

ligibly. She went very deliberately, and listened in the doorway. She looked very pale, and very interested—a face of fixed attention, of absorption in something she was irresolute about, rather than of doubt about what she heard; an expression rather out of proportion to the concurrent facts, as we know them.

“What is so strange”—this is what the man was saying, in his slow way—“is that I could find words to tell you, if I could remember what it is I have to tell. But when I try to bring it back, my head fails. Tell me again, mademoiselle, about the railway-carriage.” Sally wondered why she was mademoiselle, but recognised a tone of deference in his use of the word. She did as he asked her, slightly interrupting her narrative to make sure of getting the tea made right as she did so.

“I trod on your foot, you know. (One, two, three spoonfuls.) Surely you must remember that? (Four, and a little one for the pot.)”

“I have completely forgotten it.”

“Then I was sorry, and said I would have come off sooner if I had known it was a foot. You *must* remember that?” The man half smiled as he shook a slow-disclaiming head—one that would have remembered so gladly, if it could. “Then,” continues Sally, “I saw your thumb-ring for rheumatism.”

“My thumb-ring!” He presses his fingers over his closed eyes, as though to give Memory a better chance by shutting off the visible present, then withdraws them. “No, I remember no ring at all.”

“How extraordinary!”

“I remember a violent concussion *somewhere*—I can’t say where—and then finding myself in a cab, trying to speak to a lady whose face seemed familiar to me, but who she could be I had not the slightest idea. Then I tried to get out of the cab, and found I could not move—or hardly.”

“Look at mamma again! Here she is, come.” For Mrs. Nightingale has come into the room, looking white. “Yes, mother dear, I have. Quite full up to the brim. Only it isn’t ready to pour yet.” This last concerns the tea.

Mrs. Nightingale moves round behind the tea-maker, and comes full-face in front of her guest. One might have fancied that the hand that held the pocket-handkerchief that caused the

smell of eau-de-Cologne that came in with her was tremulous. But then that very eau-de-Cologne was eloquent about the recent effect of the heat. Of course, she was a little upset. Nothing strikes either the doctor or Mademoiselle Sally as abnormal or extraordinary. The latter resumes:

“Surely, sir! Oh, you must, you *must* remember about the name Nightingale?”

“This young gentleman said it just now. *Your* name, madame?”

“Certainly, my name,” says the lady addressed. But Sally distinguishes:

“Yes, but I didn’t mean that. I meant when I took the ring from you, and was to pay for it. Sixpence. And you had no change for half-a-crown. And then I gave you my mother’s card to send it to us here. One-and-elevenpence, because of the postage. Why, surely you can remember that!” She cannot bring herself to believe him. Dr. Vereker does, though, and tells him not to try recollecting; he will only put himself back. “Take the tea and wait a bit,” is the doctor’s advice. For Miss Sally is transmitting a cup of tea with studied equilibrium. He receives it absently, leaving it on the table.

“I do not know if you will know what I mean,” he says, “but I have a sort of feeling of—of being frightened; for I have been trying to remember things, and I find I can remember almost nothing. Perhaps I should say I cannot remember *at all*—can’t do any recollecting, if you understand.” Every one can understand—at least, each says so. Sally goes on, half *sotto voce*: “You can recollect your own name, I suppose?” She speaks half-way between soliloquy and dialogue. The doctor throws in counsel, aside, for precaution.

“You’ll only make matters worse, like that. Better leave him quite alone.”

But the man’s hearing doesn’t seem to have suffered, for he catches the remark about his name.

“I can’t tell,” he says. “I am not so sure. Of course, I can’t have forgotten my own name, because that’s impossible. I will tell it you in a minute. . . . Oh dear! . . .”

The young doctor seemed to disapprove highly of these efforts, and to wish to change the conversation. “Let it alone now,”

said he. "Only for a little. Would you kindly allow me to see your arm again?"

"Let him drink his tea first." This is from Miss Sally, the tea-priestess. "Another cup?" But no; he won't take another cup, thanks.

"Now let's have the coat off, and get another look at the arm; never mind apologizing." But the patient had not contemplated apology. It was the stiffness made him slow. However, he got his coat off, and drew the blue shirt off his left arm. He had a fine hand and arm, but the hand hung inanimate, and the fingers looked scorched. Dr. Vereker began feeling the arm at intervals all the way up, and asking each time questions about the degree of sensibility.

"I couldn't say whether it's normal or not up there." So the patient testified. And Mrs. Nightingale, who was watching the examination intently, suggested trying the other arm in the same place for comparison.

"You didn't see the other arm at the station, doctor?" she said.

"Didn't I?"

"I was asking."

"Well, no. Now I come to think of it, I don't think I did. We'll have a look now, anyhow."

"You're a nice doctor!" This is from Miss Sally; a little confidential fling at the profession. She is no respecter of persons. Her mother would, no doubt, check her—a pert little monkey!—only she is absorbed in the examination.

The doctor, as he ran back the right-arm sleeve, uttered an exclamation. "Why, my dear sir," cried he, "here we have it! What more can we want?"—and pointed at the arm. And Sally said, as though relieved: "He's got his name written on him plain enough, anyhow!" Her mother gave a sigh of relief, or something like it, and said, "Yes." The patient himself seemed quite as much perplexed as pleased at the discovery, saying only, in a subdued way: "It *must* be my name." But he did not seem to accept at all readily the name tattooed on his arm: "A. Fenwick, 1878."

"Whose name can it be if it is not yours?" said Mrs. Nightingale. She fixed her eyes on his face, as though to watch his

effort of memory. "Try and think." But the doctor protested.

"Don't do anything of the sort," said he. "It's very bad for him, Mrs. Nightingale. He *mustn't* think. Just let him rest."

The patient, however, could not resign himself without a struggle to this state of anonymous ambiguity. His bewilderment was painful to witness. "If it were my name," he said, speaking slowly and not very clearly, "surely it would bring back the first name. I try to recall the word, and the effort is painful, and doesn't succeed." His hostess seemed much interested, even to the extent of ignoring the doctor's injunctions.

"Very curious! If you heard the name now, would you recollect it?"

"I *wish* you wouldn't try these experiments," says the doctor. "They won't do him *any* good. *Rest's* the thing."

"I think I would rather try," says Fenwick, as we may now call him. "I will be quiet if I can get this right."

Mrs. Nightingale begins repeating names that begin with A. "Alfred, Augustus, Arthur, Andrew, Algernon——"

Fenwick's face brightens. "That's it!" says he. "Algernon. I knew it quite well all the time, of course. But I couldn't—couldn't. . . . However, I don't feel that I shall make myself understood."

"I can't make out," said Sally, "how you came to remember the bottle of eau-de-Cologne."

"I did not remember it. I do not now. I mean, how it came to be in the pocket. I can remember nothing else that was there—would have been, that is. There *is* nothing else there now, except my cigar-case and a pocket-book with nothing much in it. I can tell nothing about my watch. A watch ought to be there."

"There, there!" says the doctor; "you will remember it all presently. Do take my advice and be quiet, and sit still and don't talk."

But half an hour or more after, although he had taken this advice, Fenwick remembered nothing, or professed to have remembered nothing. He seemed, however, much more collected, and except on the memory-point nearly normal.

When the doctor, looking at his watch, referred to his obliga-

tion to keep another engagement, Fenwick rose, saying that he was now perfectly well able to walk, and he would intrude no longer on his hostesses' hospitality. This would have been perfectly reasonable, but for one thing. It had come out that his pockets were empty, and he was evidently quite without any definite plan as to what he should do next, or where he should go. He was only anxious to relieve his new friends of an encumbrance. He was evidently the sort of person on whom the character sat ill; one who would always be most at ease when shifting for himself; such a one as would reply to any doubt thrown on his power of doing so, that he had been in many a worse plight than this before. Yet you would hardly have classed him on that account as an adventurer, because that term implies unscrupulousness in the way one shifts for oneself. His face was a perfectly honourable one. It was a face whose strength did not interfere with its refinement, and there was a pleasant candour in the smile that covered it as he finally made ready to depart with the doctor. He should never, he said, know how to be grateful enough to madame and her daughter for their kindness to him. But when pressed on the point of where he intended to go, and how they should hear what had become of him, he answered vaguely. He was undecided, but, of course, he would write and tell them as they so kindly wished to hear of him. Would mademoiselle give him the address written down?

They found themselves—at least, the doctor and Sally did—inferring, from his refreshed manner and his confidence about departing, that his memory was coming back, or would come back. It might have seemed needless inquisitiveness to press him with further questions. They left the point alone. After all, they had no more right to catechize him about himself than if he had been knocked down by a cart outside the door, and brought into the house unconscious—a thing which might quite well have happened.

Mrs. Nightingale seemed very anxious he should not go away quite unprovided with money. She asked Dr. Vereker to pass him on a loan from her before he parted with him. He could post it back when it was quite convenient, so the doctor was to tell him. The doctor asked, Wasn't a sovereign a large order? But she seemed to think not. "Besides," said she, "it makes it

certain we shall not lose sight of him. I'm not sure we ought to let him go at all," added she. She seemed very uneasy about it—almost exaggeratedly so, the doctor thought. But he was reassuring and confident, and she allowed his judgment to overrule hers. But he must bring him back without scruple if he saw reason to do so. He promised, and the two departed together, the gait and manner of Fenwick giving rise to no immediate apprehension.

"How rum!" said Sally, when they had gone. "I never thought I should live to see a man electrocuted."

"A man what?"

"Well, half-electrocuted, then. I say, mother——"

"What, dear?" She is looking very tired, and speaks absently. Sally makes the heat responsible again in her mind, and continues:

"I don't believe his name's Algernon at all! It's Arthur, or Andrew, or something of that sort."

"You're very wise, poppet. Why?"

"Because you stopped such a long time after Algernon. It was like cheating at Spiritualism. You *must* say the alphabet quite steady—A—B—C—D——" Sally sketches out the proper attitude for the impartial inquirer. "Or else you're an accomplice."

"You're a puss! No, *his* name's Algernon, right enough. . . . I mean, I've no doubt it's Algernon. Why shouldn't it be?"

"No reason at all. Dr. Vereker's is Conrad, so, of course, there's no reason why his shouldn't be Algernon." Satisfactory and convincing! At least, the speaker thinks so, and is perfectly satisfied. Her mother doesn't quarrel with the decision.

"Kitten!" she says suddenly. And then in reply to her daughter's, "What's up, mammy dear?" she suggests that they shall walk out in front—it is a quiet, retired sort of cul-de-sac road, ending in a fence done over with tar, with nails along the top like the letter *L* upside down—in the cool. "It's quite delicious now the sun's gone down, and Martha can make supper another half-hour late." Agreed.

The mother pauses as they reach the gate. "Who's that talking?" she asks, and listens.

"Nobody. It's only the sparrows going to bed."

"No, no; not that! Shish! be quiet! I'm sure I heard Dr. Vereker's voice——"

"How could you? He's home by now."

"Do be quiet, child!" She continues listening.

"Why not look round the corner and see if it isn't him?"

"Well, I was going to; only you and the sparrows make such a chattering. . . . There, I knew it would be that! Why doesn't he bring him back here, at once?" For at the end of the short road are Dr. Vereker and Fenwick, the latter with his hand on the top of a post, as though resting. They must have been there some minutes.

"Fancy their having got no further than the fire-alarm!" says Sally, who takes account of her surroundings.

"Of course, I ought never to have let him go." Thus her mother, with decision in her voice. "Come on, child!"

She seems greatly relieved at the matter having settled itself—so Sally thinks, at least.

"We got as far as this," Dr. Vereker says—rather meaninglessly, if you come to think of it. It is so very obvious.

"And now," says Mrs. Nightingale, "how is he to be got back again? That's the question!" She seems not to have the smallest doubt about the question, but much about the answer. It is answered, however, with the assistance of the previous police-constable, who reappears like a ghost. And Mr. Fenwick is back again within the little white villa, much embarrassed at the trouble he is giving, but unable to indicate any other course. Clearly, it would never do to accept the only one he can suggest—that he should be left to himself, leaning on the fire-alarm, till the full use of his limbs should come back to him.

Mrs. Nightingale, who is the person principally involved, seems quite content with the arrangement. The doctor, in his own mind, is rather puzzled at her ready acquiescence; but, then, the only suggestion he could make would be that he should do precisely the same good office himself to this victim of an electric current of a good deal too many volts—too many for private consumption—or cab him off to the police-station or the work-house. For Mr. Fenwick continues quite unable to give any account of his past or his belongings, and can only look forward to recollecting himself, as it were, to-morrow morning.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE STRANGER STOPPED ON AT KRAKATOA VILLA. OF THE FREAKS OF AN EXTINGUISHED MEMORY. OF HOW THE STRANGER GOT A GOOD APPOINTMENT, BUT NONE COULD SAY WHO HE WAS, NOR WHENCE

WE must suppose that the personal impression produced by the man so strangely thrown on the hands of Mrs. Nightingale and her daughter was a pleasant one. For had the reverse been the case, the resources of civilisation for disposing of him elsewhere had not been exhausted when the decision was come to that he should remain where he was; till next morning, at any rate. The lady of the house—of course the principal factor in the solution of the problem—appeared, as we have seen, to have made up her mind on the subject. And probably her daughter had been enough influenced by the stranger's manner and appearance, even in the short period of the interview we have just described, to get rid of a feeling she had of self-reproach for her own rashness. We don't understand girls, but we ask this question of those who do: Is it possible that Miss Sally was impressed by the splendid arm with the name tattooed on it—an arm in which every muscle told as in a Greek statue, without infringing on its roundness—the arm of Theseus or Ilissus? Or was it the tone of his voice—a musical one enough? Or merely his generally handsome face and courteous manner?

He remained that night at the house, but next day still remembered nothing. He wished to go on his way—destination not known; but *somewhere*—and would have done so had it not been for Mrs. Nightingale, whose opposition to his going was, thought Dr. Vereker, almost more decisive than the case called for. So he remained on, that day and the next, slowly regaining the use of his right hand. But his memory continued a blank; and though he was not unable to converse about passing events, he could not fix his attention, or only with a great effort. What was very annoying to Sally was that he was absolutely unable to