I say agin, you hain't got no call to hurt that man; and what's more, I've got thirty six-barreled arguments against your doin' it.' 'It's an interestin' pint, and worth arguin' out,' said the man as was Alabama Joe's special chum. There was a clickin' of pistols, and a loosenin' of knives, and the two parties began to draw up to one another, an' it looked like a rise in the mortality of Montana. Scott was standing behind with a pistol at his ear if he stirred, lookin' quiet and composed as having no money on the table, when sudden he gives a start an' a shout as rang in our ears like a trumpet. 'Joe!' he cried, 'Joe! Look at him! In the Flytrap!' We all turned an' looked where he was pointin'. Jerusalem! I think we won't get that picter out of our minds agin. One of the great leaves of the Flytrap, that had been shut and touchin' the ground as it lay, was slowly rolling back upon its hinges. There, lying like a child in its cradle, was Alabama Joe in the hollow of the leaf. The great thorns had been slowly driven through his heart as it shut upon him. We could see as he'd tried to cut his way out, for there was a slit in the thick fleshy leaf, an' his bowie was in his hand; but it had smothered him first. He'd lain down on it likely to keep the damp off while he were awaitin' for Scott, and it had closed on him as you've seen your little hothouse ones do on a fly; an' there he were as we found him, torn and crushed into pulp by the great jagged teeth of the man-eatin' plant. There, sirs, I think you'll own as that's a curious story."

"And what became of Scott?" asked Jack Sinclair.

"Why, we carried him back on our shoulders, we did, to Simpson's bar, and he stood us liquors round. Made a speech too—a darned fine speech—from the counter. Somethin' about the British lion an' the 'Merican eagle walkin' arm in arm forever an' a day. And now, sirs, that yarn was long and my cheroot's out, so I reckon I'll make

tracks afore it's later"; and with a "Good-night!" he left the room.

"A most extraordinary narrative!" said Dawson. "Who should have thought a Dianœa had such power!"

"Deuced rum yarn!" said young Sinclair.

"Evidently a matter-of-fact truthful man," said the doctor.

"Or the most original liar that ever lived," said I.

I wonder which he was.

SELECTING A GHOST

I am sure that Nature never intended me to be a self-made man. There are times when I can hardly bring myself to realize that twenty years of my life were spent behind the counter of a grocer's shop in the East End of London, and that it was through such an avenue that I reached a wealthy independence and the possession of Goresthorpe Grange. My habits are Conservative, and my tastes refined and aristocratic. I have a soul which spurns the vulgar herd. Our family, the D'Odds, date back to a prehistoric era, as is to be inferred from the fact that their advent into British history is not commented on by any trustworthy historian. Some instinct tells me that the blood of a Crusader runs in my veins. Even now, after the lapse of so many years, such exclamations as 'By'r Lady!' rise naturally to my lips, and I feel that, should circumstances require it, I am capable of rising in my stirrups and dealing an infidel a blow—say with a mace—which would considerably astonish him.

Goresthorpe Grange is a feudal mansion—or so it was termed in the advertisement which originally brought it under my notice. Its right to this adjective had a most remarkable effect upon its price, and the advantages gained may possibly be more sentimental than real. Still, it is soothing to me to know that I have slits in my staircase through which I can discharge arrows; and there is a sense of power in the fact of possessing a complicated apparatus by means of which I am enabled to pour molten lead upon the head of the casual visitor. These things chime in with my peculiar humor, and I do not grudge to pay for them. I am proud of my battlements and of the circular uncovered sewer which girds me round. I am proud of my portcullis and

donjon and keep. There is but one thing wanting to round off the mediævalism of my abode, and to render it symmetrically and completely antique. Goresthorpe Grange is not provided with a ghost.

Any man with old-fashioned tastes and ideas as to how such establishments should be conducted would have been disappointed at the omission. In my case it was particularly unfortunate. From my childhood I had been an earnest student of the supernatural, and a firm believer in it. I have reveled in ghostly literature until there is hardly a tale bearing upon the subject which I have not perused. I learned the German language for the sole purpose of mastering a book upon demonology. When an infant I have secreted myself in dark rooms in the hope of seeing some of those bogies with which my nurse used to threaten me; and the same feeling is as strong in me now as then. It was a proud moment when I felt that a ghost was one of the luxuries which my money might command.

It is true that there was no mention of an apparition in the advertisement. On reviewing the mildewed walls, however, and the shadowy corridors, I had taken it for granted that there was such a thing on the premises. As the presence of a kennel presupposes that of a dog, so I imagined that it was impossible that such desirable quarters should be untenanted by one or more restless shades. Good heavens, what can the noble family from whom I purchased it have been doing during these hundreds of years! Was there no member of it spirited enough to make away with his sweetheart, or take some other steps calculated to establish a hereditary specter? Even now I can hardly write with patience upon the subject.

For a long time I hoped against hope. Never did rat squeak behind the wainscot, or rain drip upon the attic floor, without a wild thrill shooting through me as I thought that at last I had come upon traces of some unquiet soul. I felt no touch of fear upon these occasions. If it occurred in the nighttime, I would send Mrs. D'Odd—who is a strong-minded

woman—to investigate the matter while I covered up my head with the bedclothes and indulged in an ecstasy of expectation. Alas, the result was always the same! The suspicious sound would be traced to some cause so absurdly natural and commonplace that the most fervid imagination could not clothe it with any of the glamour of romance.

I might have reconciled myself to this state of things had it not been for Jorrocks of Havistock Farm. Jorrocks is a coarse, burly, matter-of-fact fellow whom I only happen to know through the accidental circumstances of his fields adjoining my demesne. Yet this man, though utterly devoid of all appreciation of archæological unities, is in possession of a well authenticated and undeniable specter. Its existence only dates back, I believe, to the reign of the Second George, when a young lady cut her throat upon hearing of the death of her lover at the battle of Dettingen. Still, even that gives the house an air of respectability, especially when coupled with bloodstains upon the floor. Jorrocks is densely unconscious of his good fortune; and his language when he reverts to the apparition is painful to listen to. He little dreams how I covet everyone of those moans and nocturnal wails which he describes with unnecessary objurgation. Things are indeed coming to a pretty pass when democratic specters are allowed to desert the landed proprietors and annul every social distinction by taking refuge in the house of the great unrecognized.

I have a large amount of perseverance. Nothing else could have raised me into my rightful sphere, considering the uncongenial atmosphere in which I spent the earlier part of my life. I felt now that a ghost must be secured, but how to set about securing one was more than either Mrs. D'Odd or myself was able to determine. My reading taught me that such phenomena are usually the outcome of crime. What crime was to be done, then, and who was to do it? A wild idea entered my mind that Watkins, the house steward, might be prevailed upon—for a consideration—to immolate

himself or someone else in the interests of the establishment. I put the matter to him in a half-jesting manner; but it did not seem to strike him in a favorable light. The other servants sympathized with him in his opinion—at least, I cannot account in any other way for their having left the house in a body the same afternoon.

“My dear,” Mrs. D’Odd remarked to me one day after dinner, as I sat moodily sipping a cup of sack—I love the good old names—“my dear, that odious ghost of Jorrocks’s has been gibbering again.”

“Let it gibber,” I answered recklessly.

Mrs. D’Odd struck a few chords on her virginal and looked thoughtfully into the fire.

“I’ll tell you what it is, Argentine,” she said at last, using the pet name which we usually substituted for Silas, “we must have a ghost sent down from London.”

“How can you be so idiotic, Matilda?” I remarked severely. “Who could get us such a thing?”

“My cousin, Jack Brocket, could,” she answered confidently.

Now, this cousin of Matilda’s was rather a sore subject between us. He was a rakish clever young fellow, who had tried his hand at many things, but wanted perseverance to succeed at any. He was, at that time, in chambers in London, professing to be a general agent, and really living, to a great extent, upon his wits. Matilda managed so that most of our business should pass through his hands, which certainly saved me a great deal of trouble; but I found that Jack’s commission was generally considerably larger than all the other items of the bill put together. It was this fact which made me feel inclined to rebel against any further negotiations with the young gentleman.

“Oh yes, he could,” insisted Mrs. D., seeing the look of disapprobation upon my face. “You remember how well he managed that business about the crest?”

“It was only a resuscitation of the old family coat-of-arms, my dear,” I protested.

Matilda smiled in an irritating manner. "There was a resuscitation of the family portraits, too, dear," she remarked. "You must allow that Jack selected them very judiciously."

I thought of the long line of faces which adorned two walls of my banqueting hall, from the burly Norman robber, through every gradation of casque, plume, and ruff, to the somber Chesterfieldian individual who appears to have staggered against a pillar in his agony at the return of a maiden MS. which he grips convulsively in his right hand. I was fain to confess that in that instance he had done his work well, and that it was only fair to give him an order—with the usual commission—for a family specter, should such a thing be attainable.

It is one of my maxims to act promptly when once my mind is made up. Noon of the next day found me ascending the spiral stone staircase which leads to Mr. Brocket's chambers, and admiring the succession of arrows and fingers upon the whitewashed wall, all indicating the direction of that gentleman's sanctum. As it happened, artificial aid of the sort were entirely unnecessary, as an animated flap dance overhead could proceed from no other quarter, though it was replaced by a deathly silence as I groped my way up the stair. The door was opened by a youth evidently astounded at the appearance of a client, and I was ushered into the presence of my young friend, who was writing furiously in a large ledger—upside down, as I afterward discovered.

After the first greetings, I plunged into business at once.

"Look here, Jack," I said, "I want you to get me a spirit, if you can."

"Spirits you mean!" shouted my wife's cousin, plunging his hand into the wastepaper basket and producing a bottle with the celerity of a conjuring trick. "Let's have a drink!"

I held up my hand as a mute appeal against such a proceeding so early in the day; but on lowering it again I found that I had almost involuntarily closed my fingers

round the tumbler which my adviser had pressed upon me. I drank the contents hastily off, lest anyone should come in upon us and set me down as a toper. After all, there was something very amusing about the young fellow's eccentricities.

"Not spirits," I explained smilingly; "an apparition—a ghost. If such a thing is to be had, I should be very willing to negotiate."

"A ghost for Goresthorpe Grange?" inquired Mr. Brocket, with as much coolness as if I had asked for a drawing room suite.

"Quite so," I answered.

"Easiest thing in the world," said my companion, filling up my glass again in spite of my remonstrance. "Let us see!" Here he took down a large red notebook, with all the letters of the alphabet in a fringe down the edge. "A ghost you said, didn't you? That's G. G—gems—gimlets—gaspipes—gauntlets—guns—galleys. Ah, here we are. Ghosts. Volume nine, section six, page forty-one. Excuse me." And Jack ran up a ladder and began rummaging among a pile of ledgers on a high shelf. I felt half inclined to empty my glass into the spittoon when his back was turned; but on second thoughts I disposed of it in a legitimate way.

"Here it is!" cried my London agent, jumping off the ladder with a crash, and depositing an enormous volume of manuscript upon the table. "I have all these things tabulated, so that I may lay my hands upon them in a moment. It's all right—it's quite weak" (here he filled our glasses again). "What were we looking up, again?"

"Ghosts," I suggested.

"Of course; page forty-one. Here we are. 'J. H. Fowler & Son, Dunkel Street, suppliers of mediums to nobility and gentry; charms sold—horoscopes cast.' Nothing in your line there, I suppose?"

I shook my head despondingly.

"Frederick Tabb," continued my wife's cousin, "sole channel of communications between the living and the

dead. Proprietor of the spirits of Byron, Kirke White, Grimaldi, Tom Cribb, and Inigo Jones. That's about the figure!"

"Nothing romantic enough there," I objected. "Good heavens! Fancy a ghost with a black eye and a handkerchief tied round its waist, or turning sommersaults, and saying, 'How are you tomorrow?' " The very idea made me so warm that I emptied my glass and filled it again.

"Here is another," said my companion, " 'Christopher McCarthy; biweekly séances—attended by all the eminent spirits of ancient and modern times. Nativities—charms—abracadabras, messages from the dead.' He might be able to help us. However, I shall have a hunt round myself tomorrow, and see some of these fellows. I know their haunts, and it's odd if I can't pick up something cheap. So there's an end of business," he concluded, hurling the ledger into the corner, "and now we'll have something to drink."

We had several things to drink—so many that my inventive faculties were dulled next morning, and I had some little difficulty in explaining to Mrs. D'Odd why it was that I hung my boots and spectacles upon a peg along with my other garments before retiring to rest. The new hopes excited by the confident manner in which my agent had undertaken the commission caused me to rise superior to alcoholic reaction, and I paced about the rambling corridors and old-fashioned rooms, picturing to myself the appearance of my expected acquisition, and deciding what part of the building would harmonize best with its presence. After much consideration, I pitched upon the banqueting hall as being, on the whole, most suitable for its reception. It was a long low room, hung round with valuable tapestry and interesting relics of the old family to whom it had belonged. Coats of mail and implements of war glimmered fitfully as the light of the fire played over them, and the wind crept under the door, moving the hangings to and fro with a ghastly rustling. At one end there was the raised dais, on

which in ancient times the host and his guests used to spread their table, while a descent of a couple of steps led to the lower part of the hall, where the vassals and retainers held wassail. The floor was uncovered by any sort of carpet, but a layer of rushes had been scattered over it by my direction. In the whole room there was nothing to remind one of the nineteenth century; except, indeed, my own solid silver plate, stamped with the resuscitated family arms, which was laid out upon an oak table in the center. This, I determined, should be the haunted room, supposing my wife's cousin to succeed in his negotiation with the spirit mongers. There was nothing for it now but to wait patiently until I heard some news of the result of his inquiries.

A letter came in the course of a few days, which, if it was short, was at least encouraging. It was scribbled in pencil on the back of a playbill, and sealed apparently with a tobacco stopper. "Am on the track," it said. "Nothing of the sort to be had from any professional spiritualist, but picked up a fellow in a pub yesterday who says he can manage it for you. Will send him down unless you wire to the contrary. Abrahams is his name, and he has done one or two of these jobs before." The letter wound up with some incoherent allusions to a cheque, and was signed by my affectionate cousin, John Brocket.

I need hardly say that I did not wire, but awaited the arrival of Mr. Abrahams with all impatience. In spite of my belief in the supernatural, I could scarcely credit the fact that any mortal could have such a command over the spirit world as to deal in them and barter them against mere earthly gold. Still, I had Jack's word for it that such a trade existed; and here was a gentleman with a Judaical name ready to demonstrate it by proof positive. How vulgar and commonplace Jorrocks's eighteenth-century ghost would appear should I succeed in securing a real mediæval apparition! I almost thought that one had been sent down in advance, for, as I walked round the moat that night before retiring to rest, I came upon a dark figure engaged in

surveying the machinery of my portcullis and drawbridge. His start of surprise, however, and the manner in which he hurried off into the darkness, speedily convinced me of his earthly origin, and I put him down as some admirer of one of my female retainers mourning over the muddy Hellespont which divided him from his love. Whoever he may have been, he disappeared and did not return, though I loitered about for some time in the hope of catching a glimpse of him and exercising my feudal rights upon his person.

Jack Bocket was as good as his word. The shades of another evening were beginning to darken round Goresthorpe Grange, when a peal at the outer bell, and the sound of a fly pulling up, announced the arrival of Mr. Abrahams. I hurried down to meet him, half expecting to see a choice assortment of ghosts crowding in at his rear. Instead, however, of being the sallow-faced melancholy-eyed man that I had pictured to myself, the ghost dealer was a sturdy little podgy fellow, with a pair of wonderfully keen sparkling eyes and a mouth which was constantly stretched in a good-humored, if somewhat artificial grin. His sole stock-in-trade seemed to consist of a small leather bag jealously locked and strapped, which emitted a metallic chink upon being placed on the stone flags of the hall.

“And how are you, sir?” he asked, wringing my hand with the utmost effusion. “And the missis, how is she? And all the others—’ow’s all their ’ealth?”

I intimated that we were all as well as could reasonably be expected; but Mr. Abrahams happened to catch a glimpse of Mrs. D’Odd in the distance, and at once plunged at her with another string of inquiries as to her health, delivered so volubly and with such an intense earnestness that I half expected to see him terminate his cross-examination by feeling her pulse and demanding a sight of her tongue. All this time his little eyes rolled round and round, shifting perpetually from the floor to the ceiling, and from the ceiling to the walls, taking in apparently every article of furniture in a single comprehensive glance.

Having satisfied himself that neither of us was in a pathological condition, Mr. Abrahams suffered me to lead him upstairs, where a repast had been laid out for him to which he did ample justice. The mysterious little bag he carried along with him, and deposited it under his chair during the meal. It was not until the table had been cleared and we were left together that he broached the matter on which he had come down.

“I understand,” he remarked, puffing at a trichinopoly, “that you want my ’elp in fitting up this ’ere ’ouse with a happarition.”

I acknowledged the correctness of his surmise, while mentally wondering at those restless eyes of his, which still danced about the room as if he were making an inventory of the contents.

“And you won’t find a better man for the job, though I says it as shouldn’t,” continued my companion. “Wot did I say to the young gent wot spoke to me in the bar of the Lame Dog? ‘Can you do it?’ says he. ‘Try me,’ says I, ‘Me and my bag. Just try me.’ I couldn’t say fairer than that.”

My respect for Jack Brocket’s business capacities began to go up very considerably. He certainly seemed to have managed the matter wonderfully well. “You don’t mean to say that you carry ghosts about in bags!” I remarked, with diffidence.

Mr. Abrahams smiled a smile of superior knowledge. “You wait,” he said; “give me the right place and the right hour, with a little of the essence of *Lucoptolycus*”—here he produced a small bottle from his waistcoat pocket—“and you won’t find no ghost that I ain’t up to. You’ll see them yourself, and pick your own, and I can’t say fairer than that.”

As all Mr. Abraham’s protestations of fairness were accompanied by a cunning leer and a wink from one or other of his wicked little eyes, the impression of candor was somewhat weakened.

“When you going to do it?” I asked reverentially.

“Ten minutes to one in the morning,” said Mr. Abrahams, with decision. “Some says midnight, but I says ten to one, when there ain’t such a crowd, and you can pick your own ghost. And now,” he continued, rising to his feet, “suppose you trot me round the premises, and let me see where you wants it; for there’s some places as attracts ’em, and some as they won’t hear of—not if there was no other place in the world.”

Mr. Abrahams inspected our corridors and chambers with a most critical and observant eye, fingering the old tapestry with the air of a connoisseur, and remarking in an undertone that it would, “match uncommon nice.” It was not until he reached the banqueting hall, however, which I had myself picked out, that his admiration reached the pitch of enthusiasm. “Ere’s the place!” he shouted, dancing, bag in hand, round the table on which my plate was lying, and looking not unlike some quaint little goblin himself. “Ere’s the place; we won’t get nothin’ to beat this! A fine room—noble, solid, none of your electroplate trash! That’s the way as things ought to be done, sir. Plenty of room for ’em to glide here. Send up some brandy and the box of weeds; I’ll sit here by the fire and do the preliminaries, which is more trouble than you’d think; for them ghosts carries on hawful at times, before they finds out who they’ve got to deal with. If you wait in the room they’d tear you to pieces as like as not. You leave me alone to tackle them, and at half past twelve come in, and I bet they’ll be quiet enough by then.”

Mr. Abrahams’s request struck me as a reasonable one, so I left him with his feet upon the mantelpiece, and his chair in front of the fire, fortifying himself with stimulants against his refractory visitors. From the room beneath, in which I sat with Mrs. D’Odd, I could hear that after sitting for some time he rose up, and paced about the hall with quiet impatient steps. We then heard him try the lock of the door, and afterward drag some heavy article of furniture in the direction of the window, on which, apparently, he mounted, for I heard the creaking of the rusty hinges of the diamond-

paned casement folded backward, and I knew it to be situated several feet above the little man's reach. Mrs. D'Odd says that she could distinguish his voice speaking in low and rapid whispers after this, but that may have been her imagination. I confess that I began to feel more impressed than I had deemed it possible to be. There was something awesome in the thought of the solitary mortal standing by the open window and summoning in from the gloom outside the spirits of the netherworld. It was with a trepidation which I could hardly disguise from Matilda that I observed that the clock was pointing to half past twelve, and that the time had come for me to share the vigil of my visitor.

He was sitting in his old position when I entered, and there were no signs of the mysterious movements which I had overheard, though his chubby face was flushed as with recent exertion.

"Are you succeeding all right?" I asked as I came in, putting on as careless an air as possible, but glancing involuntarily round the room to see if we were alone.

"Only your help is needed to complete the matter," said Mr. Abrahams, in a solemn voice. "You shall sit by me and partake of the essence of *Lucoptolycus*, which removes the scales from our earthly eyes. Whatever you may chance to see, speak not and make no movement, lest you break the spell." His manner was subdued, and his usual cockney vulgarity had entirely disappeared. I took the chair which he indicated, and awaited the result.

My companion cleared the rushes from the floor in our neighborhood, and, going down upon his hands and knees, described a half circle with chalk, which enclosed the fireplace and ourselves. Round the edge of this half circle he drew several hieroglyphics, not unlike the signs of the zodiac. He then stood up and uttered a long invocation, delivered so rapidly that it sounded like a single gigantic word in some uncouth guttural language. Having finished this prayer, if prayer it was, he pulled out the small bottle

which he had produced before, and poured a couple of teaspoonfuls of clear transparent fluid into a phial, which he handed to me with an intimation that I should drink it.

The liquid had a faintly sweet odor, not unlike the aroma of certain sorts of apples. I hesitated a moment before applying it to my lips, but an impatient gesture from my companion overcame my scruples, and I tossed it off. The taste was not unpleasant; and, as it gave rise to no immediate effects, I leaned back in my chair and composed myself for what was to come. Mr. Abrahams seated himself beside me, and I felt that he was watching my face from time to time while repeating some more of the invocations in which he had indulged before.

A sense of delicious warmth and languor began gradually to steal over me, partly, perhaps, from the heat of the fire, and partly from some unexplained cause. An uncontrollable impulse to sleep weighed down my eyelids, while, at the same time, my brain worked actively, and a hundred beautiful and pleasing ideas flitted through it. So utterly lethargic did I feel that, though I was aware that my companion put his hand over the region of my heart, as if to feel how it were beating, I did not attempt to prevent him, nor did I even ask him for the reason of his action. Everything in the room appeared to be reeling slowly, round in a drowsy dance, of which I was the center. The great elk's head at the far end wagged solemnly backward and forward, while the massive salvers on the tables performed cotillions with the claret cooler and the epergne. My head fell upon my breast from sheer heaviness, and I should have become unconscious had I not been recalled to myself by the opening of the door at the other end of the hall.

This door led on to the raised dais, which, as I mentioned, the heads of the house used to reserve for their own use. As it swung slowly back upon its hinges, I sat up in my chair, clutching at the arms, and staring with a horrified glare at the dark passage outside. Something was coming down it—something unformed and intangible, but still a *something*.

Dim and shadowy, I saw it flit across the threshold, while a blast of ice-cold air swept down the room, which seemed to blow through me, chilling my very heart. I was aware of the mysterious presence, and then I heard it speak in a voice like the sighing of an east wind among pine trees on the banks of a desolate sea.

It said: "I am the invisible nonentity. I have affinities and am subtle. I am electric, magnetic, and spiritualistic. I am the great ethereal sigh heaver. I kill dogs. Mortal, wilt thou choose me?"

I was about to speak, but the words seemed to be choked in my throat; and, before I could get them out, the shadow flitted across the hall and vanished in the darkness at the other side, while a long-drawn melancholy sigh quivered through the apartment.

I turned my eyes toward the door once more, and beheld, to my astonishment, a very small old woman, who hobbled along the corridor and into the hall. She passed backward and forward several times, and then, crouching down at the very edge of the circle upon the floor, she disclosed a face the horrible malignity of which shall never be banished from my recollection. Every foul passion appeared to have left its mark upon that hideous countenance.

"Ha! ha!" she screamed, holding out her wizened hands like the talons of an unclean bird. "You see what I am. I am the fiendish old woman. I wear snuff-colored silks. My curse descends on people. Sir Walter was partial to me. Shall I be thine, mortal?"

I endeavored to shake my head in horror; on which she aimed a blow at me with her crutch, and vanished with an eldritch scream.

By this time my eyes turned naturally toward the open door, and I was hardly surprised to see a man walk in of tall and noble stature. His face was deadly pale, but was surmounted by a fringe of dark hair which fell in ringlets down his back. A short pointed beard covered his chin. He was dressed in loose-fitting clothes, made apparently of

yellow satin, and a large white ruff surrounded his neck. He paced across the room with slow and majestic strides. When turning, he addressed me in a sweet, exquisitely modulated voice.

“I am the cavalier,” he remarked. “I pierce and am pierced. Here is my rapier. I clink steel. This is a bloodstain over my heart. I can emit hollow groans. I am patronized by many old Conservative families. I am the original manor house apparition. I work alone, or in company with shrieking damsels.”

He bent his head courteously, as though awaiting my reply, but the same choking sensation prevented me from speaking; and, with a deep bow, he disappeared.

He had hardly gone before a feeling of intense horror stole over me and I was aware of the presence of a ghastly creature in the room of dim outlines and uncertain proportions. One moment it seemed to pervade the entire apartment, while at another it would become invisible, but always leaving behind it a distinct consciousness of its presence. Its voice, when it spoke, was quavering and gusty. It said, “I am the leaver of footsteps and the spiller of goutts of blood. I tramp upon corridors. Charles Dickens has alluded to me. I make strange and disagreeable noises. I snatch letters and place invisible hands on people’s wrists. I am cheerful. I burst into peals of hideous laughter. Shall I do one now?” I raised my hand in a deprecating way, but too late to prevent one discordant outbreak which echoed through the room. Before I could lower it the apparition was gone.

I turned my head toward the door in time to see a man come hastily and stealthily into the chamber. He was a sunburned powerfully built fellow, with earrings in his ears and a Barcelona handkerchief tied loosely round his neck. His head was bent upon his chest, and his whole aspect was that of one afflicted by intolerable remorse. He paced rapidly backward and forward like a caged tiger, and I observed that a drawn knife glittered in one of his hands,

while he grasped what appeared to be a piece of parchment in the other. His voice, when he spoke, was deep and sonorous. He said, "I am a murderer. I am a ruffian. I crouch when I walk. I step noiselessly. I know something of the Spanish Main. I can do the lost treasure business. I have charts. Am able-bodied and a good walker. Capable of haunting a large park." He looked toward me beseechingly, but before I could make a sign I was paralyzed by the horrible sight which appeared at the door.

It was a very tall man, if indeed, it might be called a man, for the gaunt bones were protruding through the corroding flesh, and the features were of leaden hue. A winding sheet was wrapped round the figure, and formed a hood over the head, from under the shadow of which two fiendish eyes, deep set in their grisly sockets, blazed and sparkled like red hot coals. The lower jaw had fallen upon the breast, disclosing a withered shriveled tongue and two lines of black and jagged fangs. I shuddered and drew back as this fearful apparition advanced to the edge of the circle.

"I am the American blood curdler," it said, in a voice which seemed to come in a hollow murmur from the earth beneath it. "None other is genuine. I am the embodiment of Edgar Allan Poe. I am circumstantial and horrible. I am a low-caste spirit-subduing specter. Observe my blood and my bones. I am gristly and nauseous. No depending on artificial aid. Work with grave clothes, a coffin lid, and a galvanic battery. Turn hair white in a night." The creature stretched out its fleshless arms to me as if in entreaty, but I shook my head; and it vanished, leaving a low sickening repulsive odor behind it. I sank back in my chair, so overcome by terror and disgust that I would have very willingly resigned myself to dispensing with a ghost altogether, could I have been sure that this was the last of the hideous procession.

A faint sound of trailing garments warned me that it was not so. I looked up, and beheld a white figure emerging from the corridor into the light. As it stepped across the threshold I saw that it was that of a young and beautiful woman

dressed in the fashion of a bygone day. Her hands were clasped in front of her, and her pale proud face bore traces of passion and of suffering. She crossed the hall with a gentle sound, like the rustling of autumn leaves, and then, turning her lovely and unutterably sad eyes upon me, she said,

“I am the plaintive and sentimental, the beautiful and ill-used. I have been forsaken and betrayed. I shriek in the nighttime and glide down passages. My antecedents are highly respectable and generally aristocratic. My tastes are aesthetic. Old oak furniture like this would do, with a few more coats of mail and plenty of tapestry. Will you not take me?”

Her voice died away in a beautiful cadence as she concluded, and she held out her hands as if in supplication. I am always sensitive to female influences. Besides, what would Jorrocks’s ghost be to this! Could anything be in better taste? Would I not be exposing myself to the chance of injuring my nervous system by interviews with such creatures as my last visitor, unless I decided at once? She gave me a seraphic smile, as if she knew what was passing in my mind. That smile settled the matter. “She will do,” I cried; “I choose this one”; and as, in my enthusiasm, I took a step toward her I passed over the magic circle which had girdled me round.

“Argentine, we have been robbed!”

I had an indistinct consciousness of these words being spoken, or rather screamed, in my ear a great number of times without me being able to grasp their meaning. A violent throbbing in my head seemed to adapt itself to their rhythm, and I closed my eyes to the lullaby of “Robbed, robbed, robbed.” A vigorous shake caused me to open them again, however, and the sight of Mrs. D’Odd in the scantiest of costumes and most furious of tempers was sufficiently impressive to recall all my scattered thoughts, and make me realize that I was lying on my back on the floor, with my

head among the ashes which had fallen from last night's fire, and a small glass phial in my hand.

I staggered to my feet, but felt so weak and giddy that I was compelled to fall back into a chair. As my brain became clearer, stimulated by the exclamations of Matilda, I began gradually to recollect the events of the night. There was the door through which my supernatural visitors had filed. There was the circle of chalk with the hieroglyphics round the edge. There was the cigar box and brandy bottle which had been honored by the attentions of Mr. Abrahams. But the seer himself—where was he? And what was this open window with a rope running out of it? And where, O where, was the pride of Goresthorpe Grange, the glorious plate which was to have been the delectation of generations of D'Odds? And why was Mrs. D'Odd standing in the gray light of dawn, wringing her hands and repeating her monotonous refrain? It was only very gradually that my misty brain took these things in, and grasped the connection between them.

Reader, I have never seen Mr. Abrahams since, and have never seen the plate stamped with the resuscitated family crest; hardest of all, I have never caught a glimpse of the melancholy specter with the trailing garments, nor do I expect that I ever shall. In fact my night's experiences have cured me of my mania for the supernatural and quite reconciled me to inhabiting the humdrum nineteenth century edifice on the outskirts of London which Mrs. D. has long had in her mind's eye.

As to the explanation of all that occurred—that is a matter which is open to several surmises. That Mr. Abrahams, the ghost hunter, was identical with Jemmy Wilson, *alias* the Nottingham crackster, is considered more than probable at Scotland Yard, and certainly the description of that remarkable burglar tallied very well with the appearance of my visitor. The small bag which I have described was picked up in a neighboring field next day, and found to contain a choice assortment of jemmies and centerbits. Footmarks deeply imprinted in the mud on either side of the moat

showed that an accomplice from below had received the sack of precious metals which had been let down through the open window. No doubt the pair of scoundrels, while looking round for a job, had overheard Jack Brocket's indiscreet inquiries, and had promptly availed themselves of the tempting opening.

And now as to my less substantial visitors, and the curious grotesque vision which I had enjoyed—am I to lay it down to any real power over occult matters possessed by my Nottingham friend? For a long time I was doubtful upon the point, and eventually endeavored to solve it by consulting a well-known analyst and medical man, sending him the few drops of the so-called essence of *Lucoptolycus* which remained in my phial. I append the letter which I received from him, only too happy to have the opportunity of winding up my little narrative by the weighty words of a man of learning.

Arundel Street

Dear Sir,—Your very singular case has interested me extremely. The bottle which you sent contained a strong solution of chloral, and the quantity which you describe yourself as having swallowed must have amounted to at least eighty grains of the pure hydrate. This would of course have reduced you to a partial state of insensibility, gradually going on to complete coma. In this semiunconscious state of chloralism it is not unusual for circumstantial and *bizarre* visions to present themselves—more especially to individuals unaccustomed to the use of the drug. You tell me in your note that your mind was saturated with ghostly literature, and that you had long taken a morbid interest in classifying and recalling the various forms in which apparitions have been said to appear. You must also remember that you were expecting to see something of that very nature, and that your nervous system was worked up to an unnatural state of tension. Under the

circumstances, I think that, far from the sequel being an astonishing one, it would have been very surprising indeed to anyone versed in narcotics had you not experienced some such effects.—I remain, dear sir, sincerely yours,

T. E. Stube, M.D.

Argentine D'Odd, Esq.,
The Elms, Brixton

THE GREAT BROWN-PERICORD MOTOR

It was a cold, foggy, dreary evening in May. Along the Strand blurred patches of light marked the position of the lamps. The flaring shop windows flickered vaguely with steamy brightness through the thick and heavy atmosphere.

The high lines of houses which led down to the Embankment were all dark and deserted, or illuminated only by the glimmering lamp of the caretaker. At one point, however, there shone out from three windows upon the second floor a rich flood of light, which broke the somber monotony of the terrace. Passersby glanced up curiously, and drew each other's attention to the ruddy glare, for it marked the chambers of Francis Pericord, the inventor and electrical engineer. Long into the watches of the night the gleam of his lamps bore witness to the untiring energy and restless industry which was rapidly carrying him to the first rank in his profession.

Within the chamber sat two men. The one was Pericord himself—hawk-faced and angular, with the black hair and brisk bearing which spoke of his Celtic origin. The other—thick, sturdy, and blue-eyed, was Jeremy Brown, the well-known mechanic. They had been partners in many an invention, in which the creative genius of the one had been aided by the practical abilities of the other. It was a question among their friends as to which was the better man.

It was no chance visit which had brought Brown into Pericord's workshop at so late an hour. Business was to be done—business which was to decide the failure or success of months of work, and which might affect their whole careers. Between them lay a long brown table, stained and corroded by strong acids, and littered with giant carboys,

Faure's accumulators, voltaic piles, coils of wire, and great blocks of nonconducting porcelain. In the midst of all this lumber there stood a singular whizzing, whirring machine, upon which the eyes of both partners were riveted.

A small square metal receptacle was connected by numerous wires to a broad steel girdle, furnished on either side with two powerful projecting joints. The girdle was motionless, but the joints with the short arms attached to them flashed round every few seconds, with a pause between each rhythmic turn. The power which moved them came evidently from the metal box. A subtle odor of ozone was in the air.

"How about the flanges, Brown?" asked the inventor.

"They were too large to bring. They are seven foot by three. There is power enough there to work them however. I will answer for that."

"Aluminum with an alloy of copper?"

"Yes."

"See how beautifully it works." Pericord stretched out a thin, nervous hand, and pressed a button upon the machine. The joints revolved more slowly, and came presently to a dead stop. Again he touched a spring and the arms shivered and woke up again into their crisp metallic life. "The experimenter need not exert his muscular powers," he remarked. "He has only to be passive, and use his intelligence."

"Thanks to my motor," said Brown.

"*Our* motor," the other broke in sharply.

"Oh, of course," said his colleague impatiently. "The motor which you thought of, and which I reduced to practice—call it what you like."

"I call it the Brown-Pericord Motor," cried the inventor, with an angry flash of his dark eyes. "You worked out the details, but the abstract thought is mine, and mine alone."

"An abstract thought won't turn an engine," said Brown, doggedly.

“That was why I took you into partnership,” the other retorted, drumming nervously with his fingers upon the table. “I invent, you build. It is a fair division of labor.”

Brown pursed his lips, as though by no means satisfied upon the point. Seeing, however, that further argument was useless, he turned his attention to the machine, which was shivering and rocking with each swing of its arms, as though a very little more would send it skimming from the table.

“Is it not splendid?” cried Pericord.

“It is satisfactory,” said the more phlegmatic Anglo-Saxon.

“There’s immortality in it!”

“There’s money in it!”

“Our names will go down with Montgolfier’s.”

“With Rothschild’s, I hope.”

“No, no, Brown; you take too material a view,” cried the inventor, raising his gleaming eyes from the machine to his companion. “Our fortunes are a mere detail. Money is a thing which every heavy-witted plutocrat in the country shares with us. My hopes rise to something higher than that. Our true reward will come in the gratitude and goodwill of the human race.”

Brown shrugged his shoulders. “You may have my share of that,” he said. “I am a practical man. We must test our invention.”

“Where can we do it?”

“That is what I wanted to speak about. It must be absolutely secret. If we had private grounds of our own it would be an easy matter, but there is no privacy in London.”

“We must take it into the country.”

“I have a suggestion to offer,” said Brown. “My brother has a place in Sussex on the high land near Beachy Head. There is, I remember, a large and lofty barn near the house. Will is in Scotland, but the key is always at my disposal. Why not take the machine down tomorrow and test it in the barn?”

“Nothing could be better.”

“There is a train to Eastbourne at one.”

“I shall be at the station.”

“Bring the gear with you, and I will bring the flanges,” said the mechanic, rising. “Tomorrow will prove whether we have been following a shadow, or whether fortune is at our feet. One o’clock at Victoria.” He walked swiftly down the stair and was quickly reabsorbed into the flood of comfortless clammy humanity which ebbed and flowed along the Strand.

The morning was bright and springlike. A pale blue sky arched over London, with a few gauzy white clouds drifting lazily across it. At eleven o’clock Brown might have been seen entering the Patent Office with a great roll of parchment, diagrams, and plans under his arm. At twelve he emerged again smiling, and, opening his pocketbook, he packed away very carefully a small slip of official blue paper. At five minutes to one his cab rolled into Victoria Station. Two giant canvas-covered parcels, like enormous kites, were handed down by the cabman from the top, and consigned to the care of a guard. On the platform Pericord was pacing up and down, with long eager steps and swinging arms, a tinge of pink upon his sunken and sallow cheeks.

“All right?” he asked.

Brown pointed in answer to his baggage.

“I have the motor and the girdle already packed away in the guard’s van. Be careful, guard, for it is delicate machinery of great value. So! Now we can start with an easy conscience.”

At Eastbourne the precious motor was carried to a four-wheeler, and the great flanges hoisted on the top. A long drive took them to the house where the keys were kept, whence they set off across the barren Downs. The building which was their destination was a commonplace white-washed structure, with straggling stables and outhouses, standing in a grassy hollow which sloped down from the edge of the chalk cliffs. It was a cheerless house even when in use, but now with its smokeless chimneys and shuttered

windows it looked doubly dreary. The owner had planted a grove of young larches and firs around it, but the sweeping spray had blighted them, and they hung their withered heads in melancholy groups. It was a gloomy and forbidding spot.

But the inventors were in no mood to be moved by such trifles. The lonelier the place, the more fitted for their purpose. With the help of the cabman they carried their packages down the footpath, and laid them in the darkened dining room. The sun was setting as the distant murmur of wheels told them that they were finally alone.

Pericord had thrown open the shutters and the mellow evening light streamed in through the discolored windows. Brown drew a knife from his pocket and cut the packthread with which the canvas was secured. As the brown covering fell away it disclosed two great yellow metal fans. These he leaned carefully against the wall. The girdle, the connecting bands, and the motor were then in turn unpacked. It was dark before all was set out in order. A lamp was lit, and by its light the two men continued to tighten screws, clinch rivets, and make the last preparations for their experiment.

“That finishes it,” said Brown at last, stepping back and surveying the machine.

Pericord said nothing, but his face glowed with pride and expectation.

“We must have something to eat,” Brown remarked, laying out some provisions which he had brought with him.

“Afterward.”

“No, now,” said the stolid mechanic. “I am half starved.” He pulled up to the table and made a hearty meal, while his Celtic companion strode impatiently up and down, with twitching fingers and restless eyes.

“Now then,” said Brown, facing round, and brushing the crumbs from his lap, “who is to put it on?”

“I shall,” cried his companion eagerly. “What we do tonight is likely to be historic.”

“But there is some danger,” suggested Brown. “We cannot quite tell how it may act.”

“That is nothing,” said Pericord, with a wave of his hand.

“But there is no use our going out of our way to incur danger.”

“What then? One of us must do it.”

“Not at all. The motor would act equally well if attached to any inanimate object.”

“That is true,” said Pericord, thoughtfully.

“There are bricks by the barn. I have a sack here. Why should not a bagful of them take your place?”

“It is a good idea. I see no objection.”

“Come on then,” and the two sallied out, bearing with them the various sections of their machine. The moon was shining cold and clear though an occasional ragged cloud drifted across her face. All was still and silent upon the Downs. They stood and listened before they entered the barn, but not a sound came to their ears, save the dull murmur of the sea and the distant barking of a dog. Pericord journeyed backward and forward with all that they might need, while Brown filled a long narrow sack with bricks.

When all was ready, the door of the barn was closed, and the lamp balanced upon an empty packing case. The bag of bricks was laid upon two trestles, and the broad steel girdle was buckled round it. Then the great flanges, the wires, and the metal box containing the motor were in turn attached to the girdle. Last of all a flat steel rudder, shaped like a fish’s tail, was secured to the bottom of the sack.

“We must make it travel in a small circle,” said Pericord, glancing round at the bare high walls.

“Tie the rudder down at one side,” suggested Brown. “Now it is ready. Press the connection and off she goes!”

Pericord leaned forward, his long sallow face quivering with excitement. His white nervous hands darted here and there among the wires. Brown stood impassive with critical eyes. There was a sharp burr from the machine. The huge yellow wings gave a convulsive flap. Then another. Then a

third, slower and stronger, with a fuller sweep. Then a fourth which filled the barn with a blast of driven air. At the fifth the bag of bricks began to dance upon the trestles. At the sixth it sprang into the air, and would have fallen to the ground, but the seventh came to save it, and fluttered it forward through the air. Slowly rising, it flapped heavily round in a circle, like some great clumsy bird, filling the barn with its buzzing and whirring. In the uncertain yellow light of the single lamp it was strange to see the loom of the ungainly thing, flapping off into the shadows, and then circling back into the narrow zone of light.

The two men stood for a while in silence. Then Pericord threw his long arms up into the air.

“It acts!” he cried. “The Brown-Pericord Motor acts!” He danced about like a madman in his delight. Brown’s eyes twinkled, and he began to whistle.

“See how smoothly it goes, Brown!” cried the inventor. “And the rudder—how well it acts! We must register it tomorrow.”

His comrade’s face darkened and set. “It is registered,” he said, with a forced laugh.

“Registered?” said Pericord. “Registered?” He repeated the word first in a whisper, and then in a kind of scream. “Who has dared to register my invention?”

“I did this morning. There is nothing to be excited about. It is all right.”

“You registered the motor! Under whose name?”

“Under my own,” said Brown, sullenly. “I consider that I have the best right to it.”

“And my name does not appear?”

“No, but—”

“You villain!” screamed Pericord. “You thief and villain! You would steal my work! You would filch my credit! I will have that patent back if I have to tear your throat out!” A somber fire burned in his black eyes, and his hands writhed themselves together with passion. Brown was no coward, but he shrank back as the other advanced upon him.

“Keep your hands off!” he said, drawing a knife from his pocket. “I will defend myself if you attack me.”

“You threaten me?” cried Pericord, whose face was livid with anger. “You are a bully as well as a cheat. Will you give up the patent?”

“No, I will not.”

“Brown, I say, give it up!”

“I will not. I did the work.”

Pericord sprang madly forward with blazing eyes and clutching fingers. His companion writhed out of his grasp, but was dashed against the packing case, over which he fell. The lamp was extinguished, and the whole barn plunged into darkness. A single ray of moonlight shining through a narrow chink flickered over the great waving fans as they came and went.

“Will you give up the patent, Brown?”

There was no answer.

“Will you give it up?”

Again no answer. Not a sound save the humming and creaking overhead. A cold pang of fear and doubt struck through Pericord’s heart. He felt aimlessly about in the dark and his fingers closed upon a hand. It was cold and unresponsive. With all his anger turned to icy horror he struck a match, set the lamp up, and lit it.

Brown lay huddled up on the other side of the packing case. Pericord seized him in his arms, and with convulsive strength lifted him across. Then the mystery of his silence was explained. He had fallen with his right arm doubled up under him, and his own weight had driven the knife deeply into his body. He had died without a groan. The tragedy had been sudden, horrible, and complete.

Pericord sat silently on the edge of the case, staring blankly down, and shivering like one with the ague, while the great Pericord-Brown Motor boomed and hurtled above him. How long he sat there can never be known. It might have been minutes or it might have been hours. A thousand mad schemes flashed through his dazed brain. It was true

that he had been only the indirect cause. But who would believe that? He glanced down at his blood-spattered clothing. Everything was against him. It would be better to fly than to give himself up, relying upon his innocence. No one in London knew where they were. If he could dispose of the body he might have a few days clear before any suspicion would be aroused.

Suddenly a loud crash recalled him to himself. The flying sack had gradually risen with each successive circle until it had struck against the rafters. The blow displaced the connecting gear, and the machine fell heavily to the ground. Pericord undid the girdle. The motor was uninjured. A sudden, strange thought flashed upon him as he looked at it. The machine had become hateful to him. He might dispose both of it and the body in a way that would baffle all human search.

He threw open the barn door, and carried his companion out into the moonlight. There was a hillock outside, and on the summit of this he laid him reverently down. Then he brought from the barn the motor, the girdle, and the flanges. With trembling fingers he fastened the broad steel belt round the dead man's waist. Then he screwed the wings into the sockets. Beneath he slung the motor box, fastened the wires, and switched on the connection. For a minute or two the huge yellow fans flapped and flickered. Then the body began to move in little jumps down the side of the hillock, gathering a gradual momentum, until at last it heaved up into the air and soared heavily off in the moonlight. He had not used the rudder, but had turned the head for the south. Gradually the weird thing rose higher, and sped faster, until it passed over the line of cliff, and was sweeping over the silent sea. Pericord watched it with a white drawn face, until it looked like a black bird with golden wings half shrouded in the mist which lay over the waters.

In the New York State Lunatic Asylum there is a wild-eyed man whose name and birthplace are alike unknown. His

reason has been unseated by some sudden shock, the doctors say, though of what nature they are unable to determine. "It is the most delicate machine which is most readily put out of gear," they remark, and point, in proof of their axiom, to the complicated electric engines, and remarkable aeronautic machines which the patient is fond of devising in his more lucid moments.

THE TERROR OF BLUE JOHN GAP

The following narrative was found among the papers of Dr. James Hardcastle, who died of phthisis on February 4th, 1908, at 36, Upper Coventry Flats, South Kensington. Those who knew him best, while refusing to express an opinion upon this particular statement, are unanimous in asserting that he was a man of a sober and scientific turn of mind, absolutely devoid of imagination, and most unlikely to invent any abnormal series of events. The paper was contained in an envelope, which was docketed, "A Short Account of the Circumstances which Occurred near Miss Allerton's Farm in Northwest Derbyshire in the Spring of Last Year." The envelope was sealed, and on the other side was written in pencil:

DEAR SEATON,—It may interest, and perhaps pain, you to know that the incredulity with which you met my story has prevented me from ever opening my mouth upon the subject again. I leave this record after my death, and perhaps strangers may be found to have more confidence in me than my friend.

Inquiry has failed to elicit who this Seaton may have been. I may add that the visit of the deceased to Allerton's Farm, and the general nature of the alarm there, apart from his particular explanation, have been absolutely established. With this foreword I append his account exactly as he left it. It is in the form of a diary, some entries in which have been expanded, while a few have been erased.

April 17th.—Already I feel the benefit of this wonderful upland air. The farm of the Allertons lies fourteen hundred

and twenty feet above sea-level, so it may well be a bracing climate. Beyond the usual morning cough I have very little discomfort, and, what with the fresh milk and the home-grown mutton, I have every chance of putting on weight. I think Saunderson will be pleased.

The two Miss Allertons are charmingly quaint and kind, two dear little hard-working old maids, who are ready to lavish all the heart which might have gone out to husband and to children upon an invalid stranger. Truly, the old maid is a most useful person, one of the reserve forces of the community. They talk of the superfluous woman, but what would the poor superfluous man do without her kindly presence? By the way, in their simplicity they very quickly let out the reason why Saunderson recommended their farm. The Professor rose from the ranks himself, and I believe that in his youth he was not above scaring cows in those very fields.

It is a most lonely spot, and the walks are picturesque in the extreme. The farm consists of grazing land lying at the bottom of an irregular valley. On each side are the fantastic limestone hills, formed of rock so soft that you can break it away with your hands. All this country is hollow. Could you strike it with some gigantic hammer it would boom like a drum, or possibly cave in altogether and expose some huge subterranean sea. A great sea there must surely be, for on all sides the streams run into the mountain itself, never to reappear. There are gaps everywhere amid the rocks, and when you pass through them you find yourself in great caverns, which wind down into the bowels of the earth. I have a small bicycle lamp, and it is a perpetual joy to me to carry it into these weird solitudes, and to see the wonderful silver and black effects when I throw its light upon the stalactites which drape the lofty roofs. Shut off the lamp, and you are in the blackest darkness. Turn it on, and it is a scene from the Arabian Nights.

But there is one of these strange openings in the earth which has special interest, for it is the handiwork, not of

Nature, but of Man. I had never heard of Blue John when I came to these parts. It is the name given to a peculiar mineral of a beautiful purplish shade, which is only found at one or two places in the world. It is so rare that an ordinary vase of Blue John would be valued at a great price. The Romans, with that extraordinary instinct of theirs, discovered that it was to be found in this valley, and sank a horizontal shaft deep into the mountain side. The opening of their mine has been called Blue John Gap, a clean cut arch in the rock, the mouth all overgrown with bushes. It is a goodly passage which the Roman miners have cut, and it intersects some of the great water-worn caves, so that if you enter Blue John Gap you would do well to mark your steps and to have a good store of candles, or you may never make your way back to the daylight again. I have not yet gone deeply into it, but this very day I stood at the mouth of the arched tunnel, and peering down into the black recesses beyond I vowed that when my health returned I would devote some holiday to exploring those mysterious depths and finding out for myself how far the Roman had penetrated into the Derbyshire hills.

Strange how superstitious these countrymen are! I should have thought better of young Armitage, for he is a man of some education and character, and a very fine fellow for his station in life. I was standing at the Blue John Gap when he came across the field to me.

“Well, doctor,” said he, “you’re not afraid, anyhow.”

“Afraid!” I answered. “Afraid of what?”

“Of it,” said he, with a jerk of his thumb toward the black vault; “of the Terror that lives in the Blue John Cave.”

How absurdly easy it is for a legend to arise in a lonely countryside! I examined him as to the reasons for his weird belief. It seems that from time to time sheep have been missing from the fields, carried bodily away, according to Armitage. That they could have wandered away of their own accord and disappeared among the mountains was an explanation to which he would not listen. On one occasion a

pool of blood had been found, and some tufts of wool. That also, I pointed out, could be explained in a perfectly natural way. Further, the nights upon which sheep disappeared were invariably very dark, cloudy nights, with no moon. This I met with the obvious retort that those were the nights which a commonplace sheep stealer would naturally choose for his work. On one occasion a gap had been made in a wall, and some of the stones scattered for a considerable distance. Human agency again, in my opinion. Finally, Armitage clinched all his arguments by telling me that he had actually heard the Creature—indeed, that anyone could hear it who remained long enough at the Gap. It was a distant roaring of an immense volume. I could not but smile at this, knowing, as I do, the strange reverberations which come out of an underground water system running amid the chasms of a limestone formation. My incredulity annoyed Armitage, so that he turned and left me with some abruptness.

And now comes the queer point about the whole business. I was still standing near the mouth of the cave, turning over in my mind the various statements of Armitage and reflecting how readily they could be explained away, when suddenly, from the depth of the tunnel beside me, there issued a most extraordinary sound. How shall I describe it? First of all, it seemed to be a great distance away, far down in the bowels of the earth. Secondly, in spite of this suggestion of distance, it was very loud. Lastly, it was not a boom, nor a crash, such as one would associate with falling water or tumbling rock; but it was a high whine, tremulous and vibrating, almost like the whinnying of a horse. It was certainly a most remarkable experience, and one which for a moment, I must admit, gave a new significance to Armitage's words. I waited by the Blue John Gap for half an hour or more, but there was no return of the sound, so at last I wandered back to the farmhouse, rather mystified by what had occurred. Decidedly, I shall explore that cavern when my strength is restored. Of course, Armitage's

explanation is too absurd for discussion, and yet that sound was certainly very strange. It still rings in my ears as I write.

April 20th.—In the last three days I have made several expeditions to the Blue John Gap, and have even penetrated some short distance, but my bicycle lantern is so small and weak that I dare not trust myself very far. I shall do the thing more systematically. I have heard no sound at all, and could almost believe that I had been the victim of some hallucination, suggested, perhaps, by Armitage's conversation. Of course, the whole idea is absurd, and yet I must confess that those bushes at the entrance of the cave do present an appearance as if some heavy creature had forced its way through them. I begin to be keenly interested. I have said nothing to the Miss Allertons, for they are quite superstitious enough already, but I have bought some candles, and mean to investigate for myself.

I observed this morning that among the numerous tufts of sheep's wool which lay among the bushes near the cavern there was one which was smeared with blood. Of course, my reason tells me that if sheep wander into such rocky places they are likely to injure themselves, and yet somehow that splash of crimson gave me a sudden shock, and for a moment I found myself shrinking back in horror from the old Roman arch. A fetid breath seemed to ooze from the black depths into which I peered. Could it indeed be possible that some nameless thing, some dreadful presence, was lurking down yonder? I should have been incapable of such feelings in the days of my strength, but one grows more nervous and fanciful when one's health is shaken.

For the moment I weakened in my resolution, and was ready to leave the secret of the old mine, if one exists, forever unsolved. But tonight my interest has returned and my nerves grown more steady. Tomorrow I trust that I shall have gone more deeply into this matter.

April 22nd.—Let me try and set down as accurately as I can my extraordinary experience of yesterday. I started in the afternoon, and made my way to the Blue John Gap. I

confess that my misgivings returned as I gazed into its depths, and I wished that I had brought a companion to share my exploration. Finally, with a return of resolution, I lit my candle, pushed my way through the briars, and descended into the rocky shaft.

It went down at an acute angle for some fifty feet, the floor being covered with broken stone. Thence there extended a long, straight passage cut in the solid rock. I am no geologist, but the lining of this corridor was certainly of some harder material than limestone, for there were points where I could actually see the toolmarks which the old miners had left in their excavation, as fresh as if they had been done yesterday. Down this strange, old-world corridor I stumbled, my feeble flame throwing a dim circle of light around me, which made the shadows beyond the more threatening and obscure. Finally, I came to a spot where the Roman tunnel opened into a water-worn cavern—a huge hall, hung with long white icicles of lime deposit. From this central chamber I could dimly perceive that a number of passages worn by the subterranean streams wound away into the depths of the earth. I was standing there wondering whether I had better return, or whether I dare venture farther into this dangerous labyrinth, when my eyes fell upon something at my feet which strongly arrested my attention.

The greater part of the floor of the cavern was covered with boulders of rock or with hard incrustations of lime; but at this particular point there had been a drip from the distant roof, which had left a patch of soft mud. In the very center of this there was a huge mark—an ill-defined blotch, deep, broad, and irregular, as if a great boulder had fallen upon it. No loose stone lay near, however, nor was there anything to account for the impression. It was far too large to be caused by any possible animal, and, besides, there was only the one, and the patch of mud was of such a size that no reasonable stride could have covered it. As I rose from the examination of that singular mark and then looked

round into the black shadows which hemmed me in, I must confess that I felt for a moment a most unpleasant sinking of my heart, and that, do what I would, the candle trembled in my outstretched hand.

I soon recovered my nerve, however, when I reflected how absurd it was to associate so huge and shapeless a mark with the track of any known animal. Even an elephant could not have produced it. I determined, therefore, that I would not be scared by vague and senseless fears from carrying out my exploration. Before proceeding I took good note of a curious rock formation in the wall by which I could recognize the entrance of the Roman tunnel. The precaution was very necessary, for the great cave, so far as I could see it, was intersected by passages. Having made sure of my position, and reassured myself by examining my spare candles and my matches, I advanced slowly over the rocky and uneven surface of the cavern.

And now I come to the point where I met with such sudden and desperate disaster. A stream, some twenty feet broad, ran across my path, and I walked for some little distance along the bank to find a spot where I could cross dry-shod. Finally, I came to a place where a single flat boulder lay near the center, which I could reach in a stride. As it chanced, however, the rock had been cut away and made top-heavy by the rush of the stream, so that it tilted over as I landed on it, and shot me into the ice-cold water. My candle went out, and I found myself floundering about in an utter and absolute darkness.

I staggered to my feet again, more amused than alarmed by my adventure. The candle had fallen from my hand, and was lost in the stream; but I had two others in my pocket, so that it was of no importance. I got one of them ready, and drew out my box of matches to light it. Only then did I realize my position. The box had been soaked in my fall into the river. It was impossible to strike the matches.

A cold hand seemed to close round my heart as I realized my position. The darkness was opaque and horrible. It was

so utter that one put one's hand up to one's face as if to press off something solid. I stood still, and by an effort I steadied myself. I tried to reconstruct in my mind a map of the floor of the cavern as I had last seen it. Alas! the bearings which had impressed themselves upon my mind were high on the wall, and not to be found by touch. Still, I remembered in a general way how the sides were situated, and I hoped that by groping my way along them I would at last come to the opening of the Roman tunnel. Moving very slowly, and continually striking against the rocks, I set out on this desperate quest.

But I very soon realized how impossible it was. In that black, velvety darkness one lost all one's bearings in an instant. Before I had made a dozen paces I was utterly bewildered as to my whereabouts. The rippling of the stream, which was the one sound audible, showed me where it lay, but the moment that I left its bank I was utterly lost. The idea of finding my way back in absolute darkness through that limestone labyrinth was clearly an impossible one.

I sat down upon a boulder and reflected upon my unfortunate plight. I had not told anyone that I proposed to come to the Blue John mine, and it was unlikely that a search party would come after me. Therefore, I must trust to my own resources to get clear of the danger. There was only one hope, and that was the matches might dry. When I fell into the river only half of me had got thoroughly wet. My left shoulder had remained above the water. I took the box of matches, therefore, and put it in my left armpit. The moist air of the cavern might possibly be counteracted by the heat of my body, but even so I knew that I could not hope to get a light for many hours. Meanwhile there was nothing for it but to wait.

By good luck I had slipped several biscuits into my pocket before I had left the farmhouse. These I now devoured, and washed them down with a draught from that wretched stream which had been the cause of all my misfortunes.

Then I felt about for a comfortable seat among the rocks, and, having discovered a place where I could get a support for my back, I stretched out my legs and settled myself down to wait. I was wretchedly damp and cold, but I tried to cheer myself with the reflection that modern science prescribed open windows and walks in all weather for my disease. Gradually, lulled by the absolute darkness, I sank into an uneasy slumber.

How long this lasted I cannot say. It may have been for one hour, it may have been for several. Suddenly I sat up on my rock couch, with every nerve thrilling and every sense acutely on the alert. Beyond all doubt I had heard a sound—some sound very distinct from the gurgling of the waters. It had passed, but the reverberation of it still lingered in my ear. Was it a search party? They would most certainly have shouted, and vague as this sound was which had wakened me, it was very distinct from the human voice. I sat palpitating and hardly daring to breathe. There it was again! And again! Now it had become continuous. It was a tread—yes, surely it was the tread of some living creature. But what a tread it was! It gave one the impression of enormous weight carried upon spongelike feet, which gave forth a muffled but ear-filling sound. The darkness was as complete as ever, but the tread was regular and decisive. And it was coming beyond all question in my direction.

My skin grew cold, and my hair stood on end as I listened to that steady and ponderous footfall. There was some creature there, and surely, by the speed of its advance, it was one who could see in the dark. I crouched low on my rock and tried to blend myself into it. The steps grew nearer still, then stopped, and presently I was aware of a loud lapping and gurgling. The creature was drinking at the stream. Then again there was silence, broken by a succession of long sniffs and snorts, of tremendous volume and energy. Had it caught the scent of me? My own nostrils were filled by a low fetid odor, mephitic and abominable. Then I heard the steps again. They were on my side of the

stream now. The stones rattled within a few yards of where I lay. Hardly daring to breathe, I crouched upon my rock. Then the steps drew away. I heard the splash as it returned across the river, and the sound died away in the distance in the direction from which it had come.

For a long time I lay upon the rock, too much horrified to move. I thought of the sound which I had heard coming from the depths of the cave, of Armitage's fears, of the strange impression in the mud, and now came this final and absolute proof that there was indeed some inconceivable monster, something utterly un-English and dreadful, which lurked in the hollow of the mountain. Of its nature or form I could frame no conception, save that it was both light-footed and gigantic. The combat between my reason, which told me that such things could not be, and my senses, which told me that they were, raged within me as I lay. Finally, I was almost ready to persuade myself that this experience had been part of some evil dream, and that my abnormal condition might have conjured up an hallucination. But there remained one final experience which removed the last possibility of doubt from my mind.

I had taken my matches from my armpit and felt them. They seemed perfectly hard and dry. Stooping down into a crevice of the rocks, I tried one of them. To my delight it took fire at once. I lit the candle, and, with a terrified backward glance into the obscure depths of the cavern, I hurried in the direction of the Roman passage. As I did so I passed the patch of mud on which I had seen the huge imprint. Now I stood astonished before it, for there were three similar imprints upon its surface, enormous in size, irregular in outline, of a depth which indicated the ponderous weight which had left them. Then a great terror surged over me. Stooping and shading my candle with my hand, I ran in a frenzy of fear to the rocky archway, hastened down it, and never stopped until, with weary feet and panting lungs, I rushed up the final slope of stones, broke through the tangle of briers, and flung myself

exhausted upon the soft grass under the peaceful light of the stars. It was three in the morning when I reached the farmhouse, and today I am all unstrung and quivering after my terrific adventure. As yet I have told no one. I must move warily in the matter. What would the poor lonely women, or the uneducated yokels here, think of it if I were to tell them my experience? Let me go to someone who can understand and advise.

April 25th.—I was laid up in bed for two days after my incredible adventure in the cavern. I use the adjective with a very definite meaning, for I have had an experience since which has shocked me almost as much as the other. I have said that I was looking round for someone who could advise me. There is a Dr. Mark Johnson who practices some few miles away, to whom I had a note of recommendation from Professor Saunderson. To him I drove, when I was strong enough to get about, and I recounted to him my whole strange experience. He listened intently, and then carefully examined me, paying special attention to my reflexes and to the pupils of my eyes. When he had finished he refused to discuss my adventure, saying that it was entirely beyond him, but he gave me the card of a Mr. Picton at Castleton, with the advice that I should instantly go to him and tell him the story exactly as I had done it to himself. He was, according to my adviser, the very man who was preeminently suited to help me. I went on to the station, therefore, and made my way to the little town, which is some ten miles away. Mr. Picton appeared to be a man of importance, as his brass plate was displayed upon the door of a considerable building on the outskirts of the town. I was about to ring his bell, when some misgiving came into my mind, and, crossing to a neighboring shop, I asked the man behind the counter if he could tell me anything of Mr. Picton. "Why," said he, "he is the best mad doctor in Derbyshire, and yonder is his asylum." You can imagine that it was not long before I had shaken the dust of Castleton from my feet and returned to the farm, cursing all unimaginative pedants

who cannot conceive that there may be things in creation which have never yet chanced to come across their mole's vision. After all, now that I am cooler, I can afford to admit that I have been no more sympathetic to Armitage than Dr. Johnson has been to me.

April 27th.—When I was a student I had the reputation of being a man of courage and enterprise. I remember that when there was a ghosthunt at Coltbridge it was I who sat up in the haunted house. Is it advancing years (after all, I am only thirty-five), or is it this physical malady which has caused degeneration? Certainly my heart quails when I think of that horrible cavern in the hill, and the certainty that it has some monstrous occupant. What shall I do? There is not an hour in the day that I do not debate the question. If I say nothing, then, the mystery remains unsolved. If I do say anything, then I have the alternative of mad alarm over the whole countryside, or of absolute incredulity which may end in consigning me to an asylum. On the whole, I think that my best course is to wait, and to prepare for some expedition which shall be more deliberate and better thought-out than the last. As a first step I have been to Castleton and obtained a few essentials—a large acetylene lantern for one thing, and a good double-barreled sporting rifle for another. The latter I have hired, but I have bought a dozen heavy game cartridges, which would bring down a rhinoceros. Now I am ready for my troglodyte friend. Give me better health and a little spate of energy, and I shall try conclusions with him yet. But who and what is he? Ah! there is the question which stands between me and my sleep. How many theories do I form, only to discard each in turn! It is all so utterly unthinkable. And yet the cry, the footmark, the tread in the cavern—no reasoning can get past these. I think of the old world legends of dragons and of monsters. Were they, perhaps not such fairytales as we have thought? Can it be that there is some fact which underlies them, and am I, of all mortals, the one who is chosen to expose it?

May 3rd.—For several days I have been laid up by the vagaries of an English spring, and during those days there have been developments, the true and sinister meaning of which no one can appreciate save myself. I may say that we have had cloudy and moonless nights of late, which according to my information were the seasons upon which sheep disappeared. Well, sheep *have* disappeared. Two of Miss Allerton's, one of old Pearson's of the Cat Walk, and one of Mrs. Moulton's. Four in all, during three nights. No trace is left of them at all, and the countryside is buzzing with rumors of Gypsies and of sheep stealers.

But there is something more serious than that. Young Armitage has disappeared also. He left his moorland cottage early on Wednesday night, and has never been heard of since. He was an unattached man, so there is less sensation than would otherwise be the case. The popular explanation is that he owes money, and has found a situation in some other part of the country, whence he will presently write for his belongings. But I have grave misgivings. Is it not much more likely that the recent tragedy of the sheep has caused him to take some steps which may have ended in his own destruction? He may, for example, have lain wait for the creature, and been carried off by it into the recesses of the mountains. What an inconceivable fate for a civilized Englishman of the twentieth century! And yet I feel that it is possible and even probable. But in that case, how far am I answerable both for his death and for any other mishap which may occur? Surely with the knowledge I already possess it must be my duty to see that something is done, or if necessary to do it myself. It must be the latter, for this morning I went down to the local police station and told my story. The inspector entered it all in a large book and bowed me out with commendable gravity, but I heard a burst of laughter before I had got down his garden path. No doubt he was recounting my adventure to his family.

June 10th.—I am writing this, propped up in bed, six weeks after my last entry in this journal. I have gone through a

terrible shock both to mind and body, arising from such an experience as has seldom befallen a human being before. But I have attained my end. The danger from the Terror which dwells in the Blue John Gap has passed, never to return. This much at least I, a broken invalid, have done for the common good. Let me now recount what occurred, as clearly as I may.

The night of Friday, May 3rd, was dark and cloudy—the very night for the monster to walk. About eleven o'clock I went from the farm-house with my lantern and my rifle, having first left a note upon the table of my bedroom in which I said that if I were missing search should be made for me in the direction of the Gap. I made my way to the mouth of the Roman shaft, and, having perched myself among the rocks close to the opening, I shut off my lantern and waited patiently with my loaded rifle ready to my hand.

It was a melancholy vigil. All down the winding valley I could see the scattered lights of the farmhouses, and the church clock of Chapel-le-Dale tolling the hours came faintly to my ears. These tokens of my fellowmen served only to make my own position seem the more lonely, and to call for a greater effort to overcome the terror which tempted me continually to get back to the farm, and abandon forever this dangerous quest. And yet there lies deep in every man a rooted self-respect which makes it hard for him to turn back from that which he has once undertaken. This feeling of personal pride was my salvation now, and it was that alone which held me fast when every instinct of my nature was dragging me away. I am glad now that I had the strength. In spite of all that it has cost me, my manhood is at least above reproach.

Twelve o'clock struck in the distant church, then one, then two. It was the darkest hour of the night. The clouds were drifting low, and there was not a star in the sky. An owl was hooting somewhere among the rocks, but no other sound, save the gentle sough of the wind, came to my ears. And then suddenly I heard it! From far away down the tunnel

came those muffled steps, so soft and yet so ponderous. I heard also the rattle of stones as they gave way under that giant tread. They drew nearer. They were close upon me. I heard the crashing of the bushes round the entrance, and then dimly through the darkness I was conscious of the loom of some enormous shape, some monstrous inchoate creature, passing swiftly and very silently out from the tunnel. I was paralyzed with fear and amazement. Long as I had waited, now that it had actually come I was unprepared for the shock. I lay motionless and breathless, whilst the great dark mass whisked by me and was swallowed up in the night.

But now I nerved myself for its return. No sound came from the sleeping countryside to tell of the horror which was loose. In no way could I judge how far off it was, what it was doing, or when it might be back. But not a second time should my nerve fail me, not a second time should it pass unchallenged. I swore it between my clenched teeth as I laid my cocked rifle across the rock.

And yet it nearly happened. There was no warning of approach now as the creature passed over the grass. Suddenly, like a dark, drifting shadow, the huge bulk loomed up once more before me, making for the entrance of the cave. Again came that paralysis of volition, which held my crooked forefinger impotent upon the trigger. But with a desperate effort I shook it off. Even as the brushwood rustled, and the monstrous beast blended with the shadow of the Gap, I fired at the retreating form. In the blaze of the gun I caught a glimpse of a great shaggy mass, something with rough and bristling hair of a withered gray color, fading away to white in its lower parts, the huge body supported upon short, thick, curving legs. I had just that glance, and then I heard the rattle of the stones as the creature tore down into its burrow. In an instant, with a triumphant revulsion of feeling, I had cast my fears to the wind, and uncovering my powerful lantern, with my rifle in my hand, I

sprang down from my rock and rushed after the monster down the old Roman shaft.

My splendid lamp cast a brilliant flood of vivid light in front of me, very different from the yellow glimmer which had aided me down this same passage only twelve days before. As I ran I saw the great beast lurching along before me, its huge bulk filling up the whole space from wall to wall. Its hair looked like coarse faded oakum, and hung down in long, dense masses which swayed as it moved. It was like an enormous unclipped sheep in its fleece, but in size it was far larger than the largest elephant, and its breadth seemed to be nearly as great as its height. It fills me with amazement now to think that I should have dared to follow such a horror into the bowels of the earth, but when one's blood is up, and when one's quarry seems to be flying, the old primeval hunting spirit awakes and prudence is cast to the wind. Rifle in hand, I ran at the top of my speed upon the trail of the monster.

I had seen the creature was swift. Now I was to find out to my cost that it was also very cunning. I had imagined that it was in panic flight, and that I had only to pursue it. The idea that it might turn upon me never entered my excited brain. I have already explained that the passage down which I was racing opened into a great central cave. Into this I rushed, fearful lest I should lose all trace of the beast. But he had turned upon his own traces, and in a moment we were face to face.

That picture, seen in the brilliant white light of the lantern, is etched forever upon my brain. He had reared up on his hind legs as a bear would do, and stood above me, enormous, menacing—such a creature as no nightmare had ever brought to my imagination. I have said that he reared like a bear, and there was something bearlike—if one could conceive a bear which was tenfold the bulk of any bear seen upon earth—in his whole pose and attitude, in his great crooked forelegs with their ivory-white claws, in his rugged skin, and in his red, gaping mouth, fringed with monstrous

fangs. Only in one point did he differ from the bear, or from any other creature which walks the earth, and even at that supreme moment a shudder of horror passed over me as I observed that the eyes which glistened in the glow of the lantern were huge, projecting bulbs, white and sightless. For a moment his great paws swung over my head. The next he fell forward upon me, I and my broken lantern crashed to the earth, and I remember no more.

When I came to myself I was back in the farmhouse of the Allertons. Two days had passed since my terrible adventure in the Blue John Gap. It seems that I had lain all night in the cave insensible from concussion of the brain, with my left arm and two ribs badly fractured. In the morning my note had been found, a search party of a dozen farmers assembled, and I had been tracked down and carried back to my bedroom, where I had lain in high delirium ever since. There was, it seems, no sign of the creature, and no bloodstain which would show that my bullet had found him as he passed. Save for my own plight and the marks upon the mud, there was nothing to prove that what I said was true.

Six weeks have now elapsed, and I am able to sit out once more in the sunshine. Just opposite me is the steep hillside, gray with shaly rock, and yonder on its flank is the dark cleft which marks the opening of the Blue John Gap. But it is no longer a source of terror. Never again through that ill-omened tunnel shall any strange shape flit out into the world of men. The educated and the scientific, the Dr. Johnsons and the like, may smile at my narrative, but the poorer folk of the countryside had never a doubt as to its truth. On the day after my recovering consciousness they assembled in their hundreds round the Blue John Gap. As the *Castleton Courier* said:

It was useless for our correspondent, or for any of the adventurous gentlemen who had come from Matlock,

Buxton, and other parts, to offer to descend, to explore the cave to the end, and to finally test the extraordinary narrative of Dr. James Hardcastle. The country people had taken the matter into their own hands, and from an early hour of the morning they had worked hard in stopping up the entrance of the tunnel. There is a sharp slope where the shaft begins, and great boulders, rolled along by many willing hands, were thrust down it until the Gap was absolutely sealed. So ends the episode which has caused such excitement throughout the country. Local opinion is fiercely divided upon the subject. On the one hand are those who point to Dr. Hardcastle's impaired health, and to the possibility of cerebral lesions of tubercular origin giving rise to strange hallucinations. Some *idée fixe*, according to these gentlemen, caused the doctor to wander down the tunnel, and a fall among the rocks was sufficient to account for his injuries. On the other hand, a legend of a strange creature in the Gap has existed for some months back, and the farmers look upon Dr. Hardcastle's narrative and his personal injuries as a final corroboration. So the matter stands, and so the matter will continue to stand, for no definite solution seems to us to be now possible. It transcends human wit to give any scientific explanation which could cover the alleged facts.

Perhaps before the *Courier* published these words they would have been wise to send their representative to me. I have thought the matter out, as no one else has had occasion to do, and it is possible that I might have removed some of the more obvious difficulties of the narrative and brought it one degree nearer to scientific acceptance. Let me then write down the only explanation which seems to me to elucidate what I know to my cost to have been a series of facts. My theory may seem to be wildly

improbable, but at least no one can venture to say that it is impossible.

My view is—and it was formed, as is shown by my diary, before my personal adventure—that in this part of England there is a vast subterranean lake or sea, which is fed by the great number of streams which pass down through the limestone. Where there is a large collection of water there must also be some evaporation, mists or rain, and a possibility of vegetation. This in turn suggests that there may be animal life, arising, as the vegetable life would also do, from those seeds and types which had been introduced at an early period of the world's history, when communication with the outer air was more easy. This place had then developed a fauna and flora of its own, including such monsters as the one which I had seen, which may well have been the old cave bear, enormously enlarged and modified by its new environment. For countless æons the internal and the external creation had kept apart, growing steadily away from each other. Then there had come some rift in the depths of the mountain which had enabled one creature to wander up and, by means of the Roman tunnel, to reach the open air. Like all subterranean life, it had lost the power of sight, but this had no doubt been compensated for by Nature in other directions. Certainly it had some means of finding its way about, and of hunting down the sheep upon the hillside. As to its choice of dark nights, it is part of my theory that light was painful to those great white eyeballs, and that it was only a pitch-black world which it could tolerate. Perhaps, indeed, it was the glare of my lantern which saved my life at that awful moment when we were face to face. So I read the riddle. I leave these facts behind me, and if you can explain them, do so; or if you choose to doubt them, do so. Neither your belief nor your incredulity can alter them, nor affect one whose task is nearly over.

So ended the strange narrative of Dr. James Hardcastle.

THE WINNING SHOT

Cautions.—The public are hereby cautioned against a man calling himself Octavius Gaster. He is to be recognized by his great height, his flaxen hair, and by a deep scar upon his left cheek, extending from the eye to the angle of the mouth. His predilection for bright colors—green neckties, and the like—may help to identify him. A slightly foreign accent is to be detected in his speech. This man is beyond the reach of the law, but is more dangerous than a mad dog. Shun him as you would shun the pestilence that walketh at noonday. Any communication as to his whereabouts will be thankfully acknowledged by A. C. U., Lincoln's Inn, London.

This is a copy of an advertisement which may have been noticed by many readers in the columns of the London morning papers during the early part of the present year. It has, I believe, excited considerable curiosity in certain quarters, and many guesses have been hazarded as to the identity of Octavius Gaster and the nature of the charge brought against him. When I state that the "caution" has been inserted by my elder brother, Arthur Cooper Underwood, barrister-at-law, upon my representations, it will be acknowledged that I am the most fitting person to enter upon an authentic explanation.

Hitherto the horror and vagueness of my suspicion, combined with my grief at the loss of my poor darling on the very eve of our wedding, have prevented me from revealing the events of last August to anyone save my brother.

Now, however, looking back, I can fit in many little facts almost unnoticed at the time, which form a chain of

evidence that, though worthless in a court of law, may yet have some effect upon the mind of the public.

I shall therefore relate, without exaggeration or prejudice, all that occurred from the day upon which this man, Octavius Gaster, entered Toynby Hall up to the great rifle competition. I know that many people will always ridicule the supernatural, or what our poor intellects choose to regard as supernatural, and that the fact of my being a woman will be thought to weaken my evidence. I can only plead that I have never been weak-minded or impressionable, and that other people formed the same opinion of Octavius Gaster that I did.

Now to the story.

It was at Colonel Pillar's place at Roborough, in the pleasant county of Devon, that we spent our autumn holidays. For some months I had been engaged to his eldest son Charley, and it was hoped that the marriage might take place before the termination of the Long Vacation.

Charley was considered "safe" for his degree, and in any case was rich enough to be practically independent, while I was by no means penniless.

The old Colonel was delighted at the prospect of the match, and so was my mother; so that look what way we would, there seemed to be no cloud above our horizon.

It was no wonder, then, that that August was a happy one. Even the most miserable of mankind would have laid his woes aside under the genial influence of the merry household at Toynby Hall.

There was Lieutenant Daseby, or "Jack," as he was invariably called, fresh home from Japan in Her Majesty's ship Shark, who was on the same interesting footing with Fanny Pillar, Charley's sister, as Charley was with me, so that we were able to lend each other a certain moral support.

Then there was Harry, Charley's younger brother, and Trevor, his bosom friend at Cambridge.

Finally there was my mother, dearest of old ladies, beaming at us through her gold-rimmed spectacles, anxiously smoothing every little difficulty in the way of the two young couples, and never weary of detailing to them *her* own doubts and fears and perplexities when that gay young blood, Mr. Nicholas Underwood, came a-wooing into the provinces, and forswore Crockford's and Tattersall's for the sake of the country parson's daughter.

I must not, however, forget the gallant old warrior who was our host; with his time-honored jokes, and his gout, and his harmless affectation of ferocity.

"I don't know what's come over the governor lately," Charley used to say. "He has never cursed the Liberal Administration since you've been here, Lottie; and my belief is that unless he has a good blow off, that Irish question will get into his system and finish him."

Perhaps in the privacy of his own apartment the veteran used to make up for his self-abnegation during the day.

He seemed to have taken a special fancy to me, which he showed in a hundred little attentions.

"You're a good lass," he remarked one evening, in a very port-winy whisper. "Charley's a lucky dog, egad! and has more discrimination than I thought. Mark my words, Miss Underwood, you'll find that young gentleman isn't such a fool as he looks!"

With which equivocal complaint the Colonel solemnly covered his face with his handkerchief and went off into the land of dreams.

How well I remember the day that was the commencement of all our miseries!

Dinner was over, and we were in the drawing room, with the windows open to admit the balmy southern breeze.

My mother was sitting in the corner, engaged on a piece of fancy-work, and occasionally purring forth some truism which the dear old soul believed to be an entirely original

remark, and founded exclusively upon her own individual experiences.

Fanny and the young lieutenant were billing and cooing upon the sofa, while Charley paced restlessly about the room.

I was sitting by the window, gazing out dreamily at the great wilderness of Dartmoor, which stretched away to the horizon, ruddy and glowing in the light of the sinking sun, save where some rugged tor stood out in bold relief against the scarlet background.

"I say," remarked Charley, coming over to join me at the window, "it seems a positive shame to waste an evening like this."

"Confound the evening!" said Jack Daseby.

"You're always victimizing yourself to the weather. Fan and I ar'n't going to move off this sofa—are we, Fan?"

That young lady announced her intention of remaining by nestling among the cushions, and glancing defiantly at her brother.

"Spooning is a demoralizing thing— isn't it, Lottie?" said Charley, appealing laughingly to me.

"Shockingly so," I answered.

"Why, I can remember Daseby here when he was as active a young fellow as any in Devon; and just look at him now! Fanny, Fanny, you've got a lot to answer for!"

"Never mind him, my dear," said my mother, from the corner. "Still, my experience has always shown me that moderation is an excellent thing for young people. Poor dear Nicholas used to think so too. He would never go to bed of a night until he had jumped the length of the hearthrug. I often told him it was dangerous; but he *would* do it, until one night he fell on the fender and snapped the muscle of his leg, which made him limp till the day of his death, for Doctor Pearson mistook it for a fracture of the bone, and put him in splints, which had the effect of stiffening his knee. They did say that the doctor was almost out of his mind at the time from anxiety, brought on by his younger daughter

swallowing a halfpenny, and that that was what caused him to make the mistake.”

My mother had a curious way of drifting along in her conversation, and occasionally rushing off at a tangent, which made it rather difficult to remember her original proposition. On this occasion Charley had, however, stowed it away in his mind as likely to admit of immediate application.

“An excellent thing, as you say, Mrs. Underwood,” he remarked; “and we have not been out today. Look here, Lottie, we have an hour of daylight yet. Suppose we go down and have a try for a trout, if your mamma does not object.”

“Put something round your throat, dear,” said my mother, feeling that she had been outmaneuvered.

“All right, dear,” I answered; “I’ll just run up and put on my hat.”

“And we’ll have a walk back in the gloaming,” said Charley, as I made for the door.

When I came down, I found my lover waiting impatiently with his fishing basket in the hall.

We crossed the lawn together, and passed the open drawing room windows, where three mischievous faces were looking out at us.

“Spooning is a terribly demoralizing thing,” remarked Jack, reflectively staring up at the clouds.

“Shocking,” said Fan; and all three laughed until they woke the sleeping Colonel, and we could hear them endeavoring to explain the joke to that ill-used veteran, who apparently obstinately refused to appreciate it.

We passed down the winding lane together, and through the little wooden gate, which opens on to the Tavistock road.

Charley paused for a moment after we had emerged and seemed irresolute which way to turn.

Had we but known it, our fate depended upon that trivial question.

“Shall we go down to the river, dear,” he said, “or shall we try one of the brooks upon the moor?”

“Whichever you like?” I answered.

“Well, I vote that we cross the moor. We’ll have a longer walk back that way,” he added, looking down lovingly at the little white-shawled figure beside him.

The brook in question runs through a most desolate part of the country. By the path it is several miles from Toynby Hall; but we were both young and active, and struck out across the moor, regardless of rocks and furze bushes.

Not a living creature did we meet upon our solitary walk, save a few scraggy Devonshire sheep, who looked at us wistfully, and followed us for some distance, as if curious as to what could possibly have induced us to trespass upon their domains.

It was almost dark before we reached the little stream, which comes gurgling down through a precipitous glen, and meanders away to help to form the Plymouth “leat.”

Above us towered two great columns of rock, between which the water trickled to form a deep, still pool at the bottom. This pool had always been a favorite spot of Charley’s, and was a pretty cheerful place by day; but now, with the rising moon reflected upon its glassy waters, and throwing dark shadows from the overhanging rocks, it seemed anything rather than the haunt of a pleasure-seeker.

“I don’t think, darling, that I’ll fish, after all,” said Charley, as we sat down together on a mossy bank. “It’s a dismal sort of place, isn’t it?”

“Very,” said I, shuddering.

“We’ll just have a rest, and then we will walk back by the pathway. You’re shivering. You’re not cold, are you?”

“No,” said I, trying to keep up my courage; “I’m not cold, but I’m rather frightened, though it’s very silly of me.”

“By Jove!” said my lover, “I can’t wonder at it, for I feel a bit depressed myself. The noise that water makes is like the gurgling in the throat of a dying man.”

“Don’t, Charley; you frighten me!”

“Come, dear, we mustn’t get the blues,” he said, with a laugh trying to reassure me. “Let’s run away from this charnel-house place, and—Look!—see!—good gracious! what is that?”

Charley had staggered back, and was gazing upwards with a pallid face.

I followed the direction of his eyes, and could scarcely suppress a scream.

I have already mentioned that the pool by which we were standing lay at the foot of a rough mound of rocks. On the top of this mound, about sixty feet above our heads, a tall dark figure was standing, peering down, apparently, into the rugged hollow in which we were.

The moon was just topping the ridge behind, and the gaunt, angular outlines of the stranger stood out hard and clear against its silvery radiance.

There was something ghastly in the sudden and silent appearance of this solitary wanderer, especially when coupled with the weird nature of the scene.

I clung to my lover in speechless terror, and glared up at the dark figure above us.

“Hullo, you sir!” cried Charley, passing from fear into anger, as Englishmen generally do. “Who are you, and what the devil are you doing?”

“Oh! I thought it, I thought it!” said the man who was overlooking us, and disappeared from the top of the hill.

We heard him scrambling about among the loose stones, and in another moment he emerged upon the banks of the brook and stood facing us.

Weird as his appearance had been when we first caught sight of him, the impression was intensified rather than removed by a closer acquaintance.

The moon shining full upon him revealed a long, thin face of ghastly pallor, the effect being increased by its contrast with the flaring green necktie which he wore.

A scar upon his cheek had healed badly and caused a nasty pucker at the side of his mouth, which gave his whole countenance a most distorted expression, more particularly when he smiled.

The knapsack on his back and stout staff in his hand announced him to be a tourist, while the easy grace with which he raised his hat on perceiving the presence of a lady showed that he could lay claim to the *savoir faire* of a man of the world.

There was something in his angular proportions and bloodless face which, taken in conjunction with the black cloak which fluttered from his shoulders, irresistibly reminded me of a blood-sucking species of bat which Jack Daseby had brought from Japan upon his previous voyage, and which was the bugbear of the servants' hall at Toynby.

"Excuse my intrusion," he said, with a slightly foreign lisp, which imparted a peculiar beauty to his voice. "I should have had to sleep on the moor had I not had the good fortune to fall in with you."

"Confound it, man!" said Charley; "why couldn't you shout out, or give us some warning? You quite frightened Miss Underwood when you suddenly appeared up there."

The stranger once more raised his hat as he apologized to me for having given me such a start.

"I am a gentleman from Sweden," he continued, in that peculiar intonation of his, "and am viewing this beautiful land of yours. Allow me to introduce myself as Doctor Octavius Gaster. Perhaps you could tell me where I may sleep, and how I can get from this place, which is truly of great size?"

"You're very lucky in falling in with us," said Charley. "It is no easy matter to find your way upon the moor."

"That can I well believe," remarked our new acquaintance.

"Strangers have been found dead on it before now," continued Charley. "They lose themselves, and then wander in a circle until they fall from fatigue."

“Ha, ha!” laughed the Swede; “it is not I, who have drifted in an open boat from Cape Blanco to Canary, that will starve upon an English moor. But how may I turn to seek an inn?”

“Look here!” said Charley, whose interest was excited by the stranger’s allusion, and who was at all times the most openhearted of men. “There’s no an inn for many a mile round; and I daresay you have had a long day’s walk already. Come home with us, and my father, the Colonel, will be delighted to see you and find you a spare bed.”

“For this great kindness how can I thank you?” returned the traveler. “Truly, when I return to Sweden, I shall have strange stories to tell of the English and their hospitality!”

“Nonsense!” said Charley. “Come, we will start at once, for Miss Underwood is cold. Wrap the shawl well round your neck, Lottie, and we will be home in no time.”

We stumbled along in silence, keeping as far as we could to the rugged pathway, sometimes losing it as a cloud drifted over the face of the moon, and then regaining it further on with the return of the light.

The stranger seemed buried in thought, but once or twice I had the impression that he was looking hard at me through the darkness as we strode along together.

“So,” said Charley at last, breaking the silence, “you drifted about in an open boat, did you?”

“Ah, yes,” answered the stranger; “many strange sights have I seen, and many perils undergone, but none worse than that. It is, however, too sad a subject for a lady’s ears. She has been frightened once tonight.”

“Oh, you needn’t be afraid of frightening me now,” said I, as I leaned on Charley’s arm.

“Indeed there is but little to tell, and yet is it sorrowful.

“A friend of mine, Karl Osgood, of Upsale, and myself started on a trading venture. Few white men had been among the wandering Moors at Cape Blanco, but nevertheless we went, and for some months lived well, selling this and that, and gathering much ivory and gold.

"Tis a strange country, where is neither wood nor stone, so that the huts are made from the weeds of the sea.

"At last, just as we had what we thought was a sufficiency, the Moors conspired to kill us, and came down against us in the night.

"Short was our warning, but we fled to the beach, launched a canoe, and put out to sea, leaving everything behind.

"The Moors chased us, but lost us in the darkness; and when day dawned the land was out of sight.

"There was no country where we could hope for food nearer than Canary, and for that we made.

"I reached it alive, though very weak and mad, but poor Karl died the day before we sighted the islands.

"I gave him warning!

"I cannot blame myself in the matter.

"I said, 'Karl, the strength that you might gain by eating them would be more than made up for by the blood that you would lose!'

"He laughed at my words, caught the knife from my belt, cut them off, and eat them; and he died."

"Eat what?" asked Charley.

"His ears!" said the stranger.

We both looked round at him in horror.

There was no suspicion of a smile or joke upon his ghastly face.

"He was what you call headstrong," he continued, "but he should have known better than to do a thing like that. Had he but used his will he would have lived as I did."

"And you think a man's will can prevent him from feeling hungry?" said Charley.

"What can it not do?" returned Octavius Gaster, and relapsed into a silence which was not broken until our arrival at Toynby Hall.

Considerable alarm had been caused by our nonappearance, and Jack Daseby was just setting off with Charley's friend Trevor in search of us. They were delighted,

therefore, when we marched in upon them, and considerably astonished at the appearance of our companion.

“Where the deuce did you pick up that secondhand corpse?” asked Jack, drawing Charley aside into the smoking room.

“Shut up, man; he’ll hear you,” growled Charley. “He’s a Swedish doctor on a tour, and a deuced good fellow. He went in an open boat from What’s-it’s-name to another place. I’ve offered him a bed for the night.”

“Well, all I can say is,” remarked Jack, “that his face will never be his fortune.”

“Ha, ha! Very good! very good!” laughed the subject of the remark, walking calmly into the room, to the complete discomfiture of the sailor. “No, it will never, as you say, in this country be my fortune,”—and he grinned until the hideous gash across the angle of his mouth made him look more like the reflection in a broken mirror than anything else.

“Come upstairs and have a wash; I can lend you a pair of slippers,” said Charley; and hurried the visitor out of the room to put an end to a somewhat embarrassing situation.

Colonel Pillar was the soul of hospitality, and welcomed Doctor Gaster as effusively as if he had been an old friend of the family.

“Egad, sir,” he said, “the place is your own; and as long as you care to stop you are very welcome. We’re pretty quiet down here, and a visitor is an acquisition.”

My mother was a little more distant. “A very well informed young man, Lottie,” she remarked to me; “but I wish he would wink his eyes more. I don’t like to see people who never wink their eyes. Still, my dear, my life has taught me one great lesson, and that is that a man’s looks are of very little importance compared with his actions.”

With which brand new and eminently original remark, my mother kissed me and left me to my meditations.

Whatever Doctor Octavius Gaster might be physically, he was certainly a social success.

By next day he had so completely installed himself as a member of the household that the Colonel would not hear of his departure.

He astonished everybody with the extent and variety of his knowledge. He could tell the veteran considerably more about the Crimea than he knew himself; he gave the sailor information about the coast of Japan; and even tackled my athletic lover upon the subject of rowing, discoursing about levers of the first order, and fixed points and fulcra, until the unhappy Cantab was fain to drop the subject.

Yet all this was done so modestly and even deferentially, that no one could possibly feel offended at being beaten upon their own ground. There was a quiet power about everything he said and did which was very striking.

I remember one example of this, which impressed us all at the time.

Trevor had a remarkably savage bulldog, which, however fond of its master, fiercely resented any liberties from the rest of us. This animal was, it may be imagined, rather unpopular, but as it was the pride of the student's heart, it was agreed not to banish it entirely, but to lock it up in the stable and give it a wide berth.

From the first it seemed to have taken a decided aversion to our visitor, and showed every fang in its head whenever he approached it.

On the second day of his visit, we were passing the stable in a body, when the growls of the creature inside arrested Doctor Gaster's attention.

"Ha!" he said. "There is that dog of yours, Mr. Trevor, is it not?"

"Yes; that's Towzer," assented Trevor.

"He is a bulldog, I think? What they call the national animal of England on the Continent?"

"Purebred," said the student, proudly.

“They are ugly animals—very ugly. Would you come into the stable and unchain him, that I may see him to advantage. It is a pity to keep an animal so powerful and full of life in captivity.”

“He’s rather a nipper,” said Trevor, with a mischievous expression in his eye; “but I suppose you are not afraid of a dog?”

“Afraid?—no. Why should I be afraid?”

The mischievous look on Trevor’s face increased as he opened the stable door. I heard Charley mutter something to him about its being past a joke, but the other’s answer was drowned by the hollow growling from inside.

The rest of us retreated to a respectable distance, while Octavius Gaster stood in the open doorway with a look of mild curiosity upon his pallid face.

“And those,” he said, “that I see so bright and red in the darkness—are those his eyes?”

“Those are they,” said the student, as he stooped down and unbuckled the strap.

“Come here!” said Octavius Gaster.

The growling of the dog suddenly subsided into a long whimper, and instead of making the furious rush that we expected, he rustled among the straw as if trying to huddle into a corner.

“What the deuce is the matter with him?” exclaimed his perplexed owner.

“Come here!” repeated Gaster, in sharp metallic accents, with an indescribable air of command in them. “Come here!”

To our astonishment, the dog trotted out and stood at his side, but looking as unlike the usually pugnacious Towzer as it is possible to conceive. His ears were drooping, his tail limp, and he altogether presented the very picture of canine humiliation.

“A very fine dog, but singularly quiet,” remarked the Swede, as he stroked him down. “Now, sir, go back!”

The brute turned and slunk back into its corner. We heard the rattling of its chain as it was being fastened, and next moment Trevor came out of the stable door with blood dripping from his finger.

“Confound the beast!” he said. “I don’t know what can have come over him. I’ve had him three years, and he never bit me before.”

I fancy—I cannot say it for certain—but I fancy that there was a spasmodic twitching of the cicatrix upon our visitor’s face, which betokened an inclination to laugh.

Looking back, I think that it was from that moment that I began to have a strange indefinable fear and dislike of the man.

Week followed week, and the day fixed for my marriage began to draw near.

Octavius Gaster was still a guest at Toynby Hall, and, indeed, had so ingratiated himself with the proprietor that any hint at departure was laughed to scorn by that worthy soldier.

“Here you’ve come, sir, and here you’ll stay; you shall, by Jove.”

Whereat Octavius would smile and shrug his shoulders, and mutter something about the attractions of Devon, which would put the Colonel in a good humor for the whole day afterward.

My darling and I were too much engrossed with each other to pay very much attention to the traveler’s occupations. We used to come upon him sometimes in our rambles through the woods, sitting reading in the most lonely situations.

He always placed the book in his pocket when he saw us approaching. I remember on one occasion, however, that we stumbled upon him so suddenly that the volume was still lying open before him.

“Ah, Gaster,” said Charley, “studying as usual! What an old book-worm you are! What’s the book? Ah, a foreign

language; Swedish, I suppose?"

"No, it is not Swedish," said Gaster; "it is Arabic."

"You don't mean to say you know Arabic?"

"Oh, very well—very well indeed!"

"And what's it about?" I asked, turning over the leaves of the musty old volume.

"Nothing that would interest one so young and fair as yourself, Miss Underwood," he answered, looking at me in a way which had become habitual to him of late. "It treats of the days when mind was stronger than what you call matter; when great spirits lived that were able to exist without these coarse bodies of ours, and could mold all things to their so-powerful wills."

"Oh, I see; a kind of ghost story," said Charley. "Well, adieu; we won't keep you from your studies."

We left him sitting in the little glen still absorbed in his mystical treatise. It must have been imagination which induced me, on turning suddenly round half an hour later, to think that I saw his familiar figure glide rapidly behind a tree.

I mentioned it to Charley at the time, but he laughed my idea to scorn.

I alluded just now to a peculiar manner which this man Gaster had of looking at me. His eyes seemed to lose their usual steely expression when he did so, and soften into something which might be almost called caressing. They seemed to influence me strangely, for I could always tell, without looking at him, when his gaze was fixed upon me.

Sometimes I fancied that this idea was simply due to a disordered nervous system or morbid imagination; but my mother dispelled that delusion from my mind.

"Do you know," she said, coming into my bedroom one night, and carefully shutting the door behind her, "if the idea was not so utterly preposterous, Lottie, I should say that that Doctor was madly in love with you?"

“Nonsense, 'ma!” said I, nearly dropping my candle in my consternation at the thought.

“I really think so, Lottie,” continued my mother. “He’s got a way of looking which is very like that of your poor dear father, Nicholas, before we were married. Something of this sort, you know.”

And the old lady cast an utterly heartbroken glance at the bedpost.

“Now, go to bed,” said I, “and don’t have such funny ideas. Why, poor Doctor Gaster knows that I am engaged as well as you do.”

“Time will show,” said the old lady, as she left the room; and I went to bed with the words still ringing in my ears.

Certainly, it is a strange thing that on that very night a thrill which I had come to know well ran through me, and awakened me from my slumbers.

I stole softly to the window, and peered out through the bars of the Venetian blinds, and there was the gaunt, vampirelike figure of our Swedish visitor standing upon the gravel walk, and apparently gazing up at my window.

It may have been that he detected the movement of the blind, for, lighting a cigarette, he began pacing up and down the avenue.

I noticed that at breakfast next morning he went out of his way to explain the fact that he had been restless during the night, and had steadied his nerves by a short stroll and a smoke.

After all, when I came to consider it calmly, the aversion which I had against the man and my distrust of him were founded on very scanty grounds. A man might have a strange face, and be fond of curious literature, and even look approvingly at an engaged young lady, without being a very dangerous member of society.

I say this to show that even up to that point I was perfectly unbiased and free from prejudice in my opinion of Octavius Gaster.

"I say!" remarked Lieutenant Daseby, one morning; "what do you think of having a picnic today?"

"Capital!" ejaculated everybody.

"You see, they are talking of commissioning the old Shark soon, and Trevor here will have to go back to the mill. We may as well compress as much fun as we can into the time."

"What is it that you call nicpic?" asked Doctor Gaster.

"It's another of our English institutions for you to study," said Charley. "It's our version of a *fête champêtre*."

"Ah, I see! That will be very jolly!" acquiesced the Swede.

"There are half a dozen places we might go to," continued the Lieutenant. "There's the Lover's Leap, or Black Tor, or Beer Ferris Abbey."

"That's the best," said Charley. "Nothing like ruins for a picnic."

"Well, the Abbey be it. How far is it?"

"Six miles," said Trevor.

"Seven by the road," remarked the Colonel, with military exactness. "Mrs. Underwood and I shall stay at home, and the rest of you can fit into a wagonette. You'll all have to chaperon each other."

I need hardly say that this motion was carried also without a division.

"Well," said Charley, "I'll order the trap to be round in half an hour, so you'd better all make the best of your time. We'll want salmon, and salad, and hard-boiled eggs, and liquor, and any number of things. I'll look after the liquor department. What will you do, Lottie?"

"I'll take charge of the china," I said.

"I'll bring the fish," said Daseby.

"And I the vegetables," added Fan.

"What will you do, Gaster?" asked Charley.

"Truly," said the Swede, in his strange, musical accents, "but little is left for me to do. I can, however, wait upon the ladies, and I can make what you call a salad."

"You'll be more popular in the latter capacity than in the former," said I, laughingly.

“Ah, you say so,” he said, turning sharp round upon me, and flushing up to his flaxen hair. “Yes. Ha! ha! Very good!”

And with a discordant laugh, he strode out of the room.

“I say, Lottie,” remonstrated my lover, “you’ve hurt the fellow’s feelings.”

“I’m sure I didn’t mean to,” I answered. “If you like, I’ll go after him and tell him so.”

“Oh, leave him alone,” said Daseby. “A man with a mug like that has no right to be so touchy. He’ll come round right enough.”

It was true that I had not had the slightest intention of offending Gaster, still I felt pained at having annoyed him.

After I had stowed away the knives and plates into a hamper, I found that the others were still busy at their various departments. The moment seemed a favorable one for apologizing for my thoughtless remark, so without saying anything to anyone, I slipped away and ran down the corridor in the direction of our visitor’s room.

I suppose I must have tripped along very lightly, or it may have been the rich thick matting of Toynby Hall—certain it is that. Mr. Gaster seemed unconscious of my approach.

His door was open, and as I came up to it and caught sight of him inside, there was something so strange in his appearance that I paused, literally petrified for the moment with astonishment.

He had in his hand a small slip from a newspaper which he was reading, and which seemed to afford him considerable amusement. There was something horrible too in this mirth of his, for though he writhed his body about as if with laughter, no sound was emitted from his lips.

His face, which was half-turned toward me, wore an expression upon it which I had never seen on it before; I can only describe it as one of savage exultation.

Just as I was recovering myself sufficiently to step forward and knock at the door, he suddenly, with a last convulsive spasm of merriment, dashed down the piece of paper upon

the table, and hurried out by the other door of his room, which led through the billiard room to the hall.

I heard his steps dying away in the distance, and peeped once more into his room.

What could be the joke that had moved this stern man to mirth? Surely some masterpiece of humor.

Was there a woman whose principles were strong enough to overcome her curiosity?

Looking cautiously round to make sure that the passage was empty, I slipped into the room and examined the paper which he had been reading.

It was a cutting from an English journal, and had evidently been long carried about and frequently perused, for it was almost illegible in places. There was, however, as far as I could see, very little to provoke laughter in its contents. It ran, as well as I can remember, in this way:

SUDDEN DEATH IN THE DOCKS.—The master of the bark-rigged steamer *Olga*, from Tromsberg, was found lying dead in his cabin on Wednesday afternoon. Deceased was, it seems, of a violent disposition, and had had frequent altercations with the surgeon of the vessel. On this particular day he had been more than usually offensive, declaring that the surgeon was a necromancer and worshipper of the devil. The latter retired on deck to avoid further persecution. Shortly afterward the steward had occasion to enter the cabin, and found the captain lying across the table quite dead. Death is attributed to heart disease, accelerated by excessive passion. An inquest will be held today.

And this was the paragraph which this strange man had regarded as the height of humor!

I hurried downstairs, astonishment, not unmixed with repugnance, predominating in my mind. So just was I, however, that the dark inference which has so often occurred to me since never for one moment crossed my

mind. I looked upon him as a curious and rather repulsive enigma—nothing more.

When I met him at the picnic, all remembrance of my unfortunate speech seemed to have vanished from his mind. He made himself agreeable as usual, and his salad was pronounced a *chef-d'œuvre*, while his quaint little Swedish songs and his tales of all climes and countries alternately thrilled and amused us. It was after luncheon, however, that the conversation turned upon a subject which seemed to have special charms for his daring mind.

I forget who it was that broached the question of the supernatural. I think it was Trevor, by some story of a hoax which he had perpetrated at Cambridge. The story seemed to have a strange effect upon Octavius Gaster, who tossed his long arms about in impassioned invective as he ridiculed those who dared to doubt about the existence of the unseen.

“Tell me,” he said, standing up in his excitement, “which among you has ever known what you call an instinct to fail? The wild bird has an instinct which tells it of the solitary rock upon the so boundless sea on which it may lay its egg, and is it disappointed? The swallow turns to the south when the winter is coming, and has its instinct led it astray? And shall this instinct which tells us of the unknown spirits around us, and which pervades every untaught child and every race so savage, be wrong? I say, never!”

“Go it, Gaster!” cried Charley.

“Take your wind and have another spell,” said the sailor.

“No, never,” repeated the Swede, disregarding our amusement. “We can see that matter exists apart from mind; then why should not mind exist apart from matter?”

“Give it up,” said Daseby.

“Have we not proofs of it?” continued Gaster, his gray eyes gleaming with excitement. “Who that has read Steinberg’s book upon spirits, or that by the eminent American, Madame Crowe, can doubt it? Did not Gustav von Spee meet his brother Leopold in the streets of Strasburg,

the same brother having been drowned three months before in the Pacific? Did not Home, the spiritualist, in open daylight, float above the housetops of Paris? Who has not heard the voices of the dead around him? I myself—”

“Well, what of yourself?” asked half a dozen of us, in a breath.

“Bah! it matters nothing,” he said, passing his hand over his forehead, and evidently controlling himself with difficulty. “Truly, our talk is too sad for such an occasion.” And, in spite of all our efforts, we were unable to extract from Gaster any relation of his own experiences of the supernatural.

It was a merry day. Our approaching dissolution seemed to cause each one to contribute his utmost to the general amusement. It was settled that after the coming rifle match Jack was to return to his ship and Trevor to his university. As to Charley and myself, we were to settle down into a staid respectable couple.

The match was one of our principal topics of conversation. Shooting had always been a hobby of Charley’s, and he was the captain of the Roborough company of Devon volunteers, which boasted some of the crack shots of the county. The match was to be against a picked team of regulars from Plymouth, and as they were no despicable opponents, the issue was considered doubtful. Charley had evidently set his heart on winning, and descanted long and loudly on the chances.

“The range is only a mile from Toynby Hall,” he said, “and we’ll all drive over, and you shall see the fun. You’ll bring me luck, Lottie,” he whispered, “I know you will.”

Oh, my poor lost darling, to think of the luck that I brought you!

There was one dark cloud to mar the brightness of that happy day.

I could not hide from myself any longer the fact that my mother’s suspicions were correct, and that Octavius Gaster loved me.

Throughout the whole of the excursion his attentions had been most assiduous, and his eyes hardly ever wandered away from me. There was a manner, too, in all that he said which spoke louder than words.

I was on thorns lest Charley should perceive it, for I knew his fiery temper; but the thought of such treachery never entered the honest heart of my lover.

He did once look up with mild surprise when the Swede insisted on relieving me of a fern which I was carrying; but the expression faded away into a smile at what he regarded as Gaster's effusive good nature. My own only feeling in the matter was pity for the unfortunate foreigner, and sorrow that I should have been the means of rendering him unhappy.

I thought of the torture it must be for a wild, fierce spirit like his to have a passion gnawing at his heart which honor and pride would alike prevent him from ever expressing in words. Alas! I had not counted upon the utter recklessness and want of principle of the man; but it was not long before I was undeceived.

There was a little arbor at the bottom of the garden, overgrown with honeysuckle and ivy, which had long been a favorite haunt of Charley and myself. It was doubly dear to us from the fact that it was here, on the occasion of my former visit, that words of love had first passed between us.

After dinner on the day following the picnic I sauntered down to this little summer house, as was my custom. Here I used to wait until Charley, having finished his cigar with the other gentlemen, would come down and join me.

On that particular evening he seemed to be longer away than usual. I waited impatiently for his coming, going to the door every now and then to see if there were any signs of his approach.

I had just sat down again after one of those fruitless excursions, when I heard the tread of a male foot upon the gravel, and a figure emerged from among the bushes.

I sprang up with glad smile, which changed to an expression of bewilderment, and even fear, when I saw the gaunt, pallid face of Octavius Gaster peering in at me.

There was certainly something about his actions which would have inspired distrust in the mind of anyone in my position. Instead of greeting me, he looked up and down the garden, as if to make sure that we were entirely alone. He then stealthily entered the arbor, and seated himself upon a chair, in such a position that he was between me and the doorway.

“Do not be afraid,” he said, as he noticed my scared expression. “There is nothing to fear. I do but come that I may have talk with you.”

“Have you seen Mr. Pillar?” I asked, trying hard to seem at my ease.

“Ha! Have I seen your Charley?” he answered, with a sneer upon the last words. “Are you so anxious that he come? Can no one speak to thee but Charley, little one?”

“Mr. Gaster,” I said, “you are forgetting yourself.”

“It is Charley, Charley, ever Charley!” continued the Swede, disregarding my interruption. “Yes, I have seen Charley. I have told him that you wait upon the bank of the river, and he has gone thither upon the wings of love.”

“Why have you told him this lie?” I asked, still trying not to lose my self-control.

“That I might see you; that I might speak to you. Do you, then, love him so? Cannot the thought of glory, and riches, and power, above all that the mind can conceive, win you from this first maiden fancy of yours? Fly with me, Charlotte, and all this, and more, shall be yours! Come!”

And he stretched his long arms out in passionate entreaty.

Even at that moment the thought flashed through my mind of how like they were to tentacles of some poisonous insect.

“You insult me, sir!” I cried, rising to my feet. “You shall pay heavily for this treatment of an unprotected girl!”

“Ah, you say it,” he cried, “but you mean it not. In your heart so tender there is pity left for the most miserable of men. Nay, you shall not pass me—you shall hear me first!”

“Let me go, sir!”

“Nay; you shall not go until you tell me nothing that I can do may win your love.”

“How dare you speak so?” I almost screamed, losing all fear in my indignation. “You, who are the guest of my future husband! Let me tell you, once and for all, that I had no feeling toward you before save one of repugnance and contempt, which you have now converted into positive hatred.”

“And is it so?” he gasped, tottering backward toward the doorway, and putting his hand up to his throat as if he found a difficulty in uttering the words. “And has my love won hatred in return? Ha!” he continued, advancing his face within a foot of mine as I cowered away from his glassy eyes, “I know it now. It is this—it is this!” and he struck the horrible cicatrix on his face with his clenched hand. “Maids love not such faces as this! I am not smooth, and brown, and curly like this Charley—this brainless schoolboy; this human brute who cares but for his sport and his—”

“Let me pass!” I cried, rushing at the door.

“No; you shall not go—you shall not!” he hissed, pushing me backward.

I struggled furiously to escape from his grasp. His long arms seemed to clasp me like bars of steel. I felt my strength going, and was making one last despairing effort to shake myself loose, when some irresistible power from behind tore my persecutor away from me and hurled him backward onto the gravel walk.

Looking up, I saw Charley’s towering figure and square shoulders in the doorway.

“My poor darling!” he said, catching me in his arms. “Sit here—here in the angle. There is no danger now. I shall be with you in a minute.”

“Don’t Charley, don’t!” I murmured, as he turned to leave me.

But he was deaf to my entreaties, and strode out of the arbor.

I could not see either him or his opponent from the position in which he had placed me, but I heard every word that was spoken.

“You villain!” said a voice that I could hardly recognize as my lover’s. “So this is why you put me on a wrong scent?”

“That is why,” answered the foreigner, in a tone of easy indifference.

“And this is how you repay our hospitality, you infernal scoundrel!”

“Yes; we amuse ourselves in your so beautiful summerhouse.”

“We! You are still on my ground and my guest, and I would wish to keep my hands from you; but, by heavens—”

Charley was speaking very low and in gasps now.

“Why do you swear? What is it, then?” asked the languid voice of Octavius Gaster.

“If you dare to couple Miss Underwood’s name with this business, and insinuate that—”

I heard the sound of a heavy blow, and a great rattling of the gravel.

I was too weak to rise from where I lay, and could only clasp my hands together and utter a faint scream.

“You cur!” said Charley. “Say as much again, and I’ll stop your mouth for all eternity!”

There was a silence, and then I heard Gaster speaking in a husky, strange voice.

“You have struck me!” he said; “you have drawn my blood!”

“Yes; I’ll strike you again if you show your cursed face within these grounds. Don’t look at me so! You don’t suppose your hanky-panky tricks can frighten me?”

An indefinable dread came over me as my lover spoke. I staggered to my feet and looked out at them, leaning

against the doorway for support.

Charley was standing erect and defiant, with his young head in the air, like one who glories in the cause for which he battles.

Octavius Gaster was opposite to him, surveying him with pinched lips and a baleful look in his cruel eyes. The blood was running freely from a deep gash on his lip, and spotting the front of his green necktie and white waistcoat. He perceived me the instant I emerged from the arbor.

“Ha, ha!” he cried, with a demoniacal burst of laughter. “She comes! The bride! She comes! Room for the bride! Oh, happy pair, happy pair!”

And with another fiendish burst of merriment he turned and disappeared over the crumbling wall of the garden with such rapidity that he was gone before we had realized what it was that he was about to do.

“Oh, Charley,” I said, as my lover came back to my side, “you’ve hurt him!”

“Hurt him! I should hope I have! Come, darling, you are frightened and tired. He did not injure you, did he?”

“No; but I feel rather faint and sick.”

“Come, we’ll walk slowly to the house together. The rascal! It was cunningly and deliberately planned, too. He told me he had seen you down by the river, and I was going down when I met young Stokes, the keeper’s son, coming back from fishing, and he told me that there was nobody there. Somehow, when Stokes said that, a thousand little things flashed into my mind at once, and I became in a moment so convinced of Gaster’s villainy that I ran as hard as I could to the arbor.”

“Charley,” I said, clinging to my lover’s arm, “I fear he will injure you in some way. Did you see the look in his eyes before he leaped the wall?”

“Pshaw!” said Charley. “All these foreigners have a way of scowling and glaring when they are angry, but it never comes to much.”

“Still, I am afraid of him,” said I, mournfully, as we went up the steps together, “and I wish you had not struck him.”

“So do I,” Charley answered; “for he was our guest, you know, in spite of his rascality. However, it’s done now and it can’t be helped, as the cook says in ‘Pickwick,’ and really it was more than flesh and blood could stand.”

I must run rapidly over the events of the next few days. For me, at least, it was a period of absolute happiness. With Gaster’s departure a cloud seemed to be lifted off my soul, and a depression which had weighed upon the whole household completely disappeared.

Once more I was the lighthearted girl that I had been before the foreigner’s arrival. Even the Colonel forgot to mourn over his absence, owing to the all-absorbing interest in the coming competition in which his son was engaged.

It was our main subject of conversation, and bets were freely offered by the gentlemen on the success of the Roborough team, though no one was unprincipled enough to seem to support their antagonists by taking them.

Jack Daseby ran down to Plymouth, and “made a book on the event” with some officers in the Marines, which he did in such an extraordinary way that we reckoned that in case of Roborough winning, he would lose seventeen shillings; while, should the other contingency occur, he would be involved in hopeless liabilities.

Charley and I had tacitly agreed not to mention the name of Gaster, nor to allude in anyway to what had passed.

On the morning after our scene in the garden, Charley had sent a servant up to the Swede’s room with instructions to pack up any things he might find there, and leave them at the nearest inn.

It was found, however, that all Gaster’s effects had been already removed, though how and when was a perfect mystery to the servants.

I know of few more attractive spots than the shooting range at Roborough. The glen in which it is situated is about

half a mile long and perfectly level, so that the targets were able to range from two to seven hundred yards, the farther ones simply showing as square white dots against the green of the rising hills behind.

The glen itself is part of the great moor, and its sides sloping gradually up, lose themselves in the vast rugged expanse. Its symmetrical character suggested to the imaginative mind that some giant of old had made an excavation in the moor with a titanic cheese scoop, but that a single trial had convinced him of the utter worthlessness of the soil.

He might even be imagined to have dropped the despised sample at the mouth of the cutting which he had made, for there was a considerable elevation there, from which you looked down on the long, straight glen.

It was upon this rising ground that the platform was prepared from which the riflemen were to fire, and thither we bent our steps on that eventful afternoon.

Our opponents had arrived there before us, bringing with them a considerable number of naval and military officers, while a long line of nondescript vehicles showed that many of the good citizens of Plymouth had seized the opportunity of giving their wives and families an outing on the moor.

An enclosure for ladies and distinguished guests had been erected on the top of the hill, which, with the marquee and refreshment tents, made the scene a lively one.

The country people had turned out in force, and were excitedly staking their half crowns upon their local champions, which were as enthusiastically taken up by the admirers of the regulars.

Through all of this scene of bustle and confusion we were safely conveyed by Charley, aided by Jack and Trevor, who finally deposited us in a sort of rudimentary grandstand, from which we could look round at our ease on all that was going on.

We were soon, however, so absorbed in the glorious view, that we became utterly unconscious of the betting and

pushing and chaff of the crowd in front of us.

Away to the south we could see the blue smoke of Plymouth curling up into the calm summer air, while beyond that was the great sea stretching away to the horizon, dark and vast, save where some petulant wave dashed it with a streak of foam, as if rebelling against the great peacefulness of nature.

From the Eddystone to the Start the long rugged line of the Devonshire coast lay like a map before us.

I was still lost in admiration when Charley's voice broke half-reproachfully on my ear.

"Why, Lottie," he said, "you don't seem to take a bit of interest in it!"

"Oh, yes, I do, dear," I answered. "But the scenery is so pretty, and the sea is always a weakness of mine. Come and sit here, and tell me all about the match and how we are to know whether you are winning or losing."

"I've just been explaining it," answered Charley. "But I'll go over it again."

"Do, like a darling," said I; and settled myself down to mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

"Well," said Charley, "there are ten men on each side. We shoot alternately: first, one of our fellows, then one of them, and so on—you understand?"

"Yes, I understand that."

"First we fire at the two hundred yards range—those are the targets, nearest of all. We fire five shots each at those. Then we fire five shots at the ones at five hundred yards—those middle ones; and then we finish up by firing at the seven hundred yards range—you see the targets far over there on the side of the hill. Whoever makes most points wins. Do you grasp it now?"

"Oh, yes; that's very simple," I said.

"Do you know what a bull's-eye is?" asked my lover.

"Some sort of sweetmeat, isn't it?" I hazarded.

Charley seemed amazed at the extent of my ignorance. "That's the bull's-eye," he said; "that dark spot in the center

of the target. If you hit that, it counts five. There is another ring, which you can't see, drawn round that, and if you get inside of it, it is called a 'center,' and counts four. Outside that, again, is called an 'outer,' and only gives you three. You can tell where the shot has hit, for the marker puts out a colored disc, and covers the place."

"Oh, I understand it all now," said I, enthusiastically. "I'll tell you what I'll do, Charley; I'll mark the score on a bit of paper every shot that is fired, and then I'll always know how Roborough is getting on!"

"You can't do better," he laughed as he strode off to get his men together, for a warning bell signified that the contest was about to begin.

There was a great waving of flags and shouting before the ground could be got clear, and then I saw a little cluster of red coats lying upon the greensward, while a similar group, in gray, took up their position to the left of them.

"Pang!" went a rifle shot, and the blue smoke came curling up from the grass.

Fanny shrieked, while I gave a cry of delight, for I saw the white disc go up, which proclaimed a "bull," and the shot had been fired by one of the Roborough men. My elation was, however, promptly checked by the answering shot which put down five to the credit of the regulars. The next was also a "bull," which was speedily canceled by another. At the end of the competition at the short range each side had scored forty-nine out of a possible fifty, and the question of supremacy was as undecided as ever.

"It's getting exciting," said Charley, lounging over the stand. "We begin shooting at the five hundred yards in a few minutes."

"Oh, Charley," cried Fanny, in high excitement, "don't you go and miss, whatever you do!"

"I won't if I can help it," responded Charley, cheerfully.

"You made a 'bull' every time just now," I said.

"Yes, but it's not so easy when you've got your sights up. However, we'll do our best, and we can't do more. They've

got some terribly good long-range men among them. Come over here, Lottie, for a moment."

"What is it, Charley?" I asked, as he led me away from the others. I could see by the look in his face that something was troubling him.

"It's that fellow," growled my lover. "What the deuce does he want to come here for? I hoped we had seen the last of him!"

"What fellow?" I gasped, with a vague apprehension at my heart.

"Why, that infernal Swedish fellow, Gaster!"

I followed the direction of Charley's glance, and there, sure enough, standing on a little knoll close to the place where the riflemen were lying, was the tall, angular figure of the foreigner.

He seemed utterly unconscious of the sensation which his singular appearance and hideous countenance excited among the burly farmers around him; but was craning his long neck about, this way and that, as if in search of somebody.

As we watched him, his eye suddenly rested upon us, and it seemed to me that, even at that distance, I could see a spasm of hatred and triumph pass over his livid features.

A strange foreboding came over me, and I seized my lover's hand in both my own.

"Oh, Charley," I cried, "don't—don't go back to the shooting! Say you are ill—make some excuse, and come away!"

"Nonsense, lass!" said he, laughing heartily at my terror. "Why, what in the world are you afraid of?"

"Of him!" I answered.

"Don't be silly, dear! One would think he was a demigod to hear the way in which you talk of him. But there! that's the bell, and I must be off."

"Well, promise, at least, that you will not go near him?" I cried, following Charley.

"All right—all right!" said he.

And I had to be content with that small concession.

The contest at the five hundred yards range was also a close and exciting one. Roborough led by a couple of points for some time, until a series of "bulls" by one of the crack marksmen of their opponents turned the tables upon them.

At the end it was found that the volunteers were three points to the bad—a result which was hailed by cheers from the Plymouth contingent and by long faces and black looks among the dwellers on the moor.

During the whole of this competition Octavius Gaster had remained perfectly still and motionless upon the top of the knoll on which he had originally taken up his position.

It seemed to me that he knew little of what was going on, for his face was turned away from the marksmen, and he appeared to be gazing abstractedly into the distance.

Once I caught sight of his profile, and thought that his lips were moving rapidly as if in prayer, or it may have been the shimmer of the hot air of the almost Indian summer which deceived me. It was, however, my impression at the time.

And now came the competition at the longest range of all, which was to decide the match.

The Roborough men settled down steadily to their task of making up the lost ground; while the regulars seemed determined not to throw away a chance by overconfidence.

As shot after shot was fired, the excitement of the spectators became so great that they crowded round the marksmen, cheering enthusiastically at every "bull."

We ourselves were so far affected by the general contagion that we left our harbor of refuge, and submitted meekly to the pushing and rough ways of the mob, in order to obtain a nearer view of the champions and their doings.

The military stood at seventeen when the volunteers were at sixteen, and great was the despondency of the rustics.

Things looked brighter, however, when the two sides tied at twenty-four, and brighter still when the steady shooting of the local team raised their score to thirty-two against thirty of their opponents.

There were still, however, the three points which had been lost at the last range to be made up for.

Slowly the score rose, and desperate were the efforts of both parties to pull off the victory.

Finally, a thrill ran through the crowd when it was known that the last red coat had fired, while one volunteer was still left, and that the soldiers were leading by four points.

Even *our* unsportsmanlike minds were worked into a state of all-absorbing excitement by the nature of the crisis which now presented itself.

If the first representative of our little town could but hit the bull's-eye the match was won.

The silver cup, the glory, the money of our adherents, all depended upon that single shot.

The reader will imagine that my interest was by no means lessened when, by dint of craning my neck and standing on tiptoe, I caught sight of my Charley coolly shoving a cartridge into his rifle, and realized that it was upon his skill that the honor of Roborough depended.

It was this, I think, which lent me strength to push my way so vigorously through the crowd that I found myself almost in the first row and commanding an excellent view of the proceedings.

There were two gigantic farmers on each side of me, and while we were waiting for the decisive shot to be fired, I could not help listening to the conversation, which they carried on in broad Devon, over my head.

"Mun's a rare ugly 'un," said one.

"He is that," cordially assented the other.

"See to mun's een?"

"Eh, Jock; see to mun's moo', rayther! Blessed if he bean't foamin' like Farmer Watson's dog—t' bull pup whot died mad o' the hydropathics."

I turned round to see the favored object of these flattering comments, and my eyes fell full upon Doctor Octavius Gaster, whose presence I had entirely forgotten in my excitement.

His face was turned toward me; but he evidently did not see me, for his eyes were bent with unswerving persistence upon a point midway apparently between the distant targets and himself.

I have never seen anything to compare with the extraordinary concentration of that stare, which had the effect of making his eyeballs appear gorged and prominent, while the pupils were contracted to the finest possible point.

Perspiration was running freely down his long, cadaverous face, and, as the farmer had remarked, there were some traces of foam at the corners of his mouth. The jaw was locked, as if with some fierce effort of the will which demanded all the energy of his soul.

To my dying day that hideous countenance shall never fade from my remembrance nor cease to haunt me in my dreams. I shuddered, and turned away my head in the vain hope that perhaps the honest farmer might be right, and mental disease be the cause of all the vagaries of this extraordinary man.

A great stillness fell upon the whole crowd as Charley, having loaded his rifle, snapped up the breech cheerily, and proceeded to lie down in his appointed place.

“That’s right, Mr. Charles, sir—that’s right!” I heard old McIntosh, the volunteer sergeant, whisper as I passed. “A cool head and a steady hand, that’s what does the trick, sir!”

My lover smiled round at the gray-headed soldier as he lay down upon the grass, and then proceeded to look along the sight of his rifle amid silence in which the faint rustling of the breeze among the blades of grass was distinctly audible.

For more than a minute he hung upon his aim. His finger seemed to press the trigger, and every eye was fixed upon the distant target, when suddenly, instead of firing, the rifleman staggered to his knees, leaving his weapon upon the ground.

To the surprise of everyone, his face was deadly pale, and perspiration was standing on his brow.

"I say, McIntosh," he said, in a strange, gasping voice, "is there anybody standing between that target and me?"

"Between, sir? No, not a soul, sir," answered the astonished sergeant.

"There, man, there!" cried Charley, with fierce energy, seizing him by the arm, and pointing in the direction of the target. "Don't you see him there, standing right in the line of fire?"

"There's no one there!" shouted half a dozen voices.

"No one there? Well, it must have been my imagination," said Charley, passing his hand slowly over his forehead. "Yet I could have sworn—Here, give me the rifle!"

He lay down again, and having settled himself into position, raised his weapon slowly to his eye. He had hardly looked along the barrel before he sprang up again with a loud cry.

"There!" he cried; "I tell you I see it! A man dressed in volunteer uniform, and very like myself—the image of myself. Is this a conspiracy?" he continued, turning fiercely on the crowd. "Do you tell me none of you see a man resembling myself walking from that target, and not two hundred yards from me as I speak?"

I should have flown to Charley's side had I not known how he hated feminine interference, and anything approaching to a scene. I could only listen silently to his strange, wild words.

"I protest against this!" said an officer, coming forward. "This gentleman must really either take his shot, or we shall remove our men off the field and claim the victory."

"But I'll shoot *him!*" gasped poor Charley.

"Humbug!" "Rubbish!" "Shoot him, then!" growled half a score of masculine voices.

"The fact is," lisped one of the military men in front of me to another, "the young fellow's nerves ar'n't quite equal to the occasion, and he feels it, and is trying to back out."

The imbecile young lieutenant little knew at this point how a feminine hand was longing to stretch forth and deal him a

sounding box on the ears.

"It's Martell's three-star brandy, that's what it is," whispered the other. "The 'devils,' don't you know. I've had 'em myself, and know a case when I see it."

This remark was too recondite for my understanding, or the speaker would have run the same risk as his predecessor.

"Well, are you going to shoot or not?" cried several voices.

"Yes, I'll shoot," groaned Charley—"I'll shoot *him* through! It's murder—sheer *murder!*"

I shall never forget the haggard look which he cast round at the crowd. "I'm aiming *through* him, McIntosh," he murmured, as he lay down on the grass and raised his gun for the third time to his shoulder.

There was one moment of suspense, a spurt of flame, the crack of a rifle, and a cheer which echoed across the moor, and might have been heard in the distant village.

"Well done, lad—well done!" shouted a hundred honest Devonshire voices, as the little white disc came out from behind the marker's shield and obliterated the dark "bull" for the moment, proclaiming that the match was won.

"Well done, lad! It's Maister Pillar, of Toynby Hall. Here, let's gie mun a lift, carry mun home, for the honor o' Roborough. Come on, lads! There mun is on the grass. Wake up, Sergeant McIntosh. What be the matter with thee? Eh? What?"

A deadly stillness came over the crowd, and then a low incredulous murmur, changing to one of pity, with whispers of "Leave her alone, poor lass—leave her to hersel'!"—and then there was silence again, save for the moaning of a woman, and her short, quick cries of despair.

For, reader, my Charley, my beautiful, brave Charley, was lying cold and dead upon the ground, with the rifle still clenched in his stiffening fingers.

I heard kind words of sympathy. I heard Lieutenant Doseby's voice, broken with grief, begging me to control my sorrow, and felt his hand, as he gently raised me from my

poor boy's body. This I can remember, and nothing more, until my recovery from my illness, when I found myself in the sickroom at Toynby Hall, and learned that three restless, delirious weeks had passed since that terrible day.

Stay!—do I remember nothing else?

Sometimes I think I do. Sometimes I think I can recall a lucid interval in the midst of my wanderings. I seem to have a dim recollection of seeing my good nurse go out of the room—of seeing a gaunt, bloodless face peering in through the half-open window, and of hearing a voice which said, “I have dealt with thy so beautiful lover, and I have yet to deal with thee.” The words come back to me with a familiar ring, as if they had sounded in my ears before, and yet it may have been but a dream.

“And this is all!” you say. “It is for this that a hysterical woman hunts down a harmless *savant* in the advertisement columns of the newspapers! On this shallow evidence she hints at crimes of the most monstrous description!”

Well, I cannot expect that these things should strike you as they struck me. I can but say that if I were upon a bridge with Octavius Gaster standing at one end, and the most merciless tiger that ever prowled in an Indian jungle at the other, I should fly to the wild beast for protection.

For me, my life is broken and blasted. I care not how soon it may end, but if my words shall keep this out of one honest household, I have not written in vain.

Within a fortnight after writing this narrative, my poor daughter disappeared. All search has failed to find her. A porter at the railway station has deposed to having seen a young lady resembling her description get into a first-class carriage with a tall, thin gentleman. It is, however, too ridiculous to suppose that she can have eloped after her recent grief, and without my having had any suspicions. The detectives are, however, working out the clue.—EMILY UNDERWOOD

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