

UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION.*

By *Hall Caine*,

AUTHOR OF "THE MANXMAN," "THE DEEMSTER," "THE SCAPEGOAT," ETC.

I.

AT Euston station at 9 P.M. on Sunday, the twenty third of December, 18—, I leaned out of the window of a carriage of the Scotch train, and Sir George Chute shook hands with me from the platform.

"Good by, Robert," said Sir George. "Mind you come to me the very moment of your return. I shall be anxious to hear everything. Our good friends at Cleator are half strangers to both of us, you know—well, to me, at all events. My kind regards to Miss Clousedale—to Mrs. Hill, too—good by! Good by!"

I waved my hand to him as the train sped away from the platform. He had dined with me that night in my rooms at the Temple, and had come to Euston to see me off. Sir George was five and twenty years my senior, but nevertheless my closest friend. In earlier life he had been the friend of my father. Forty years before they had been fellow clerks in the office of a country attorney. Their courses then fell apart. Sir George Chute had become the most prosperous solicitor in London, and my father, Sir Robert Harcourt, was an Indian judge. But though separated by half the world, their friendship had been maintained. I myself was born in India, and when at fourteen I was sent to England to begin my education at a public school, it was Sir George who established me at Harrow. In due time he sent me on to Oxford, and afterwards opened up to me my career at the bar. I had been five years a junior, and my success was due in great part to Sir George. He was more than my friend—he was my foster father.

But the debt I owed him included a claim that touched me closer than any material obligations. He had been the means by which I had come to know Lucy Clousedale. Lucy had come up to London from her home in Cumberland to consult him as a

solicitor in relation to the mining estate which was her inheritance. She was two and twenty, and both her parents were long dead. Her only companion throughout life had been an old nurse, who was a maiden lady, but was always addressed as Mrs. Hill. The friendlessness of the orphan girl had touched Sir George, and he had invited her to his house in Cheyne Walk. It was there that I had met her. To meet her was to admire her, for surely no lovelier woman ever lived. Her health, her sweetness, her simplicity, her naturalness, her freshness, had made a deep impression. This was early in May, and during the next month or two she had been invited everywhere. Lucy spoke with a slight northern accent, and sang old English songs. Everything was new to her, and everything was wonderful. It will not wrong the truth to say that in that home of the neurotic woman she had been the success of the hour.

I was a happy man, for our acquaintance had ripened into friendship, and our friendship into love. Before she left London at the end of June, Lucy had promised to be my wife. We were not to be married until the following spring, but I was to visit her at home at Christmas. Her last evening in London we spent together at Sir George Chute's. It was a sweet and happy time. The soft glow of a London sunset lay along the sleepy Thames as we sat in the balcony and looked towards the old Battersea Bridge. Before the lamps were lit she sang "Sally in our Alley." I had one pang only—the thought of our six months' separation.

But that was over at length. The long tale of my duties at the courts was at an end for the present. Christmas was near, and I was in the train for Cumberland. I lay back in my seat, and beguiled the first hour of my journey with a packet of old letters from my breast pocket. Most of them were from Lucy—the daintiest little things in the neatest penmanship. I noticed for the second time that in this regard two of the

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letters were unlike the rest. The handwriting was irregular, and the sentences were jerky and inconsequent. Sir George had chanced to see one of the two as it lay on the table at my chambers. "Not so well, eh?" said Sir George. He fancied himself as an expert in that direction. And he was right. Temporary indisposition had been the explanation. Lucy herself had said so.

The only letters of my old packet that were not Lucy's were from my father. I had written to tell him of my forthcoming marriage, and he had answered with as much cordiality as I had a right to expect. He trusted that my determination was wise, that my action was not premature, that I saw my course clear before me. The only significant passage was in the nature of a warning: "Above all, my dear boy, let me hope and trust that the woman who is to be your wife and my daughter comes of a good and healthy stock. Living in this country, where natural selection in marriage is hampered by consideration of caste, I see more plainly than ever how terrible are the consequences of heredity, not only in actual physical taint, but also in the countless forms of bad habits that are equivalent to disease."

I left the Scotch mail at Penrith at three in the morning, but Lucy's home was in the iron district of Cleator Moor, and I had to change at a second junction before reaching the last stage of my journey. This junction was in the heart of the Cumberland hills. Day had not yet dawned when I got there; thick snow lay on the ground, the morning was cold, and I had half an hour to wait for the local train. With the help of a porter I found my way into the waiting room of the little wooden station house. A brisk fire was burning there, and a group of miners were sitting on the benches about it, smoking their clay pipes, with their elbows on their knees, and their lamps hanging from their wrists. They made room for me at the fire, but went on with their talk without regard to my presence. I asked if they were going by the train to Cleator. They answered "Yes," and that they worked at the Clousedale mines, in the pit known as "Owd Boney." I learned that "Owd Boney" meant "old bone of contention," and that the popular nickname had reference to the pit's history. Also I gathered that the men lived in the neighboring town of Cockermouth, and were that morning starting afresh on their fortnightly "shift."

"But Christmas Eve?" I said. "Surely you take a holiday at Christmas?"

They laughed and answered that all seasons were alike to the miner.

"Sunday or Monday, it's all t' same," said one. "Th' engine at t' pit head doesna stop for t' church service."

"And t' boiler at t' bottom is as thirsty as owd Geordie Clous'al hisself," said another, and then they laughed, and puffed and spat in a chuckling chorus.

The train steamed up and whistled; I got into the same carriage with the miners, and we ran into the mining country. Over the snow covered dales the day was now dawning. The mountains were falling behind us, and we were coming on to a broad stretch of moorland. I could see ahead, in the increasing gray light, the wooden gear of many pit shafts, and the smoke and flame from the squat chimneys of the smelting houses. The snow was thinner at every mile, and the bare ground was red and black, as if with cinders and the refuse of iron ore.

"You spoke of old George Clousedale, I said. "What is he?"

"A dead man," said one of the miners.

"What was he?"

"The owner of 'Owd Boney,' and half the pits of Cleator."

"Any relative of Miss Clousedale of Clousedale Hall?" I asked.

"Lucy?" said several voices together.

"Well, yes, Lucy, if you like."

"Thirsty owd Geordie Clous'al was Lucy's grandfadder."

I was curious, but I was also vexed. "Men," I said, "it's only right to tell you at once that Miss Clousedale is a friend of mine, and that I'm now on my way to visit her."

They understood me instantly, and made amends with manly simplicity. "No disrespect to Miss Lucy, sure. Nobbut good will to the young lady, sir. We're eating her bread, and we've nowt agen her."

Nothing further was said until we came within a mile of the village, which I had seen lying on the moor top under a canopy of smoke. Then one of the miners leaned over to the carriage window, and pointed to a house which we were rapidly passing.

"Yon's Clous'al Hall, sir," he said.

I jumped up and looked out. The house was a large square mansion of modern date and of no particular character, standing deep in its own grounds, behind thick clumps of trees, which were all leafless. The sun had broken out, and a watery gleam lay along the slate roof and part of the grass of the lawn. Smoke was coming from the chimneys, and just at the moment

somebody was raising the white blind of one of the windows. Such was the home of Lucy. As the train passed, I noticed that not far from the gate of Clousedale Hall there was a small group of cottages, with a little public house at their nearest corner. The train ran so close that I could read the sign. It was the "Clousedale Arms."

We drew up at the station, and I looked around to see if there was any one to meet me. It was still as early as half past eight, and the morning was chill, but spite of reason I had half cherished the hope that Lucy herself would have driven down. At least I thought Mrs. Hill might be there. I saw neither. There was no carriage, no trap, no recognizable servant of any kind. When the miners had trooped away the platform would have been empty but for myself and the servants of the railway. I hailed the porter.

"Anybody here who can carry my bag to Clousedale Hall?" I asked.

"Then mebbe you're the gentleman that's expected," he said, and diving into his jacket pocket, he produced a letter.

It was addressed "Robert Harcourt, Esq.," and was not in Lucy's handwriting. The letter was from Mrs. Hill, and was dated 9 P.M., Sunday, Dec. 23.

DEAR SIR :

I am sorry to tell you that Lucy has suddenly become ill, and that the doctor thinks it necessary that she should have absolute quiet and rest during the next few days. There is no danger of any kind, and therefore I trust you will not feel anxiety, still less alarm. But, under the circumstances, I am reluctantly compelled to ask you not to come to Clousedale Hall at present. I have taken the liberty of engaging rooms for you at the Wheatsheaf in the village, where I trust you will be comfortable until such time as I can properly and safely give my dear one the great happiness of asking you to remove your quarters to this house. With every apology, disappointment, and regret, I am, dear Mr. Harcourt,

Yours very sincerely,

MARTHA HILL.

"Take my bag to the Wheatsheaf, porter," I said.

He took it up and trudged off, and I followed him. I was pained, dazed, and bewildered.

II.

BREAKFAST was ready for me at the inn, but I could not touch it until I had written to Lucy. I told her with what concern I heard of her illness, how I hoped for her speedy recovery, how grievous was my dis-

appointment at not seeing her immediately on my arrival in her country, with much beside of too intimate a nature to be repeated here. After this letter had been despatched by hand, I sat down to breakfast, and the landlady herself waited upon me as I ate. She was a worthy Cumberland woman in middle life, very staid and serious, but somewhat more talkative than the generality of her race. Her name was Tyson; her husband was something of a sportsman; they were living on the Clousedale property.

Mrs. Tyson had much to say about Lucy, whom she had known since earliest childhood, of her goodness to the poor, her personal sweetness to everybody, her generosity (exhibited in many ways), and generally of the qualities of mind and heart which had endeared her beyond all others to the people of the district wherein she had been born and reared. It did not surprise me that, as seen in the eyes of those who had known her longest and most intimately, my darling proved to be as good as she was beautiful. I gathered that she was interested in various local institutions for the social welfare of the people—in workmen's clubs, an evening ragged school, and a branch of the Rechabite order, which she had helped to establish. It appeared that, at her own cost—the parish church lying two miles away in the dale—she had even gone so far as to build and endow a little chapel of ease for the use of the community that had grown up on the moor top, around the pits which her family had worked for generations. The landlady was warm in her relation of these good offices; and when I inquired about Lucy's health, if it had ever hitherto given cause for anxiety, she answered no, that only twice before, as far back as they could remember, had she been at all unwell, and both attacks had been within the past six months.

"Nothing serious, surely?" I said.

"Nay, not that I know of," said the landlady. "But the poor young lady seemed that glad to be better that she niver knew how to be good enough to anybody the moment she was gotten round. And a cruel pity it was to see her white face going from house to house with her basket and her purse. It was then that she got her new Scotch parson to start the Rechabites. The sweet little body went over the moor herself, persuading the miners to take the pledge—and a good thing for some of them, too, for all it's the wife of a publican that says so."

My night long journey had wearied me,

and I went to bed and slept soundly. Some time late in the afternoon I awoke, and then it occurred to me that it might, perhaps, set at rest the anxiety which I could not help but feel if I were to go to see Lucy's doctor. On this errand, after I had taken some dinner, I set out at the direction of the landlady. The doctor was not at home. He was at the public dispensary in the village. I learned that this dispensary was another of Lucy's charities. The outer room was filled with women and children waiting their turn to enter the room within. In the moment I stood among them while my card was taken to the doctor, I heard my dear one's name coupled with praises and blessings.

"It'll be made up to her," said one woman.

"The Lord will pay her back," said another.

The doctor's name was Godwin. At first sight it occurred to me that he hardly justified it. I found him a hard faced man, with a square head and gray, steely eyes. He had been educated in Germany, and I learned afterward that he took pride in being abreast of all modern developments of his science. This, and his resolute personal character, had given him a certain superiority over old fashioned country practitioners, though he was understood to be an atheist, and certainly never attended church.

I explained that I was a friend of Miss Clousedale's, and he seemed to have been aware of our relations. I inquired if her illness was at all serious, and he answered me less promptly than I had expected.

"No, not serious—not at present," he said.

As he volunteered no further explanation, I made bold to ask if Lucy's trouble was some girlish ailment. After a moment he answered yes, and was silent again.

"Some nervous complaint, no doubt?" I said, whereupon he said "Yes" once more, repeated my words mechanically, and then looked up quickly and asked if I was making any stay in the district.

I was nettled by his reserve, and told him that Lucy was to be my wife, that I had come expressly and by old appointment from London to visit her; that, by the wish of her nurse, and, as I understood, by his own wish also, I was now staying at the inn in the village; but that I was looking forward to changing my quarters to Clousedale Hall as soon as he could assure me that my presence there would be no disadvantage to his patient.

"It will be some days still," he said.

I thought the man was treating me with scant courtesy, and I made no disguise of my annoyance. On leaving, I went the length of hinting that perhaps I should think it necessary to telegraph for a specialist. My threat had no effect. The man saw me to the door with frigid politeness, and all but the silence of a sphinx.

Going back by the main street of the village, I passed in the gathering darkness of the winter evening a little red brick Gothic church, standing in the midst of a closely populated district of very poor cottages. It was the chapel of ease that had been built and endowed by Lucy. I recognized it by its foundation stone, which bore a gilt lettered inscription in my dear one's honor. There were lights burning, the door was open, and I glanced within. Some ladies were decorating the windows, and the timbers of the open roof, from ladders held by two or three miners.

When I got back to the Wheatsheaf, I asked if there was any message from Clousedale Hall. There was no letter, but a gentleman was waiting to see me. It was the clergyman. His name was McPherson, and he was a middle aged Scotchman of severe aspect. He had come to tell me that my letter had been received, but that Miss Clousedale was not well enough to reply to it. Then, on his own account, he proceeded to advise the postponement of my intended visit.

"Is her illness so serious?" I asked.

"I fear it is," he answered.

"What *is* her illness?"

He hesitated a moment, and then said, "I cannot rightly say."

"Has she ever had it before?"

"Twice before."

"And she recovered on both occasions?"

"By the grace of God, yes—for the time, at all events."

My anger was rising. This man, like the doctor, was keeping me at arm's length.

"And you advise me," I said, "to go back to London?"

"For the present," he replied.

"Without seeing her?"

"To see her would be impossible."

"Is it her own wish?"

He hesitated again, then answered falteringly, "Yes—I think so—that was my inference."

My patience was well nigh exhausted before I saw the man out of the house. Another man was then coming in at the door—a big, lusty, deep chested fellow, with a game bag over his shoulder and a gun under

his arm. It was Tyson, the landlord. He saluted me as we passed in the hall. There was something open and fearless in the air of the man that appealed to me at the moment, and, having parted from my parson, I followed my landlord into his little red parlor at the back of the bar. He gave me a cheery welcome, and began to joke about my visitor, called him "Mr. Sky Pilot," and said it was the first time his reverence had deigned to cross the threshold of the Wheatsheaf. I learned that Mr. McPherson was a fanatical teetotaler, and that this was understood to be the qualification that had led to his appointment by the patroness of his living.

"No wonder, nowther," said Tyson, "seeing the lesson she's been getting all the days of her life, poor lady."

"What lesson?" I asked.

"Nay, hast a nivver heard tell of owd Geordie Clous'al?"

I remembered the talk of the miners in the train. "Thirsty owd Geordie, as they called him?" I said.

"The verra same man," said my landlord. "Miss Lucy's for breaking the curse, I reckon."

"What curse?" I asked.

"Then you're not knowing owt of the Clous'al history, sir?"

I had to confess that though Miss Clousedale was my friend, my intimate friend, I knew nothing about her family. Mrs. Tyson was laying her husband's tea. "Psha, John," she said, "don't bother thy head with such owd wife's stories."

I drew my chair to the fire. "A story of a curse?" I said. "I must hear it at all costs."

Tyson laughed. "Thoo must take it as it comes, then," he said, and while he munched his great mouthfuls, he told his tale.

Old George Clousedale, the grandfather of Lucy, and the founder of the fortunes of the Clousedale family, was a hard and cruel master. It was told of him that if he saw a poor widow picking cinders from the refuse of the smelting house to warm her old bones on a wintry day, he would drive her away with threats and oaths. One Sunday morning two of his miners were walking home from the church in the valley, when, crossing the beck, they kicked up a red stone. It was good, solid iron ore. This was a find that promised great results. The men agreed to say nothing of their discovery until such time as they could take out royalties and begin mining on their own account.

One of the two was faithful to his bond; the other broke it secretly. While the first was borrowing money towards his visit to the lord of the manor, the second went to the house of his master, told all, and accepted a bribe of twenty pounds. Within a week George Clousedale had bought up the royalties of another mine, and was sinking another shaft.

The miner who had been betrayed was mad with rage. He went in search of his faithless partner, and thrashed him within an inch of his life. The man was arrested, and George Clousedale was the magistrate by whom he was tried. He was sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

The poor fellow was young, and had been the only support of his mother. When he was sent to Carlisle the old woman went up to the house of George Clousedale, and asked for the master. He came out to her in the hall, and she railed at him as a traitor and a tyrant. Losing himself at her insults, he snatched a riding whip from the wall, struck her on the head, and told her to be off to hell, and never dare to show her face in his house again. The woman drew herself up to him and cried, "You brutal ruffian, it's yourself that will go to hell, but before you go you will have the fire of hell in your body, and feel a thirst that can never be quenched! You will drink and drink till you die, and your children will drink, and your children's children will drink, and your great grandchildren, forever and ever!"

"But," I said, "you don't mean to tell me the curse came true?"

"Have it as you like, sir," said Tyson, "but in less nor six weeks and Geordie Clous'al was tak'n with a burning heat of his inside, and he drank, and drank, and drank, and in a matter of twelve months he was dead."

"What children had he?"

"Only a son—young Geordie, as we caw'd him. Young Geordie laughed at the owd tale as they telt of, but at forty he was seized with the same burning thirst, and at fifty he was in a drunkard's grave."

"And—and Lucy—Miss Clousedale?" I asked.

"She was nobbut a bairn when her fadder died, and they've tak'n time by the forelock, and brought her up teetotal," the inn keeper said.

I laughed, Tyson laughed, his wife laughed, and we all laughed together. "A good old witch story," I said. "I wonder who ever makes up these queer, gruesome yarns."

But the thing possessed me. I came back to it again and again. The pit that had been the first cause of the quarrel was the one known as "Owd Boney." It brought wealth to the Clousedale family, and was the chief source of Lucy's fortune. Her father died rich, but his last years were years of pain and terror. The unquenchable thirst which tormented him came in periodical attacks which grew more and more frequent, appearing first at intervals of six months, then of three, and then of one. Thus in narrowing circles the burning fever encompassed the man like a deadly serpent, and closed in and throttled him at the end.

My landlord's story might have interested me at any time, but at that moment it seemed to have a horrible fascination. Under other circumstances I might have speculated on the power of imagination to induce the fate it dreads; but the creeping mystery of Lucy's illness made it difficult to think dispassionately. I hardly dared to formulate the fears that were floating in my soul.

Eventually I made up my mind to "sleep on it," and so went off to bed. Some hours later I awoke from a fitful and troubled sleep, and heard the singing of hymns in the street outside. I had forgotten that it was Christmas Eve.

III.

THE only decision the morning brought me was that I should write to Mrs. Hill asking permission to call. This I did, with many expressions of solicitude, and no concealment of the disquietude caused by the clergyman's summary message. I proposed to go up to Clousedale Hall in the course of the afternoon, but asked for an answer in the mean time encouraging me to do so.

It was Christmas morning, and the bells were ringing for service. I went to church. The pew under the pulpit was empty—it was Lucy's pew. They had decorated it with ivy and holly and some sprigs of flowering gorse. There was a large congregation, chiefly of miners and their children. The minister was the Rev. Mr. McPherson, my visitor of the night before. Between the second lesson and the sermon he asked for the prayers of all present for their dear friend, the donor and patroness of their church, who at that hour of rejoicing lay sick at home. Many heads were bowed instantly—there could be no question of the response.

As I was coming out at the close, somebody touched me on the arm. It was an elderly man of a cheerful face, and with small, twinkling eyes behind large spectacles. He told me his name was Youdale, and he was the manager of the Clousedale mines. There was to be the usual Christmas dinner for poor children given by Miss Clousedale at the church schools—would I care to be present? We went along together. The school house was thronged with the little mites, all very ragged, very dirty, very odorous, very noisy, but very happy in spite of their condition. Grace was sung, and then numbers of steaming "hot pots" were brought in. The youngsters were stretching themselves with repletion before the dishes had been emptied. Thanks were offered, and then my friend of the spectacles got up on two forms to deliver an address. He began by regretting the absence of their beloved benefactor, who out of the kindness of her heart had provided this Christmas meal for the children, but by reason of illness could not partake of the good things herself. Let them pray that God would be gracious to her and bring her safely out of the valley of the shadow to be a guide and a blessing to all who loved and revered her. A young schoolmistress sat down at a harmonium, and then the little folks shambled up and sang "Safe in the Arms of Jesus." It was more than I could bear, and I stole out unobserved.

That evening I had a terrible shock. All the afternoon I had waited in pain for the reply to my letter addressed to the nurse. It did not come, but towards nightfall there came a letter from Lucy herself. It was penned in the same irregular hand which had struck me so painfully in the two letters received in London. It was written in the same jerky and inconsequent sentences. I cannot attempt to transcribe it. Every syllable burned itself into my brain with a finger of fire, but I will not dare to set it down. It begged, it prayed, it supplicated me not to come to the house. It craved my indulgence, my forgiveness, my everlasting forgetfulness of one who was unworthy of my love and devotion. She was ill, very ill, but she was also worse than ill. I must let her escape from our engagement. It had been the joy and the charm of her life, but now it was the terror and torment of her existence. She must break it, I must go back to London, we must never think of each other again. God forgive her and pity her; God be good to me and keep me and preserve me.

Such a letter could have but one effect. I snatched up my hat, and turned my face towards Clousedale Hall. While going through the village I walked briskly, but on reaching the lanes I set off to run. Upon reaching the group of cottages that stood near to the gate of the house, I was bathed in perspiration, and my heart was beating audibly. Not to defeat my purpose with such violence of zeal, I turned in at the Clousedale Arms and called for a glass of brandy. It was one of those old fashioned public houses which have the counter partitioned into compartments like the boxes of a pawnbroker's shop. In one of these compartments I stood and cooled myself and sipped my brandy, while I tried to collect my thoughts and determine what I was to do. There was a woman in the compartment next to me, and the landlady was leaning across and talking to her in whispers.

"I'm sorry Maggie's losin' her place," said one of the two.

"She knows far ower much," said the other. "Only yesterday the mistress gave her half a sovereign to steal out and fetch her a bottle of something, and when she went back never asked her for a penny of change."

"Was it the doctor that gave Maggie her notice, then?"

"It's like it was, but they've told me no particulars."

The approach to Clousedale Hall was by a curving path bordered by trees, which, though leafless, made the way dark and gave out gruesome noises in a wind that was then rising. I found the door with difficulty, for there was no lamp burning at the porch, and I had nothing to guide me save the dim light that came from behind the blinds of the windows of the upper story. It was not easy to get attention, and when after long delay a little elderly man servant, with a candle, appeared in answer to my loud knocking, he held the door narrowly ajar while he told me that his mistress was very ill and the house-keeper unable to leave her. I was not to be put off with such excuses; and brushing by the old man into the hall, I told him to take my name instantly to Mrs. Hill and request her to see me immediately. This, however, was not needful, for while I was speaking Mrs. Hill herself came hurriedly down stairs, as if she had been listening from the landing above and was answering my emphatic summons.

I found her strangely agitated and painfully changed. Instead of the gracious elderly lady in the unfashionable black silk, with soft manners and gentle speech—

the companion of my dear one in London—I saw before me a nervous and hysterical old woman in a plaid dress. She took the candle from the man servant and asked me into a room without a fire. Then, closing the door and speaking in whispers, she delivered herself of many apologies and excuses, saying it was a grief to her to be so inhospitable, and that this was a cause of unhappiness to Lucy also. When I asked if I might see my darling, she appeared to be thrown into a state of extreme perturbation, declaring that it would be impossible, and that the doctor had forbidden all visits whatever except those of the clergyman. And when I inquired if she knew the nature of the letter which Lucy had sent me an hour or so earlier, her agitation increased, and she protested that, though it was written without her knowledge, she was afraid that what it suggested might be for the best.

"Is it true, then?" I said. "Am I to understand that Lucy's illness is beyond hope of recovery?"

I had asked the question contemptuously, and I expected a prompt negative. It irritated me that the reply was faltering and uncertain.

"I cannot say—I'm not sure—the doctor would know best."

My patience was gone, and my answer was without ceremony.

"Then, by Heaven, the doctor shall tell me, if I have to wring it out of the man's throat! This mummerly of a mystery is too much for me, and I shall stand no more of it."

With that I flung out of the house, and pulled the door after me. It had got into my head that Lucy was the victim of a conspiracy, and that the two men, the doctor and the clergyman, were at the bottom of everything. With heart and brain aflame I went tramping down the curving path. In my mind's eye I was seeing my dear girl as if by flashes of lightning, first with her beautiful bright eyes full of youth and health and happiness and love, and next in the toils of some hideous and mysterious trouble.

I was awakened from my visions by a sudden apparition. It was that of a woman coming out of the Clousedale Arms as I passed by. Her figure was young; she wore a little dark shawl over her head; her appearance was untidy and neglected. She came out of the public house by stealth, made a quick pause as I approached, and then half turned, as if thinking to go back.

At that moment, by the light of the win-

dow, I saw her face. It was a horrible shock. The face bore an ugly resemblance to the face of Lucy. When I looked again the woman was gone.

I recovered myself and called after her. Her footsteps were rapidly going off in the darkness.

"Wait," I cried, and I swung round to follow. I saw the woman turn in at the gate of Clousedale Hall.

"Wait," I cried again, and I hastened my steps. When I reached the avenue the footsteps had ceased, and the dark figure had disappeared. There was no noise but the creaking of the bare boughs of the trees overhead.

I returned to the house, and with both fists struck heavily on the door. It was opened this time by Mrs. Hill herself. She looked like a woman distracted.

"Mrs. Hill," I said, "I am sorry to be rude, but I demand to see Miss Clousedale—I must see her instantly!"

She burst out crying, and I stepped into the house. Then I observed that the whole place was in disorder. The servants, with candles in their hands, were running up and down stairs and in and out of rooms on the ground floor.

"Where shall I find her?"

At that the poor old soul made a clean breast of it. Lucy had gone out of the house. They had been keeping her a prisoner and watching her constantly, but she had escaped. Snatching the opportunity of Mrs. Hill's absence at the moment of my call, Lucy had slipped away, and nobody knew what had become of her.

"Good Lord Almighty!" I thought, "then it must have been she!"

I was outside again in a moment, running towards the gate. I thought I heard something passing me in the darkness. I stopped and stretched my arms toward the sound, but there was nothing there. Then I heard a rustle, as of a woman's dress along the grass, dying off in the direction of the house. At the next moment I saw distinctly a female figure moving across the windows, where flickering lights were coming and going.

I ran after her and overtook her. She was throwing up the sash of a bay window, and creeping through, when I caught her tightly in my arms.

"Who are you?" I cried, and she gave a smothered cry of—

"Let me go, let me go!"

"Not till I know who you are!"

"Let me go!"

"Who are you?"

Our voices had drawn the servants, and they came running into the room with their candles. Then I saw the face of the woman whom I held in my arms.

It was Lucy—Lucy my love, my dear one, my wife that was to be—Lucy Clousedale, the beloved of everybody, the saintly soul, the generous heart, the sweet and beautiful flower of girlhood just budding into womanhood—and I knew that she was a poor, wretched dipsomaniac under the terrors of an inherited curse!

IV.

NEXT day I was back at the Temple, yet before leaving Cumberland I heard the whole pitiful story from the nurse. Until after her return from London Lucy had never touched intoxicating drink. But London had exhausted her. The new scene, the new life, our engagement and our parting, had played upon her nerves, and she had begun to show symptoms of hysteria. Then the doctor had ordered egg and brandy twice daily to build up the burned out nervous system. The nurse had been horrified. She had reminded him of the death of Lucy's father and grandfather, and of the curse that hung over the family. The doctor had only laughed. Did she expect any sensible man of modern ideas to be influenced in his practice by such foolish superstitions? The young lady required a stimulant, and she must have it.

Within a fortnight Lucy had become the slave of her medicine. She took it, not twice daily, but four times, six times, ten times. An unquenchable thirst possessed her, a burning fever, an insatiable craving. The doctor had begun to talk of latent alcoholism in the blood, and to treat his patient as if she had been a mad woman. An acute attack of two days' duration had ended in convulsions, and then my darling had been herself again. The thirst, the fever, the crave, had gone, leaving her well, though weak and faint.

But the poison had been subdued, not expelled. Three months later the crave had returned, the former symptoms had been renewed, and the same agony gone through. The attack had lasted longer this time, and the prostration that followed had been greater.

When the crave came back for the third time it was within two months of the second attack, and that was the hapless period into which my visit had fallen. Such was the miserable story of my dear one's abject con-

dition, of the narrowing circle of her doom ; and in horror, and the cowardice of horror, I had fled away.

There was a letter waiting for me at the Temple. It was from my father, and it was full of heart breaking good spirits. "Since I wrote last I have been thinking that, as I have only one son in the world, and am soon to lose him in that old cruel battle of father's love against woman's love, the least I can do is to show my front to the enemy and die with a brave face. So please take warning that having asked and obtained six months' leave of absence, I intend to present myself at your wedding in the spring, when, if my foe is only good and sweet to me, I may perhaps capitulate without very much of a struggle. My affectionate remembrances to her in the mean time, and this message for my Christmas greeting—that my boy's letters have made an old man more than half in love with her already."

The same night I found my way to Cheyne Walk. I told the whole shocking story to Sir George. Under the quiet manner of a man familiar with shocking stories, and self trained to betray no surprise, I saw his strange and painful emotion. As I sat with head down before the fire my old friend laid an affectionate hand on my shoulder and said, "I'm sorry, my boy, very sorry, but there's no possible help for it."

"You mean that my poor Lucy's case is hopeless?"

"I'm afraid it is. Whatever the cause—hereditary taint or hereditary curse—the poor child is under the ban."

"For mercy's sake don't say so. Is there nothing I can do?"

"Yes, there is one thing—one only," said Sir George.

"What's that?"

"Take your discharge, and thank God for your escape. You are on the threshold of life—think what it would be to drag at your heels a drunken woman!"

The word struck me like a blow in the face, and I cried out with the pain. "She may be saved yet," I said. "Who shall say she may not?"

"Ask the doctors," said Sir George. "They'll tell you there's no recorded instance of the reformation of a woman who has once fallen under that horrible curse of drink."

When I got up to go I showed Sir George the letter from my father. "Telegraph," he said. "You must stop him. Telegraph immediately."

I walked home by the Strand. It was "Boxing Night," and some of the later theaters were discharging their dense crowds into the streets. The people were talking loudly and laughing. Many of them were making with all haste for the public houses. There were only a few minutes left before closing time. Drink, drink—during the next few days it seemed to pursue and haunt me. I saw it everywhere—its wrecks and ruins dogged my footsteps.

Towards the end of the week, a letter came from Lucy. The attack was over, and she was herself again ; but she saw more plainly than before in what direction her duty lay. Our engagement must be considered off, at once and forever. "It is only right," she wrote, "and even if you, in your love or your pity—and I am sure of both—desired to continue it, nothing would prevail with me to agree." There were words of tenderness, too, very hard to bear, and only to be read with half blinded eyes. But the one deep impression left by the letter was that of a poor human soul—a soul so dear to me—struggling under the domination of the crave for drink.

DEAR ROBERT—If you only knew (but God keep you from all such knowledge) how much I suffer when these periods approach, you would not, as I fear you may, pity me for my weakness, or reproach me for not conquering it. Oh, the terror of the time when I feel this craving come upon me ! I give up all work. I write postponing all engagements, I excuse myself to everybody. I lock myself up from every eye. This is before it comes ; but when I know it is near, and when the dreadful thing falls upon me, oh, the pain, the shame, the horror ! Cheating myself, deceiving everybody about me, bribing the servants, and stealing in and out of my own house like a thief. Heaven save me from this fiend that takes hold of me and possesses me ! But Heaven will not save me ; I must end as my father ended. And, after all, I ought to be thankful that I have found my fate in time. If it had fallen on me after we had married, and, perhaps, after I had become a mother—but this is too painful to think of. Good by, dear Robert ! Think of me as tenderly as you can. Though it is so hard to put away the thought of the happiness we dreamed of, it will be a comfort to me in my darkest hours to remember the joy you snatched for me out of my doomed and fated life.

Sir George was right—there was no help for it. I remembered my father, and went out to send him a telegram. At the telegraph office in Fleet Street I wrote my message : "Don't come—marriage postponed—am writing." I held the message a long time in my hand, and could not

bring myself to hand it to the clerk. At length I tore it up, and hurriedly left the office.

It was just as if it had been Lucy's death warrant, and I could not deliver it. I could not give her up. I would not abandon hope of her. The thought of that beautiful young life being slowly encircled as by a serpent that was to destroy it was too horrible. Some angel there must be in God's world to slay this demon, if I could only find it out.

It was Saturday night, and the streets were thronged. I walked aimlessly along until I found myself in front of a place of popular entertainment, which had a gigantic placard on the face of it. The placard announced that, at half past ten that night, a certain Dr. La Mothe, a hypnotist, would awaken a man who had been lying ten days in a trance. In sheer weariness of soul, and only with a desire for distraction from painful thoughts, I went in to see what there was to be seen.

It was still an hour earlier than the time appointed for the experiment, but I found my way to the sleeper. He was kept in a small room apart, and lay in a casket, which at first sight suggested a coffin. There were raised platforms at either side, from which the spectator looked down at the man as into a grave. But nothing in his own appearance gave any hint of death. His face was composed and healthful; his eyes were closed, his lips lightly pressed together, his breathing was noiseless, and his breast rose and fell with the gentlest motion. The sleep of a child was never more soft and sweet and peaceful.

I was alone in the room, and I could not leave it. Here was a great and wondrous power—sleep. It had wiped out ten days of this man's life—ten days, perhaps, of sorrow and pain. The world had gone by him and left no mark. His temptations, his troubles, his besetting sins, they had touched him not.

Oh, sleep it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole.
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven
That slid into my soul.

I sat on a chair on the platform, and looked down at the sleeper. And as I looked it seemed at last that it was not a strange man's face I was gazing into, but the beautiful face that was the dearest to me in all the world. Suddenly a thought struck me that made me quiver from head to foot. What if Lucy could sleep through the days of her awful temptation! What if she could

be put into a trance when the craving was coming upon her! Would she bridge over the time of the attack? Would she elude the relentless fiend that was pursuing her? Would she awake with the burning fever gone?

The hour of the experiment arrived, and spectators came trooping into the room. They were chiefly fashionable young men with their women, and they chatted and laughed, and smoked their cigars, throughout the proceedings. The hypnotist was a man of five and thirty, with prepossessing manners, a clear cut face, and a heavy chin, but a smile like sunshine, and a voice that was at once sharp and caressing. He pressed the brows of the sleeper, opened his eyes and blew into them, then called to him, and he awoke. In less than sixty seconds the man, who had lain ten days asleep, dead to himself and to all knowledge of life, had vaulted lightly out of the casket and was putting on his coat.

I stepped down and spoke to him. "Are you hungry?" I asked.

"No, sir," he answered.

"Nor thirsty?"

"No."

"You feel quite well?"

"Quite."

I followed the hypnotist into his retiring room. "Dr. La Mothe," I said, "has artificial sleep ever been used for the cure of intemperance?"

He was a Parisian, and I had to repeat my question in French. "In the school of Nancy," he said, "the cure of alcoholism by suggestion is not unknown."

"That is more than I meant. You know the form of mania in which the crave is periodical?"

"Certainly."

"Do you think if a patient were put under artificial sleep when the period is approaching, and kept there as long as it is usual for it to last, the crave would be past and gone when the time came to awaken him?"

I could see that the idea had never occurred to the hypnotist before, and that it startled and fascinated him. "With a proper subject it might be—I cannot say—I think it would—at any rate, I should like to try."

Before leaving him I had arranged everything. He was to hold himself in readiness to go with me to Cumberland at any moment that I might summon him on that errand.

Is it too much to say that I went home that night with the swing and step of a man

walking on the stars? If I had found a cure for the deadliest curse of humanity, if I had been about to wipe out the most terrible plague of all races, of all nations, of all climes, of all ages, I could not have been one whit more proud and confident. Mesmerism! Hypnotism! Animal magnetism! Electrobiolgy! Call it what you will. To me it had one name only—sleep;

sleep, the healer, sleep, the soother, the comforter—

Sleep, that knits up the ravel'd sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast.

And sleep was the good angel that was to snatch my dear one from the grasp of the deadliest fiend out of hell.

(*To be continued.*)

UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION.*

By Hall Caine,

AUTHOR OF "THE MANXMAN," "THE DEEMSTER," "THE SCAPEGOAT," ETC.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS ALREADY PUBLISHED.

HARCOURT, who tells the story, is a young London lawyer, into whose life a terrible thing has come. He is engaged to Lucy Clousedale, a Cumberland girl who has beauty and wealth; and the day of their marriage is approaching when he is horrified to learn that his fiancée has become a helpless victim of violent dipsomania. Her ailment recurs in periodical attacks, and is inherited from her father and her grandfather. The latter, "old Geordie" Clousedale, the founder of the family's fortune, had—according to the local tradition of Lucy's northern home—overreached a miner who had discovered a new and valuable deposit of ore in the Cumberland hills. The mine, called "Owd Boney"—the "old bone of contention"—added to George Clousedale's wealth, but the mother of the defrauded man laid a curse upon its owner, who died a drunkard's death within a year. His son followed in his footsteps, and now the same fearful craving has attacked Lucy.

Harcourt, who loves her deeply, is in despair. His friend Sir George Chute, who first introduced him to Lucy, now advises him to abandon her, and to telegraph to his father, Sir Robert Harcourt, an Indian judge, not to carry out his announced intention of coming home to his son's wedding. In his doubt and hesitation the young lawyer chances to encounter Dr. La Mothe, a French hypnotist, who tells him that the crave for drink may be cured by putting the patient into a mesmeric slumber. Harcourt determines to try the experiment, and arranges with Mrs. Hill, Lucy's guardian, that he shall be summoned to Cumberland at the first sign of the return of the malady.

V.

A LETTER came from the Scots minister. By the grace of God Lucy was better. Her ardent philanthropy had begun again. She was organizing Bands of Hope among the children. The power of the Lord was strong above all other powers, and our dear victim was to be saved.

I was relieved, but I was also distressed. The paths of Lucy's repentance touched me deeply, but if the world knew the truth, how it would shout itself hoarse at what it must call her hypocrisy!

My time was not yet, but it came only too soon, only too surely. A fortnight later I heard from Mrs. Hill. Lucy was betraying symptoms of another attack. The twitching of her mouth, the restlessness of her hands, the keen and feverish look of her eyes, these were unmistakable indications.

"They began," said the nurse, "after

service last Sunday morning. She took the communion. Merciful Father! What am I saying? And yet it is the truth, and I must not conceal it."

I had told Mrs. Hill that I had engaged a doctor who was a specialist in nervous ailments, and that I wished for due warning of the return of an attack. Her letter was intended to ask for the specialist, and I summoned him by a telegram.

On the way to Euston I called on Sir George at his chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He heard of my errand without either approval or disapproval. His strong face was like a mask, and gave no sign. As I was leaving his room he touched my arm and said, "Have you telegraphed to your father?"

I answered "No," and tried to hasten away.

"I must do so myself," he said.

"Give me a week more," I pleaded. "There will still be time enough to stop him."

Sir George nodded his head, and I left him. He had no faith in my errand, I knew that. Only his pity for the deep entanglement of my affections suffered him to see me go on with my enterprise.

Late the same night I reached Cumberland with Dr. La Mothe. We put up at the Wheatsheaf, and I lost no time in sending a message to McPherson and to Godwin, announcing my arrival, and asking them to oblige me with a call. The two men came together, and there was a strained and painful interview. I introduced the hypnotist and told of my intention, saying I desired their countenance and assistance.

The minister refused it, promptly and absolutely. His attitude was precisely that which I might have foreseen. What I proposed to do would be tampering with free will. His conscience was startled by such audacity. Drink was a temptation of the devil, only to be conquered by the grace of God. The measures we proposed to employ were the instruments of the evil

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one. To subjugate the free will of a fellow creature, to act upon her by suggestion, to compel her to do that which she must and not that which she would, was to attempt to uproot the moral law, to unseat religion, and to shake our trust in the supremacy of God himself.

It was in vain that I urged that it was no part of my present scheme to act upon Lucy by therapeutic suggestion, but that if I were driven to doing so as a last resource I should feel justified by the natural order of life.

"You talk," I said, "about conscience, about moral responsibility, about free will. To ninety nine out of a hundred there is no such thing. Only the hundredth has a will that is free, and, for good or evil, he makes slaves of the wills of the ninety and nine. The orator swaying an assembly, the statesman directing affairs, the king controlling an empire, the pretty woman dictating fashion, the young bride winning to her own way the husband who loves her—what are they all doing but imposing the free will on the will that is not free? Every great man is great in degree as he dictates the wills of other men, and he is the greatest man whom the greatest men are doomed to obey."

The Scots minister listened to me with a face of horror.

"Why call a man great," he said, "because he paralyzes the souls of his fellow men? The basest and the worst of men do that, and it is by the power of the devil that they do it. The murderer who lures his victim to a lonely place that he may fall on him and kill him, the Judas who worms himself into the secret of his master that he may betray and sell him, the unjust steward who seeks the care of the widow and fatherless that he may rob them of their bread, the seducer who palters with the love of a weak woman that he may dishonor her and then fling her in the mud—these are the men who try to control the actions of their fellow men, and they are the real Lucifers, for they are in rebellion against God on his real throne—the hearts of his creatures."

"In short, you mean," I said, "that if I cause Miss Clousedale to be put under the hypnotic sleep in the hope of conquering the drink crave which is destroying her, I shall be acting the part of her worst enemy?"

"You will be attempting to break down the sanctuaries of her soul," he answered, "and pretending to a power that can only come of the grace of God itself."

I was losing my patience. "Nevertheless I intend to try."

The minister flushed to the eyes. "You shall not do so."

I set my teeth and went on. "She has no legal guardian, and I am shortly to be her husband. The moral right is mine, and I am going to exercise it."

"Then, sir," replied the Rev. Mr. McPherson, bringing his fist down on the table, "I wash my hands of your proceedings;" and with that and a flash of anger he rose and left us.

I had no better encouragement from the doctor. His steely eyes had glittered with amused contempt during my encounter with the minister, and now he spoke with the easy superiority of a man who believes himself to be above all feeble superstitions. His theories were the new ones; his methods the reverse of those who trust to moral suasion. Drink was a madness. The victims of it ought to be treated as mad people, and kept under restraint until the madness had been overcome.

The words stung me, and I suppose I colored deeply, for he looked into my face and said,

"This is no time for mock modesty. It is a time to face the truth. For my own part, I have done so from the first. Regarding Miss Clousedale as a subject of temporary insanity, I have, as you are aware, treated her accordingly."

I bit my lip and asked, "With what results?"

"I am not responsible for results," he answered. "I am only responsible for the treatment. To attempt to cure the drink crave by the machinery of the temperance pledge is a course discredited in the eyes of all scientific inquirers. In spite of the gigantic temperance organization of the last fifty years, drunkenness the world over is not less, but more. Its consequences are more serious, its special cases more acute. As a whole, taken in its broadest aspects, the temperance cause has failed. So far I am at one with you, but"—I was shaking my head; he paid no heed to my dissent—"but the method with which you now propose to supersede the effete one of temperance people like this Scots minister is not only ineffectual, it is beset with terrors. You say you are going to put the young lady under hypnotic sleep. There is no such thing as hypnotic sleep. What there is in actual fact is a phenomenon produced by imagination."

"Very well," I said; "if you prefer to call it imagination, let us do so; and if im-

agination is a medicine, by all means let us use it."

"Not so quick," he answered. "You have clearly not counted with the dangers. The phenomenon of imagination which you propose to induce is only a form of hysteria. We know what that involves. It involves the danger of madness—incurable madness, not temporary madness such as the victim of drink suffers from. Thus you are trying to jump out of the frying pan into the fire. Even if it is possible to put Miss Clousedale into a real sleep of three days' duration—a thing I entirely disbelieve—you would only be reducing her by one form of hysteria—the quiescent form, the most dangerous form—to a condition which must imperil her life."

"Do you mean," I said, "that she would never awake?"

"I mean," he answered, "that she would never awake to the consciousness of reason, or else that she would only awake to die."

"In short, you refuse to share our responsibility?"

"I am not so simple as to share it. What you say you are going to do amounts in effect, if you can do it, to the administration of chloroform. Now a patient may die under chloroform, but when this occurs our defense is obvious. But you are using unrecognized means, and there is no way by which you can show that, such as they are, you are using them properly. If Miss Clousedale should die in your hands, what is your position in the eye of the law?"

"She will not die."

"But if, my friend, if, if?"

"If," I answered, "you know so little of hypnotism as to speak of its dangers in the same breath with those of chloroform, it is clear that we have nothing to gain by your coöperation and nothing to lose by your withdrawal."

The hard face became harder and the square brow more stern.

"So you ask me to withdraw—you who have no legal rights whatever—you ask me to step back in favor of God knows whom from God knows where, coming with God knows what tricks of the adventurer and the charlatan?"

"I ask you to remember," I replied, "that your profession has always used just such language as yours about everything and everybody that has done any great work in the interests of humanity."

He had risen and was making for the door.

"It is such men as you, and—and this person"—pointing with his hat to the hyp-

notist—"who are the disturbers of society, making with a little burning straw and dirty smoke the scarecrow superstitions which fill the world with weakness and melancholy and insanity. I leave you to your silly work, but I warn you that if you do what you say, and anything happens as the consequence, as sure as there is law in the land I will set it in motion to punish you."

I bowed him out with cold politeness, and he went off in anger. The hypnotist had sat through both interviews with no better apprehension of their drift than observation of our faces had afforded him.

"Dr. La Mothe," I said, in French, "the gentlemen wash their hands of us."

He smiled. I had not surprised him.

VI.

EARLY the next morning we went up to Clousedale Hall. I was not surprised to find that both doctor and clergyman were there before us. They had come, however, to watch, not to resist, and were moving about in the breakfast room with grim and silent faces. Mrs. Hill was looking worn and wretched.

"You are none too soon," she said in her low and nervous voice. Then she led the way up stairs.

It is impossible to describe the effect the sight of Lucy had upon me. She was sitting in a boudoir, which had a bed room opening out of it. The beautiful pale face was now flushed and heated, the big blue eyes were keen and restless, there was something feverish and electrical in her manner; and her glossy chestnut hair, almost as dull as tow, was partly dragging over her shoulders. When she saw me she tried to escape, but I intercepted her at the bed room door, and did what I could to overcome the torment of her humiliation. She fell upon my neck, buried her face in my breast, and burst into tears. As well as I was able for the sobs that choked me I tried to soothe and comfort her.

"You will soon be well again, dearest. Have no fear. I have brought a French specialist to see you, and you must do all that he asks and expects."

Then the hypnotist entered, and close behind came the doctor and the minister.

Lucy held my hand during the first examination, and she seemed fairly quiet and tractable. But when an attempt was made to put her to sleep by causing her to fix her gaze for a few moments on some luminous object, she realized the intention instantly, and broke into a fit of hysteria. It

was agony to listen to her cries, and to see the convulsive twitching of her features. The hypnotist called for brandy and offered her a small dose of it. She clutched at the glass with feverish eagerness. Her eyes at that moment were like balls of fire in darkness. Their wild gloating was terrible to look upon.

It was true enough that we had not come too soon. The attack was imminent. We must act now or not at all.

"Hypnogenic agencies," said La Mothe, "are difficult in a case like this, so we must needs try the mesmeric ones."

Without quite realizing the difference I consented to this change in the experiment, and then everybody except myself was ordered out of the room. Shall I ever forget what occurred? The scene that followed has left scars on my memory. It is with pain like that of tearing the bandage from a wound that I try now to recall it.

The magnetizer put my dear one to sit on a chair in the middle of the floor, and seated himself on another chair drawn up directly in front of hers. Then, sitting face to face with her, he proceeded to incline her knees within his own. This he did with difficulty, due to the natural revolt of her modesty at the contact of the operator's person. Holding her firmly, knee to knee, he began to make passes before her bosom, and at length to apply his left hand on her breast in downward movements toward what I now know as the hypnogenic zones. After that he reached over, and passed his right hand across her shoulder and behind her body. Their foreheads touched, their breathing must have mingled. Lucy made a low, indistinguishable cry, and half turned to me with a movement either of appeal or of reproach.

The operation went on. Slowly, very slowly, with a calm that began to grow hateful, the magnetizer continued the downward pressure. Lucy's hysteria seemed to subside at every stroke of his hand. After a time her face, which had grown pale with fear, was inflamed as with pleasure, her eyes brightened and became humid, their pupils dilated, and their gaze grew fixed. She dropped her head, covered her face, and sighed audibly. I wanted to put a stop to everything, though I did not know why I should do so.

The operation continued. Lucy's eyes grew dimmer, their vision seemed to be obscured, her breathing became short and difficult as if she were beginning to suffer from an attack of nervous suffocation.

"The room is going round and round," she said in a thick, low voice; and again in a half articulate murmur, "it is going faster and faster."

"All right," said La Mothe, turning to me for a moment, and my impulse to intervene was checked.

Then my darling's body began to be agitated by sudden jerky movements. This was followed by languor and prostration. Finally, as he reached across to her again, she fell forward in his arms, swayed a moment, dropped her head over his shoulders, with eyes closed and neck extended, and with a gurgling sigh lost consciousness.

"All right," said La Mothe again, but his tone of satisfaction revolted me. I wanted to lay hold of him by the throat and fling him out of the house. I knew now what was the sensation of horror which, down to that moment, had been so vague. It was horror of the power, which the animal part of one human creature can, by the mysterious processes of nature, wield over the animal part of another. It was sickening horror of the power which man as man can wield over woman as woman, putting the soul to sleep and for a time, at all events, to death.

"Let me take her to her room," said La Mothe.

"Out of the way there!" I cried, and plucking my dear one from his arms, I carried her into her bed room and laid her upon the bed.

I was leaning over her, kissing her marble forehead that was wet with my tears, when I became conscious that Godwin and McPherson were standing behind me.

"The intense excitement has produced catalepsy," said the doctor, and then after a moment he added, "she has merely fainted."

I repeated the words in French, and La Mothe smiled, shook his head, and answered, "No."

"Don't you see she has merely fainted?" said the doctor.

I repeated these words also, and the hypnotist replied,

"Do people speak when they have fainted?"

"Of course not," said the doctor.

"Speak to her," said the hypnotist to me.

I leaned over the bed again, and looking down at the closed eyelids, cried in a loud tone,

"Lucy!"

"Don't shout," said the hypnotist. "Her hearing is not duller. It is intensified. She

hears all we are saying, as well as the ticking of our watches and the beating of our hearts."

In a breaking voice that was all but a whisper, I spoke again.

"Lucy!"

The sweet lips so softly closed opened gently, and the voice of my dear one came like the voice of one who speaks as she is sinking into a sleep.

"Yes."

"Are you in pain?"

"Oh, no."

"Do you know who I am?"

"Yes."

"Do you wish me to hold your hand?"

"Oh, yes."

I lifted from the counterpane the thin, motionless fingers, and inclosed them in my moist and swelling palms.

"Are you happy now, dearest?"

"Quite happy."

The doctor and the minister listened and looked on.

"She is exhausted—that's all," said Godwin.

"Do you mean that she is not asleep?" said the hypnotist.

"Certainly I do."

"Then arouse her. Make her sit up and talk to us in the common way of life."

The doctor accepted the challenge promptly. He raised Lucy in his arms and spoke to her, but she dropped back as one without bodily power.

"Raise her eyelids. Look at the pupils," said the hypnotist.

The doctor did so. "She *is* asleep," he muttered.

"But only in the somnambulistic phase," said the hypnotist.

Then he touched her eyebrows and her temples with a hard downward pressure. Her breathing became slower and less audible, her face settled to a serene expression, and a faint tinge of color rose to her cheeks.

"She is now in the deeper phase—she is in a trance," said the hypnotist.

"You mean that she is unconscious?" said the doctor.

"Quite unconscious."

"Lucy!" I cried again over the placid face, but there came no answer.

"Lucy! Lucy!"

There was not the quiver of an eyelid, not the shadow of movement on the lips. She was gone—gone to the great world of silence where the soul lives apart.

But I felt no fear now, no self reproach, no misgiving. It was impossible to look into that silent face and be afraid. Never

had my dear one seemed to me so softly beautiful, so like a happy sleeping child, so like an angel still on earth and yet cut off from the jar and fret of life. Her bosom rose and fell with the gentlest motion. I had to listen hard to catch the sound of her slow breathing. Her heart beat regularly. She was at peace.

Oh, sleep it is a gentle thing,

Beloved from pole to pole—

But would the experiment succeed? When my darling awoke from this sleep of the soul, would the burning thirst of the flesh be gone?

"How long does the crave usually last?" said the hypnotist.

"Three days," answered Mrs. Hill, rising from a chair at the back, where she had been sitting with covered face.

"Three! This is Wednesday. Thursday—Friday—Saturday—then we shall waken her from her sleep on Sunday morning. And meantime I will stay here in the house and watch her."

VII.

I LEFT the hypnotist at Clousedale Hall, and went back to the Wheatsheaf. Not until then did I realize what the tension had been, and what it still must be. How I passed the four nights and days that followed I do not know. One creeping terror dominated every sleeping and waking hour—that Lucy would never come out of the trance into which our mysterious forces had laid her. I went up to the house constantly, and as often as I approached it I glanced nervously from the farthest point of sight to assure myself that the blinds had not been drawn down. I crept up stairs on tiptoe, and stole along the corridors like a thief. I know that short as the time of waiting was, measured in relation to life, I wasted away in it and grew pale and haggard. It ought to have reassured me, but hardly did, that meantime the hypnotist did not turn a hair. A smug content shone on his face as often as I looked at it with fearful eyes.

Lucy's condition continued good. Her pulse was regular, and her heart normal. She took nourishment in sustaining quantities, by the means they had of passing it through her almost motionless lips.

I had no thought to waste on the people of Cleator, but it was impossible not to know that in some way public opinion was against me. Even Mrs. Tyson, the landlady, at first so friendly a soul, was clearly looking at me askance. Suspicion, which

I had feared might settle on Lucy, was resting on myself instead.

But I lived through everything, and even Saturday night came at length. It was the night before the morning appointed for Lucy's waking, and I did not attempt to sleep. When I ought to have gone to bed I wandered out into the locality of the mines, and at early morning I found myself like a lost soul encircling the smelting house of "Owd Bony." The bank fires burning the refuse of iron ore sent a red glow into the world of darkness. Mountains and dale were blotted out; nothing was visible but the tongues of flame leaping from the squat mouths of the chimneys, and nothing was audible but the deep panting of the laboring engine that brought the iron out of the bowels of the earth. In my mood at that time it seemed a fit scene for the mysterious and awful rites which were being enacted in the big house behind the trees, with my love as the silent and unconscious subject.

The morning dawned very fresh and bright and beautiful. The sun shone and the birds sang, and there was no cloud or wind. As early as I dared I went up to the house. The doctor and the Scots minister arrived soon after me. I could not help seeing, in their grim sallowness, a certain satisfaction at my nervousness and pallor. It was almost as if they hoped for a tragic issue, or at least foresaw a ghastly triumph over me if things should not go well.

La Mothe joined us after a period of waiting. He looked cheerful and spoke cheerily. There was an irritating atmosphere of "everydayness" about the man's manner. He had been sleeping and had just awakened. I think he yawned as he bade us good morning.

In due course we all four passed into the bed room. That peaceful place was full of a holy calm. Lucy lay there as I had last seen her, with the tranquil face of a sleeping angel. I thought I had never beheld a human countenance so saintly. There was not a line of evil passion, not a trace of that spiritual alloy which the touch of the world brings to the soul that is fresh from God. The air around her seemed to breathe of heaven.

"Is everything ready, nurse?" said the hypnotist.

"Yes," Mrs. Hill replied.

"Bring up that small table and set it near to the bed."

This was done.

"Now set a wine glass on the table with the decanter of brandy."

This was done also. The time for the awakening was at hand. There was no sound in the room except the chirping of the cheerful fire, the singing of the birds outside, the shuffling of the feet and the rasping of the breath of the hypnotist. The rest of us were perfectly quiet. Our very hearts seemed to stand still.

I must have lived a lifetime during the next two minutes. The tension was terrible. No physical pain can compare with the agony of suspense like that.

The hypnotist approached my darling, squared his breast across her body, and putting his fingers lightly on her forehead raised her eyelids with his thumbs. Her pupils were turned up—I could not look at her, I could not look away.

At the next moment the hypnotist was leaning closely over her, with his face close to her face, blowing softly into her eyes.

There was a measureless period of suspense. Lucy lay without a sign of life.

The hypnotist was holding the eyelids wide open and blowing strongly upon the pupils. The pupils were moving; they were coming down.

Then close to the silent face, very close, the hypnotist began to speak. In a loud, deep voice, caressing and yet commanding, he cried, "You're all right!"

Lucy's eyelids twitched under his fingers, but there was no other response.

"You're all right!" cried the hypnotist, as one calling into a deep cavern.

"All right! All right!"

The voice seemed to be dragging back the reluctant soul.

The sleeper moved. There was a clutching of the counterpane, a swelling of the bosom, a deep, audible breathing, and then the whole body rolled over on its side, as a child does when it is awakening in the morning from the long, unbroken sleep of the night.

I had begun to breathe freely again under mingled feelings of relief and joy.

"Speak to her," said the hypnotist.

I tried but could not, then tried again and uttered a husky gurgle.

"Have no fear. She is quite safe. In two minutes more she will be awake and well. Speak to her. Let your voice be the first that she hears on returning to consciousness and to the world. Recall some incident of the past—the more tender the better. We will leave you."

He motioned the doctor and the minister to go out with him, and they passed into the boudoir together. I reached over to my dear one and took her hand and kissed

her, and then in a whisper I called her by name :

" Lucy !"

There was a moment's silence, as if the soul of the sleeper were listening, and then in a toneless, somnambulist voice she answered,

" Yes."

" Do you remember the day we parted in London ?"

There was another pause, and then came a flood of words :

" What a lovely sunset ! See how sweetly the red glow stretches down the river. How beautiful the world is ! And how good !"

I remembered the words. I had heard her speak them before. She was living over again the incidents of our last evening at Sir George Chute's.

" What a long, long time it must be before we meet again ! Christmas ! Will it ever come ? I shall count the days like the prisoner of Chillon."

I remembered how I had answered her when she said this before, and in the same way I answered her again :

" Let us hope that like him you will not become too fond of your prison to leave it for good when I come in the spring to fetch you."

There was a little trill of laughter, like the ghostly echo of the merry note that danced in my ears on that June night when we sat on the balcony looking down at the sleeping Thames.

" They are lighting the lamps in the drawing room. Would you like me to sing something ?"

In another moment my darling was singing from her bed in the breaking sleep of

her spirit, just as she had sung to me at that happy parting seven months before :

" And when my seven long years are done——"

Suddenly the voice broke and then frayed away, and the song stopped. Lucy moved and opened her eyes. I was face to face with her, and she looked on me with a bewildered gaze. Then the light of love came into her eyes, and in an ardent, penetrating, passionate tone, she cried, " Robert !" and stretched out her hand.

" I was dreaming of you," she said. " I thought we were together in London and I was singing."

" And so you were, my love," I answered, as well as I was able for the sobs that choked me.

Then she raised herself on her elbow, and realized where we were.

" I remember—you brought the French doctor early this morning. What time is it now ?"

I made what shift I could to answer her question, and little by little everything came back. Her distress was more than I could bear to witness, and I crept away.

Yet before I left the room I realized that the hypnotist, who had come to the little table, was pouring brandy from the decanter into the glass.

" Offer her this," he said to the nurse, who had been hovering about the bed head.

But Lucy only glanced at the glass, and cried, with a look of repulsion and a voice of pain :

" No, no ! Take it away. It makes me sick."

In the agony of my suspense I had forgotten our mission. We had succeeded. The drink crave was gone.

(*To be continued.*)

UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION.*

By *Hall Caine*,

AUTHOR OF "THE MANXMAN," "THE DEEMSTER," "THE SCAPEGOAT," ETC.

VIII.

LA MOTHE was enraptured with his success.

"We have taken only one step yet," he said. "We have staved off a single attack of the drink crave. But we must put the lady under the hypnotic sleep again and again, until the chain of the periodic crave is broken. And if that will not suffice to cure her, we must have recourse to therapeutic suggestion. While she is under influence we must impress it upon her that drink is a sickening poison, which she ought never to touch."

But I could not nerve myself to go on. To allow Lucy to slip back again and again to the world of silence and darkness was more than I dare think of. Then my feeling of repulsion against the occult powers, and against the hypnotist's method of using them, was now stronger than ever, notwithstanding the good results obtained. And I began to foresee a new and hideous danger.

"Dr. La Mothe," I said, "has it been your experience that a subject is easier to magnetize at a second than at the first attempt, and easier still at a third, and that the difficulty grows less and less at each successive effort?"

"Certainly," said La Mothe, with eagerness. "We should have no such scene again as we went through on Wednesday morning."

"And has it been your experience, also, that the subjects of the magnetizer become more and more attached to him, as though drawn and held by the fascination of his own personality?"

"That was Mesmer's chief difficulty," said La Mothe. "His subjects were mainly women, and it is told of them that they were constantly following him about the house with the eyes of devoted dogs."

"Ah!"

It must be just as I foresaw. When I thought of the scene of the magnetizing, the prospect of a fascination based on such

forces as were there brought into play terrified and revolted me. La Mothe seemed to surmise the nature of my objection, for he began to argue the claims of hypnotism as a substitute for mesmerism.

"In hypnotism," he said, "the operator's personality is not an active force. Your English doctor, Braid, saw this clearly, at a moment when the very mention of mesmerism would have deprived him of his practice and ruined him. Hypnotism requires no commerce between the body of the operator and the body of the subject."

"But it requires, instead," I urged, "the acquiescence of the subject's will."

"In the first instance, certainly," said La Mothe.

"Only in the first instance?"

"Well, the first few instances."

"That is to say," I said, "that the subject who has once or twice or thrice submitted her will to the will of the hypnotist slackens her hold of it little by little."

"I think that may be allowed."

"And in the long run, if the experiment were carried so far, there might come the complete subjugation of the will of the subject and the complete domination of the will of the operator."

"Opinions among authorities," said La Mothe, "are divided on that point. The schools of Salpêtrière and of Nancy part company on the question—among others—whether the free will remains unbroken or the hypnotized subject is a mere automaton."

"But what is your own opinion?"

"My own opinion is that the will of the subject does in the long run, and after many operations, assimilate itself to the will of the operator."

"That means," I said, "that if the operator is a good man the influence he exercises will be for good."

"Most certainly," said La Mothe.

I did not urge the opposing fact that if the operator is an evil man his influence must be for evil. My mind was already made

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up. Whatever La Mothe might be, if the powers he exercised were what he described, the risk that Lucy would run in being made subject to them was so fearful that no gain seemed great enough to justify the change. The remedy would be worse than the disease. On the one side was the drink crave with its blasting curse; on the other side either the moral danger of a power which no man's body should wield over the body of any woman—no husband, even, over any wife—or else the malign domination of the very soul itself.

I had had enough of hypnotism and mesmerism. They might offer a means of cure for Lucy, but I could not bear to think of them. They revolted me. I paid La Mothe his fee, and with a shrug and a sneer he went back to London. When he was gone I asked myself where I stood. No nearer the end I had set out to reach. One spasm of the drink crave I had postponed or passed over. But another would come soon, and perhaps it would come with redoubled force.

IX.

I STAYED a fortnight longer in Cumberland. It was a tender, pathetic time. Lucy's health grew better every day, yet her spirits did not improve. There was a look of trouble in her face, and sometimes her eyes would fill when the talk was cheerful and I was doing my best to be merry. I noticed that the visits of the Scots minister were frequent. Lucy and McPherson were much in each other's company. I did not intrude upon their conversation, thinking it might refer to the good works on which they were engaged together. But one day I saw them part with undisguised anger on his side and some confusion upon hers, and then I knew that his visits had involved a more serious and personal issue.

Lucy told me what it was. It concerned myself closely. With eyes on the needle work that was in her trembling fingers she let slip the truth.

"Robert," she said, "don't think too hard of me—"

"What is it?" I said.

"Try to forgive me if I have given you so much trouble, so much pain—"

I saw it coming. "Tell me—what is it, Lucy?"

"I want to go into a convent."

"Good God!" I cried, "can you mean it?"

"I have thought it over very carefully," she said. "There is nothing else left for

me to do. It is my only hope, my only refuge. If I am ever to conquer this curse it can only be there. And if I am not to conquer it, where else can I hide myself so well? Besides, I feel that it is right and just. I know all about my grandfather and how he made our money. That needs an expiation, and we know what is written about the third and fourth generation. But I am very sorry for your sake, Robert. It was very sweet and beautiful—all we hoped and expected; but then—but then—"

Her cheeks were becoming red, her eyes moist, and her voice husky.

"Lucy, my darling," I said, "you are not very well yet. By and by you will be better, and then everything will seem different. All the world will be changed, and you will wonder how you could ever have made this resolution. Let us not think of it any more."

My reason was more selfish than I had allowed. It was impossible for me to discuss with this sweet and tender creature an infirmity so ugly and so abject.

I was asking myself what it was that had led to her determination, and telling myself that imagination was the most potent factor in life. Lucy wanted to go into a convent because the idea of a hereditary curse had taken possession of her imagination. What was the drink crave in her case? What must it be in nearly all cases? It was the idea that drink controlled the will. The drunkard drinks because he thinks he cannot help it. Drink is the hypnotist, and every time the victim yields to his sway his influence becomes more powerful. The beginning of his attempts upon Lucy was at the moment when she first tasted, for then the bulwark of her will was broken down. Imagination may bring to pass the thing it fears, and Lucy's imagination, dominated by the thought of a curse inherited from her grandfather, was working out the results which the curse predicted.

On the other hand, was there no poison in her blood? No organic mischief set up by two generations of alcoholism? The eagerness with which she had clutched at the brandy immediately before her trance, and the repulsion she had shown at sight of it when she awoke, seemed to point to some absolute bodily ferment quite independent of imagination.

But the only standing ground I could find anywhere was the hope that if an imaginative idea had been the beginning of Lucy's disease, another and healthier imaginative idea might perhaps be her medicine. What was therapeutic suggestion but imagination

working on imagination? The sleep was no part of the primary thing, but only necessary for that subjugation of the opposing will wherein the imagination of the operator might have free play with the imagination of the subject. Why not the imagination without the sleep? Why not my imagination against that of Lucy? And where was the imaginative idea with which I could overcome her belief in the curse? There lay her salvation, if I could only find it.

X.

ON my way to London I picked up the evening papers at Rugby. They were full of my quondam acquaintance, La Mothe. He had made a sensation by improvising a sort of private hospital for the cure of inebriates. The Society for Psychical Research had investigated certain of his cases, and their report was favorable. His success was already very great. In a country house a few miles out of London he was at full swing. The patients were chiefly ladies.

Late that night I was sitting alone in my chambers, thinking of all that had happened so strangely, when I heard footsteps on the pavement below, and voices approaching my own building.

"This is Pump Court, sir, and this is number five." It was the porter from the lodge outside.

"Thank you, thank you," was the answer in a cheery tone, which came to me as a ghost of some old memory.

Then there was a heavy and uncertain step on the naked wooden stairs. I knew that the stranger was coming to me, and before he had knocked at my door I had got up to open it. At the next moment my father and I stood face to face.

"Does Mr. Har—" he began, and then looking into my face he cried, "Robert!" and laid hold of me with both hands.

I had not seen him for nearly fifteen years. His hair had become white, and he was now an elderly man. But if the change in my father was great, the change in me must have been still greater.

"Let me look at you, my boy," he said, and without releasing my hands he drew me to the lamp, held me at arm's length, threw back his head and scanned me from head to foot. I remember that I laughed during this scrutiny, and bore it with the indulgence which, in a son, comes so near to condescension.

My father was much affected, but he did all he could to conceal his emotion under a boisterous manner.

"So I've taken you by surprise, eh? Come earlier than I was expected, have I? Well, I thought I would take you on the hop, young fellow. Here I am, any way, straight from Charing Cross, with all my luggage in the hands of the customs. Couldn't wait for the examination, you see. And now you've just got to put me up, for I'm not going to budge out of these rooms tonight."

Thus he laughed and rattled on, telling me of his journey, his vacation, the time of his return, and interrupting every other sentence with exclamations on the change in myself, which had transformed me from boy to man. By and by he stopped in the torrent of his talk, looked round at a photograph of Lucy that stood on the mantel-piece, blinked at it, picked it up, and said,

"This?"

I nodded my head, and he settled his glasses and looked into the face in the photograph with a long and earnest gaze.

"Well?" I asked.

"She's *beautiful!*" he answered. "*Beautiful!*" he said again, with a long, warm utterance of the word, and after a moment, "She's a good woman," he said tenderly.

We sat late and talked on every subject except one subject, and that was the subject nearest to my heart. Of Lucy's illness I could tell my father nothing, and I occupied myself at every pause in devising subterfuges by which I could prevent Sir George Chute from telling him. Somewhere in the early hours of morning my father unwittingly struck at an angle the thought that was dominant in my mind. He was talking of my mother, of whom I had no memories, for she had died in my childhood.

"Poor dear mother, she had strange fancies," he said. "The last of them came just before her death. It was an odd thought, and of course a harmless one, but I really believe it brightened and cheered the sweet soul at the last dark hour of the end."

"What was it?" I asked.

"You'll laugh. It was nothing—nothing a man could ever mention except to his son. In fact it was about *your* son."

"Mine?"

"Yes; you were only a child then, but she thought she saw you as you might be at seventy, with a son of your own by your side."

"Well?"

"You were a judge yourself, and your son was being made lord chancellor of England!"

I laughed, we both laughed, and then we

sighed and were silent. My father was thinking of my mother; I was thinking of Lucy. Here was an idea, a dream, a fancy, a madness exactly the opposite in nature and effect of that which had clouded the life of my dear girl. Just as the curse that had taken possession of the mind of Lucy's grandfather had overshadowed his life, and carried its darkness onward to the lives of his son and his granddaughter, so had the blessing that had germinated in the weakness, perhaps, of my mother's failing mind brightened the end of her days, and brought some afterglow, some shadow as of sweet flame into my own existence. Now, if I could oppose the one superstition against the other! If I could only believe what my mother had believed, as Lucy believed what her grandfather had believed! If imagination could bring about the fate it feared, why could it not also bring about the fortune for which it hoped?

My father slept that night in my bed, and I made shift with the couch in my study. The sound of his measured breathing came to me through the door between, during the long hours in which I lay awake.

XI.

FULL of a new thought, I was eager to get back to Cumberland; and ten or twelve days after my father's arrival in England I parted from him with certain obvious excuses, and took train for Cleator.

"Don't be too long sending me that telegram, and I'll be after you like quick sticks," said he at Euston.

Sir George Chute was with him, and I had sworn our old friend to silence.

"Good by," said he loudly, and then putting his head in at the carriage window, "Do nothing rash," he added in significant tones.

I nodded my head for reassurance and assent, and the train started on its way. It was the same night mail by which I had traveled on the occasion of my first journey. Again I changed at Penrith, and changed a second time at the little junction in the mountains. It was now several weeks later, and early spring had begun to breathe over the widening year. The morning was still very young, but the day had dawned, and over the hills to the east were the first pink rays from the unrisen sun. In the waiting room of the little wooden station I found the same group of miners, smoking their clay pipes over the crackling sticks of a newly kindled fire. They remembered me, and with easy good manners recalled the name

of Lucy. It was common talk by this time that she intended to go into a convent.

"We allus knew it would come to that," said one. "She's a vast ower good for the world, is Lucy Clous'al."

It was Sunday morning, and I was at breakfast in the Wheatsheaf when the bells began to ring. I thought it probable that Lucy would be at church, and I was not disappointed. From my seat at the back I saw her in the pew under the pulpit, which on my former visit had been empty, and decorated with ivy and holly and flowering gorse. She was dressed in a black that was almost like crape, and it made her pale face still more pale and spiritual. I do not think she saw me. With head bent she knelt through a great part of the service, and when it was over I did not attempt to speak to her. Some secret voice seemed to tell me that it should not be there, it should not be then, that I should launch upon her what I had come to say. From a few paces back I saw her pass out with reverent step, and my whole heart yearned for her, but I let her go.

Next day, Monday, with the sun shining, the birds singing, the butterflies tossing in the air, and all the world turning to love and song, I went up to Clousedale Hall and asked for Mrs. Hill. The faithful old servant had a nervous and worn out look, as of sleepless hours and bitter sorrow. I asked if I might see Lucy.

"Youdale, from the mines, is with her now," she said, "and I know that Cockbain, the solicitor, is to come again in the afternoon."

Her wrinkled face quivered as she used these names, for she saw that I recognized their significance as indicating the preparations toward that change in life which was meant to be so near.

"Then I'll invite myself to dinner—you dine at six," I said, and with that I shook the trembling hand again. I thought there was a kind of half despairing appeal expressed in the good old face as it looked into mine at the door, but nothing was said, and I passed out of the house.

We were quiet and almost constrained that night at dinner. Lucy spoke very little, but she looked at me from time to time. She seemed to be saying farewell to me with her eyes.

I did what I could to be calm, and even to talk cheerfully, but my whole heart was in rebellion. As I glanced across the table at my dear one, with her pale face and large, liquid eyes, I was seeing her in a nun's dress, living within chill and sunless

walls amid clouds of incense. I was seeing myself, too, going through the world as a homeless straggler. To have stretched out our hands for the golden wine of life, to have been so near to quaffing it when the cup was dashed from our lips, seemed cruel and monstrous. It was as much as I could do to keep up the flow of conversation without painful pauses; and when Mrs. Hill rose and left us, giving me another look of supplication as she passed out, my impatience could support itself no longer.

"So you are going away, Lucy?" I said.

"Yes," she answered in a faint voice.

"You are going into the convent?" I said.

"I have made all preparations," she said, and she indicated some of them.

"And are we to part like this, Lucy?"

"It is better so," she said. "I thank God that I saw what it was right to do before it was too late to do it."

"You are thinking of me," I said.

"How can I help it?" she answered.

"When I remember that you are now at the beginning of life, and how nearly, though unwittingly, I had wrecked everything, not only for yourself, but perhaps for your children—"

"You still think you are under the curse?" I said.

"How can I think otherwise?" she replied. "Remember my grandfather and my father, and think of myself. Then your own experiment seemed to prove it."

"But have you not reflected," I said, "that the power of such an idea is only in proportion to the belief in it? That is the true psychology of a curse, always. When you see a man, or a family, or even a nation, laboring like blind Samson against what seems like fate, if you look closely you will find that the only fact is the fancy. That is your own case, Lucy. There is nothing really amiss with you. You have only to deny belief to the idea that killed your grandfather and your father, and all will be well."

She remained unshaken. "It is impossible," she said. "At all events I dare not trust myself."

I came to closer quarters. "And what about me?" I asked.

"You," she answered in a faltering voice, "you are to forget me."

"Forget you, Lucy?"

"No, not that, either," she said. "I cannot wish you to forget me. I shall always remember your goodness, Robert, and—and I wish you to think of me as—as one who is lost to you in death."

"But it is not death, Lucy—that's the cruelty of it. It has none of the peace of death, and I cannot reconcile myself to it."

She could not answer me, and I saw that her bosom was heaving.

"Lucy," I said, "have you nothing more to say to me?"

"Nothing," she answered in a breaking voice. "Yet wait! Yes, I have something to say."

"What is it?"

"I thought I had already gone through our last hour of parting."

"When?"

"When you were in London, and I was here alone."

It was very hard to go on. "Well?" I asked.

"I had hoped you would not come again, Robert, but since you have come, there is one thing you can do—you have not done it yet."

"Tell me what it is, Lucy."

"Release me from our engagement. Do it for my sake. It is my last request. Will you?"

"I will."

"You are very good."

"But I have something to say, Lucy."

"Yes."

I passed over to the other side of the table, and leaned on the back of the chair beside her.

"Lucy," I said, "you are living under the influence of an idea which takes the form of fate itself. It follows you and clouds your whole existence. Now, I am living under the influence of an idea also."

She shuddered and said, "Is it a curse?"

"No, but a blessing," I replied. And then I told her of my mother's dream, my mother's fancy, my mother's dying hope. A hush fell on the room as I spoke, and I could see that my dear one was deeply touched.

"That is very, very beautiful," she said in a hushed whisper, and then, with a quick glance, "but do you believe it?"

I summoned all my resolution, and replied, "With all my heart."

"You believe that in the fullness of time it will come to pass?"

"I do."

Her eyes began to glisten with tears, and she said, not without effort, "That must be a great, great source of strength to you, Robert—to think that you will marry and be happy, and have children, and that they will do well in the world some day—"

She was breaking down. I had plowed deeply, and torn at the tenderest fibers.

"And believing that, Lucy," I said, "trusting in that, feeling confident of that——"

"Yes?"

"I ask you again to be my wife."

"No, no," she cried; "don't say it."

"I do say it, Lucy, for I know that the blessing and not the curse will triumph."

She had risen as if to fly from the room.

"Don't tempt me," she said.

I reached over her, and in spite of her resistance I put my arms about her neck and drew her back to her chair.

"Lucy," I said, "I love you—you know that. With all my heart and soul and strength I love you. I will not think of losing you. Love is stronger than any curse. I don't want to think of you as one who is dead. I want your living heart to answer my heart. I have set my stake on your love, and I mean to keep it. Lucy, my beautiful Lucy, you belong to me, you are mine, my love, my wife! I have been waiting for you all these years, you have been waiting for me. You shall not bury yourself in a convent. I want you, my darling, you, you, you! I want the breath of your golden hair, the light of your blue eyes, the kiss of your red lips. Come to me, come to me, come to me!"

I had liberated her, and now stood facing

her with my arms outstretched. She swayed a moment as one who was struggling hard, and then, trailing her hand along the table, my brave girl came to me—came to me with a faint cry that was half a sob and half a laugh, and fell upon my breast.

"Take me, then," she said. "What I could not do for myself I feel that I can do for you."

That night I telegraphed for my father.

* * * *

It all happened five and thirty years ago, and assuredly the blessing has thus far got the better of the curse.

Hope! It is the only true physician. There is no evil it may not conquer, for where it cannot destroy the disease, it can destroy the fear that makes the disease fearful. It is the one prophecy that is always the beginning of its own fulfilment; it is the one universal possession, and "the miserable have no other medicine." No man is utterly lost who has not lost his hope. No ship is a derelict, though abandoned by her crew, while one living soul remains on board.

Ideas are eternal and immortal, omnipresent and omnipotent, and hope is the father of all ideas that have comforted and sustained and strengthened and governed us since the beginning of the world.

THE END.