

Well!—Mr. Ancrum may be right—the English Puritan may be right—'sin' and 'law' may have after all some of those mysterious meanings his young analysis had impetuously denied them—he and Elise may have been only dashing themselves against the hard facts of the world's order, while they seemed to be transcending the common lot and spurning the common ways. What matter now! A certain impatient defiance rises in his stricken soul. He has made shipwreck of this one poor opportunity of life—confessed! now let the God behind it punish, if God there be. '*The rest is silence.*' With Elise in his arms, he had grasped at immortality. Now a stubborn, everlasting 'Nay' possesses him. There is nothing beyond.

He gathered up his letter, folded it, and put it into the breast-pocket of his coat. But in doing so his fingers touched once more the ragged edges of a bit of frayed paper.

*Louie!*

Through all these half-sane days and nights he had never once thought of his sister. She had passed out of his life—she had played no part even in the nightmares of his dreams.

But now!—while that intense denial of any reality in the universe beyond and behind this masque of life and things was still vibrating through his deepest being, it was as though a hand gently drew aside a curtain, and there grew clear before him, slowly effacing from his eyes the whole grandiose spectacle of buildings, sky, and river, that scene of the past which had worked so potently both in his childish sense and in Reuben's maturer conscience—the bare room, the iron bed, the dying man, one child within his arm, the other a frightened baby beside him.

It was frightfully clear, clearer than it had ever been in any normal state of brain, and as his mind lingered on it, unconsciously shaping, deepening its own creation, the weird impression grew that the helpless figure amid the bedclothes rose on its elbow, opened its cavernous eyes, and looked at him face to face, at the son whose childish heart had beat against his father's to the last. The boy's tortured soul quailed afresh before the curse his own remorse called into those eyes.

He hung over the water pleading with the phantom—defending himself. Every now and then he found that he was speaking aloud; then he would look round with a quick, piteous terror to see whether he had been heard or no, the parched lips beginning to move again almost before his fear was soothed.

All his past returned upon him, with its obligations, its fetters of conscience and kinship, so slowly forged, so often resisted and forgotten, and yet so strong. The moment marked the first passing away of the philtre, but it brought no recovery with it.

*'My God! my God! I tried, father—I tried. But she is lost, lost—as I am!'*

Then a thought found entrance and developed. He walked up and down the quay, wrestling it out, returning slowly and

with enormous difficulty, because of his physical state, to some of the normal estimates and relations of life.

At last he dragged himself off towards his hotel. He must have some sleep, or how could these hours that yet remained be lived through—his scheme carried out?

On the way he went into a shop still open on the boulevard. When he came out he thrust his purchase into his pocket, buttoned his coat over it, and pursued his way northwards with a brisker step.

## CHAPTER XI

Two days afterwards David stood at the door of a house in the outskirts of the Auteuil district of Paris. The street had a half-finished, miscellaneous air; new buildings of the villa type were mixed up with old and dingy houses standing in gardens, which had been evidently overtaken by the advancing stream of Paris, having once enjoyed a considerable amount of country air and space.

It was at the garden gate of one of these older houses that David rang, looking about him the while at the mean irregular street and the ill-kept side-walks with their heaps of cinders and refuse.

A powerfully built woman appeared, scowling, in answer to the bell. At first she flatly refused the new-comer admission. But David was prepared. He set to work to convince her that he was not a Paris creditor, and, further, that he was well aware M. Montjoie was not at home, since he had passed him on the other side of the road, apparently hurrying to the railway station, only a few minutes before. He desired simply to see madame. At this the woman's expression changed somewhat. She showed, however, no immediate signs of letting him in, being clearly chosen and paid to be a watch-dog. Then David brusquely put his hand in his pocket. Somehow he must get this harridan out of the way at once! The same terror was upon him that had been upon him now for many days and nights—of losing command of himself, of being no more able to do what he had to do.

The creature studied him, put out a greedy palm, developed a smile still more repellent than her brutality, and let him in.

He found himself in a small, neglected garden; in front of him, to the right, a wretched, weather-stained house, bearing every mark of poverty and dilapidation, while to the left there stretched out from the house a long glass structure, also in miserable condition—a sculptor's studio, as he guessed.

His guide led him to the studio-door. Madame was there a few minutes ago. As they approached, David stopped.

'I will knock. You may go back to the house. I am madame's brother.'

She looked at him once more, reluctant. Then, in the clearer light of the garden, the likeness of the face to one she already

knew struck her with amazement; she turned and went off, muttering.

David knocked at the door; there was a movement within, and it was cautiously opened.

'*Monsieur est sorti.*—You!'

The brother and sister were face to face.

David closed the door behind him, and Louie retreated slowly, her hands behind her, her tall figure drawing itself up, her face setting into a frowning scorn.

'You!—what are you here for? We have done with each other!'

For answer David went up to a stove which was feebly burning in the damp, cheerless place, put down his hat and stick, and bent over it, stretching out his hands to the warmth. A chair was beside it, and on the chair some scattered bits of silk and velvet, out of which Louie was apparently fashioning a hat.

She stood still, observing him. She was in a loose dress of some silky Oriental material, and on her black hair she wore a red close-fitting cap with a fringe of golden coins dropping lightly and richly round her superb head and face.

'What is the matter with you?' she asked him grimly, after a minute's silence. 'She has left you—that's plain!'

The young man involuntarily threw back his head as though he had been struck, and a vivid colour rushed into his cheek. But he answered quickly:

'We need not discuss my affairs. I did not come here to speak of them. They are beyond mending. I came to see—before I go—whether there is anything I can do to help you.'

'Much obliged to you!' she cried, flinging herself down on the edge of a rough board platform, whereon stood a fresh and vigorous clay-study, for which she had just been posing, to judge from her dress. Beyond was the *Mænad*. And in the distance loomed a great block of marble, upon which masons had been working that afternoon.

'I am *greatly* obliged to you!' she repeated mockingly, taking the crouching attitude of an animal ready to attack. 'You are a pattern brother.'

Her glowing looks expressed the enmity and contempt she was at the moment too excited to put into words.

David drew his hand across his eyes with a long breath. How was he to get through it, this task of his, with this swollen, aching brain and these trembling limbs? Louie *must* let him speak; he bitterly felt his physical impotence to wrestle with her.

He went up to her slowly and sat down beside her. She drew away from him with a violent movement. But he laid his hand upon her knee—a shaking hand which his impatient will tried in vain to steady.

'Louie, look at me!' he commanded.

She did so unwillingly, but the proud repulsion of her lip did not relax.

'Well, I dare say you look pretty bad. Whose fault is it? everybody else but you knew what the creature was worth. Ask anybody!'

The lad's frame straightened and steadied. He took his hand from her knee.

'Say that kind of thing again,' he said calmly, 'and I walk straight out of that door, and you set eyes on me for the last time. That would be what you want, I dare say. All I wish to point out is, that you would be a great fool. I have not come here to-day to waste words, but to propose something to your advantage—your money-advantage,' he repeated deliberately, looking round the dismal building with its ill-mended gaps and rents, and its complete lack of the properties and appliances to which the humblest modern artist pretends. 'To judge from what I heard in Paris, and what I see, money is scarce here.'

His piteous sudden wish to soften her, to win a kind word from her, from anyone, had passed away. He was beginning to take command of her as in the old days.

'Well, maybe we are hard up,' she admitted slowly. 'People are such brutes and won't wait, and a sculptor has to pay out for a lot of things before he can make anything at all. But that statue will put it all right,' and she pointed behind her to the *Mænad*. 'It's me—it's the one you tried to put a stopper on.'

She looked at him darkly defiant. She was leaning back on one arm, her foot beating with the trick familiar to her. For reckless and evil splendour the figure was unsurpassable.

'When he sells that,' she went on, seeing that he did not answer, 'and he will sell it in a jiffy—it is the best he's ever done—there'll be heaps of money.'

David smiled.

'For a week perhaps. Then, if I understand this business aright—I have been doing my best, you perceive, to get information, and M. Montjoie seems to be better known than one supposed to half Paris—the game will begin again.'

'Never you mind,' she broke in, breathing quickly. 'Give me my money—the money that belongs to me—and let me alone.'

'On one condition,' he said quietly. 'That money, as you remember, is in my hands and at my disposal.'

'Ah! I supposed you would try to grab it!' she cried.

Even he was astonished at her violence—her insolence. The demon in her had never been so plain, the woman never so effaced. His heart dropped within him like lead, and his whole being shrank from her.

'Listen to me!' he said, seizing her strongly by the hand, while a light of wrath leapt into his changed and bloodshot eyes. 'This man will desert you; in a year's time he will have tired of you; what'll you do then?'

'Manage for myself, thank you! without any canting interference from you. I have had enough of that.'

'And fall again,' he said, releasing her, and speaking with a deliberate intensity; 'fall again—from infamy to infamy!'

She sprang up.

'Mind yourself!' she cried.

Miserable moment! As he looked at her he felt that that weapon of his old influence with her which, poor as it was, he had relied on in the last resort all his life, had broken in his hand. His own act had robbed it of all virtue. That pang of 'irreparable-ness' which had smitten Elise smote him now. All was undone—all was done!

He buried his face in his hands an instant. When he lifted it again, she was standing with her arms folded across her chest, leaning against an iron shaft which supported part of the roof.

'You had better go!' she said, still in a white heat. 'Why you ever came I don't know. If you won't give me that money, I shall get it somehow.'

Suddenly, as she spoke, everything—the situation, the subject of their talk, the past—seemed to be wiped out of David's brain. He stared round him helplessly. Why were they there—what had happened?

This blankness lasted a certain number of seconds. Then it passed away, and he painfully recovered his identity. But the experience was not new to him—it would recur—let him be quick.

This time a happier instinct served him. He, too, rose and went up to her.

'We are a pair of fools,' he said to her, half bitterly, half gently; 'we reproach and revile each other, and all the time I am come to give you not only what is yours, but all—all I have—that it may stand between you and—and worse ruin.'

'Ruin!' she said, throwing back her head and catching at the word; 'speak for yourself! If I am Montjoie's mistress, Elise Delaunay was yours. Don't preach. It won't go down.'

'I have no intention of preaching—don't alarm yourself,' he replied quietly, this time controlling himself without difficulty. 'I have only this to say. On the day when you become Montjoie's wife, all our father's money—all the six hundred pounds Mr. Gurney paid over to me in January, shall be paid to you.'

She started, caught her breath, tried to brazen it out.

'What is this idiocy for?' she asked coldly. 'What does marrying matter to you?'

He sank down again on the chair by the stove, being, indeed, unable to stand.

'Perhaps I can't tell you,' he said, after a pause, shading his face from her with his hand; 'perhaps I could not make plain to myself what I feel. But this I know—that this man with whom you are living here is a man for whom nobody has a good word. I want to give you a hold over him. But first!—stop a moment,'—he dropped his hand and looked up eagerly, 'will you leave him—leave him at once? I could arrange that.'

'Make your mind easy,' she said shortly; 'no suits me—I stay. I went with him, well, because I was dull—and because I wanted to make you smart for it, if you're keen to know!—but if you think I am anxious to go home, to be cried over by Dora and lectured by you, you're vastly mistaken. I can manage him! I have my hold on him—he knows very well what I am worth to him.'

She threw her head back superbly against the iron shaft, putting one arm round it and resting her hot cheek against it as though for coolness.

'Why should we argue?' he said sharply—after a wretched silence. 'I didn't come for that. If you won't leave him I have only this to say. On the day he marries you, if the evidence of the marriage is satisfactory to an English lawyer I have discovered in Paris and whose address I will give you, six hundred pounds will be paid over to you. It is there now, in the lawyer's hands. If not, I go home, and the law does not compel me to hand you over one farthing.'

She was silent, and began to pace up and down.

'Montjoie despises marriage,' she said presently.

'Try whether he despises money too,' said David, and could not for the life of him keep the sarcastic note out of his voice.

She bit her lip.

'And when, if it is done, must this precious thing be settled?'

'If your marriage does not take place within a month, Mr. O'Kelly—I will leave you his address; he put his hand into his pocket—has orders to return the money—'

'To whom?' she inquired, struck by his sudden break.

'To me, of course,' he said slowly. 'Is it perfectly plain? do you understand? Now, then, listen. I have inquired what the law is—you will have to be married both at the mairie and by the chaplain at the British embassy.'

She stopped suddenly in her walk and confronted him.

'If I am married at all,' she said abruptly, 'I shall be married as a Catholic.'

'A Catholic!' David stared at her. She enjoyed his astonishment.

'Oh, I have had that in my mind for a long time,' she said scornfully. 'There is a priest at that church with the steps, you know, near that cemetery place on the hill, who is very much interested in me indeed. He speaks English. I used to go to confession. Madame Cervin told me all about it, and how to do it; I did it exact! Oh, if I am to be married, that will make it plain sailing enough. It was awkward—while—'

She broke off and sat down again beside him, pondering and smiling as he had seen her do in Manchester, when she had the prospect of a new dress or some amusement that excited her.

'How have you been able to think about such things?' he asked her, marvelling.

'Think about them! What was the good of that? It's the churches I like, and the priests. Now there *is* something to see in the Paris churches, like the Madeleine—worth a dozen St. Damian's,—you may tell Dora that. The flowers and the dresses and the music—they *are* something like. And the priests—'

She smiled again, little meditative smiles, as though she were recalling her experiences.

'Well, I don't know that there's much about them,' she said at last; 'they're queer, and they're awfully clever, and they want to manage you, of course.'

She stopped, quite unable to express herself any more fully. But it was evident that the traditional relation of the Catholic priest to his penitent had been to her a subject of curiosity and excitement—that she would gladly know more of it.

David could hardly believe his ears. He sat lost at first in the pure surprise of it, in the sense of Louie's unlikeness to any other human creature he had ever seen. Then a gleam of satisfaction arose. He had heard of the hold on women possessed by the Catholic Church, and maintained by her marvellous, and on the whole admirable, system of direction. For himself, he would have no priests of whatever Church. But his mind harboured none of the common Protestant rules and shibboleths. In God's name, let the priests get hold of this sister of his!—if they could—when he—

'Marry this man, then!' he said to her at last, breaking the silence abruptly, 'and square it with the Church, if you want to.'

'Oh, indeed!' she said mockingly. 'So you have nothing to say against my turning Catholic? I should like to see Uncle Reuben's face.'

Her voice had the exultant mischief of a child. It was evident that her spirits were rising, that her mood towards her brother was becoming more amiable.

'Nothing,' he said dryly, replying to her question.

Then he got up and looked for his hat. She watched him askance. 'What are you going for? I could get you some tea. He won't be in for hours.'

'I have said what I had to say. These'—taking a paper from his pocket and laying it down, 'are all the directions, legal and other, that concern you, as to the marriage. I drew them up this morning, with Mr. O'Kelly. I have given you his address. You can communicate with him at any time.'

'I can write to you, I suppose?'

'Better write to him,' he said quietly, 'he has instructions. He seemed to me a good sort.'

'Where are you going?'

'Back to Paris, and then—home.'

She placed herself in his way, so that the sunny light of the late afternoon, coming mostly from behind her, left her face in shadow,

'What'll you do without that money?' she asked abruptly.

He paused, getting together his answer with difficulty.

'I have the stock, and there is something left of the sixty pounds Uncle Reuben brought. I shall do.'

'He'll muddle it all,' she said roughly. 'What's the good?'

And she folded her arms across her with the recklessness of one quite ready and eager, if need be, to fight her own battle, with her own weapons, in her own way.

'Get Mr. O'Kelly to keep it, if you can persuade him, and draw it by degrees. I'd have made a trust of it, if it had been enough; but it isn't. Twenty-four pounds a year: that's all you'd get, if we tied up the capital.'

She laughed. Evidently her acquaintance with Montjoie had enlarged her notions of money, which were precise and acute enough before.

'He spends that in a supper when he's in cash. I'll be curious to see whether, all in a lump, it'll be enough to make him marry me. Still, he is precious hard up: he don't stir out till dark, he's so afraid of meeting people.'

'That's my hope,' said David heavily, hardly knowing what he said. 'Good-bye.'

'Hope!' she re-echoed bitterly. 'What d'you want to tie me to him for, for good and all?'

And, turning away from him, she stared, frowning, through the dingy glass door into the darkening garden. In her mind there was once more that strange uprising swell of reaction—of hatred of herself and life.

Why, indeed? David could not have answered her question. He only knew that there was a blind instinct in him driving him to this, as the best that remained open—the only *amende* possible for what had been so vilely done by himself, by her, and by the man who had worked out her fall for a mere vicious whim. There was no word in any mouth, it seemed to him, of his being in love with her.

There were all sorts of whirling thoughts in his mind—fragments cast up by the waves of desolate experience he had been passing through—inarticulate cries of warning, judgment, pain. But he could put nothing into words.

'Good-bye, Louie!'

She turned and stood looking at him.

'What made you get ill?' she inquired, eyeing him.

His thirsty heart drank in the change of tone.

'I don't sleep,' he said hurriedly. 'It's the noise. The Nord station is never quiet. Well, mind you've got to bring that off. Keep the papers safe. Good-bye, for a long time.'

'I can come over when I want?' she said half sullenly.

'Yes,' he assented, 'but you won't want.'

He drew her by the hand, with a solemn tremulous feeling, and kissed her on the cheek. He would have liked to give her their father's dying letter. It was there, in his coat-pocket. But

he shrank from the emotion of it. No, he must go. He had done all he could.

She opened the door for him, and took him to the garden-gate in silence.

'When I'm married,' she said shortly, 'if ever I am—Lord knows!—you can tell Uncle Reuben and Dora?'

'Yes. Good-bye.'

The gate closed behind him. He went away, hurrying towards the Auteuil station.

When he landed again in the Paris streets, he stood irresolute.

'One more look,' he said to himself, 'one more.'

And he turned down the Rue Chantal. There was the familiar archway, and the light shining behind the porter's door. Was her room already stripped and bare, or was the broken glass—poor dumb prophet!—still there, against the wall?

He wandered on through the lamp-lit city and the crowded pavements. Elise—the wraith of her—went with him, hand in hand, ghost with ghost, amid this multitude of men. Sometimes, breaking from this dream-companionship, he would wake with terror to the perception of his true, his utter loneliness. He was not made to be alone, and the thought that nowhere in this great Paris was there a single human being to whose friendly eye or hand he might turn in his need, swept across him from time to time, contracting the heart. Dora—Mr. Ancrum—if they knew, they would be sorry.

Then again indifference and blankness came upon him, and he could only move feebly on, seeing everything in a blur and mist. After these long days and nights of sleeplessness, semi-starvation, and terrible excitement, every nerve was sick, every organ out of gear.

The lights of the Tuileries, the stately pile of the Louvre, under a grey driving sky.—There would be rain soon—ah, there it came! the great drops hissing along the pavement. He pushed on to the river, careless of the storm, soothed, indeed, by the cool dashes of rain in his face and eyes.

The Place de la Concorde seemed to him as day, so brilliant was the glare of its lamps. To the right, the fairyland of the Champs-Élysées, the trees tossing under the sudden blast; in front, the black trench of the river. On, on—let him see it all—gather it all into his accusing heart and brain, and then at a stroke blot out the inward and the outward vision, and 'cease upon the midnight with no pain'!

He walked till he could walk no more; then he sank on a dark seat on the Quai Saint-Michel, cursing himself. Had he no nerve left for the last act—was that what this delay, this fooling meant? Coward!

But not here! not in these streets—this publicity! Back—to the little noisome room. There lock the door, and make an end!

On the way northward, at the command of a sudden caprice, he sat down outside a blazing café on the Boulevard and ordered

absinthe, which he had never tasted. While he waited he looked round on the painted women, on the men escorting them, on the loungers with their newspapers and cigars, the shouting, supercilious waiters. But all the little odious details of the scene escaped him; he felt only the touchingness of his human comradeship, the yearning of a common life, bruised and wounded but still alive within him.

Then he drank the stuff they gave him, loathed it, paid and staggered on. When he reached his hotel he crept upstairs, dreading to meet any of the harsh-faced people who frowned as he passed them. He had done abject things these last three days to conciliate them—tipped the waiter, ordered food, not that he might eat it but that he might pay for it, bowed to the landlady—all to save the shrinking of his sore and quivering nerves. In vain! It seemed to him that since that last look from Elise as she nestled into the fern, there had been no kindness for him in human eyes—save, perhaps, from that woman with the child.

As he dragged himself up to his fourth floor, the stimulant he had taken began to work upon his starved senses. The key was in his door, he turned it and fell into his room, while the door, with the key still in it, swung to behind him. Guiding himself by the furniture, he reached the only chair the room possessed—an arm-chair of the commonest and cheapest hotel sort, which, because of the uncertainty of its legs, the *femme de chambre* had propped up against the bed. He sat down in it and his head fell back on the counterpane. There was much to do. He had to write to John about the sale of his stock and the payment of his debts. He had to put his father's letter into an envelope for Louie, to send all the papers and letters he had on him and a last message to Mr. Ancrum, and then to post these letters, so that nothing private might fall into the hands of the French police, who would, of course, open his bag.

While these thoughts were rising in him, a cloud came over the brain, bringing with it, as it seemed, the first moment of ease which had been his during this awful fortnight. Before he yielded himself to it he thrust his hand into his coat-pocket with a sudden vague anxiety to feel what was there. But even as he withdrew his fingers they relaxed; a black object came with them, and fell unheeded, first on his knee, then on to a coat lying on the floor between him and the window.

A quarter of an hour afterwards there was a stir and voices on the landing outside. Some one knocked at the door of No. 139. No answer. 'The key is in the door. *Ouvrez donc!*' cried the waiter, as he ran downstairs again to the restaurant, which was still crowded. The visitor opened the door and peeped in. Some quick words broke from him. He rushed in and up to the bed. But directly the heavy feverish breathing of the figure in the chair caught his ear his look of sudden horror relaxed, and he fell back, looking at the sleeping youth.

It was a piteous sight he saw! Exhaustion, helplessness,

sorrow, physical injury, and moral defeat, were written in every line of the poor drawn face and shrunken form. The brow was furrowed, the breathing hard, the mouth dry and bloodless. Upon the mind of the new-comer, possessed as it was with the image of what David Grieve had been two short months before, the effect of the spectacle was presently overwhelming.

He fell on his knees beside the sleeper. But as he did so, he noticed the black thing on the floor, stooped to it, and took it up. That it should be a loaded revolver seemed to him at that moment the most natural thing in the world, little used as he personally was to such possessions. He looked at it carefully, took out the two cartridges it contained, put them into one pocket and the revolver into the other.

Then he laid his arm round the lad's neck.

'David !'

The young man woke directly and sat up, shaking with terror and excitement. He pushed his visitor from him, looking at him with defiance. Then he slipped his hand inside his coat and sprang up with a cry.

'David !—dear boy—dear fellow !'

The voice penetrated the lad's ear. He caught his visitor and dragged him forward to the light. It fell on the twisted face and wet eyes of Mr. Ancrum. So startling was the vision, so poignant were the associations which it set vibrating, that David stood staring and trembling, struck dumb.

'Oh, my poor lad ! my poor lad ! John wanted me to come yesterday, and I delayed. I was a selfish wretch. Now I will take you home.'

David fell again upon his chair, too feeble to speak, too feeble even to weep, the little remaining colour ebbing from his cheeks. The minister used all his strength, and laid him on the bed. Then he rang and made even the callous and haughty madame, who was presently summoned, listen to and obey him while he sent for brandy and a doctor, and let the air of the night into the stifling room.

#### CHAPTER XII

In two or three days the English doctor who was attending David strongly advised Mr. Ancrum to get his charge home. The fierce strain his youth had sustained acting through the nervous system had disordered almost every bodily function, and the collapse which followed Mr. Ancrum's appearance was severe. He would lie in his bed motionless and speechless, volunteered no confidence, and showed hardly any rallying power.

'Get him out of this furnace and that doghole of a room,' said the doctor. 'He has come to grief here somehow—that's plain. You won't make anything of him till you move him.'

When the lad was at last stretched on the deck of a Channel steamer speeding to the English coast, and the sea breeze had

brought a faint touch of returning colour to his cheek, he asked the question he had never yet had the physical energy to ask.

'Why did you come, and how did you find me ?'

Then it appeared that the old cashier at Heywood's bank, who had taken a friendly interest in the young bookseller since the opening of his account, had dropped a private word to John in the course of conversation, which had alarmed that youth not a little. His own last scrawl from David had puzzled and disquieted him, and he straightway marched off to Mr. Ancrum to consult. Whereupon the minister wrote cautiously and affectionately to David asking for some prompt and full explanation of things for his friends' sake. The letter was, as we know, never opened, and therefore never answered. Whereupon John's jealous misery on Louie's account and Mr. Ancrum's love for David had so worked that the minister had broken in upon his scanty savings and started for Paris at a few hours' notice. Once in the Rue Chantal he had come easily on David's track.

Naturally he had inquired after Louie as soon as David was in a condition to be questioned at all. The young man hesitated a moment, then he said resolutely, 'She is married,' and would say no more. Mr. Ancrum pressed the matter a little, but his patient merely shook his head, and the sight of him as he lay there on the pillow was soon enough to silence the minister.

On the evening before they left Paris he called for a telegraph form, wrote a message and paid the reply, but Mr. Ancrum saw nothing of either. When the reply arrived David crushed it in his hand with a strange look, half bitterness, half relief, and flung it behind a piece of furniture standing near.

Now, on the cool, wind-swept deck, he seemed more inclined to talk than he had been yet. He asked questions about John and the Lomaxes—he even inquired after Lucy, as to whom the minister who had lately improved an acquaintance with Dora and her father, begun through David, could only answer vaguely that he believed she was still in the south. But he volunteered nothing about his own affairs or the cause of the state in which Mr. Ancrum had found him.

Every now and then, indeed, as they stood together at the side of the vessel, David leaning heavily against it, his words would fail him altogether, and he would be left staring stupidly, the great black eyes widening, the lower lip falling—over the shifting brilliance of the sea.

Ancrum was almost sure too that in the darkness of their last night in Paris there had been, hour after hour, a sound of hard and stifled weeping, mingled with the noises from the street and from the station ; and to-day the youth in the face was more quenched than ever, in spite of the signs of reviving health. There had been a woman in the case, of course : Louie might have misbehaved herself ; but after all the world is so made that no sister can make a brother suffer as David had evidently suffered—and then there was the revolver ! About this