PLAYERS WHO MAKE MONEY

The Good Old Days of Big Box Receipts Are Passing.

DEPENDS ON THE ADVANCE MAN

Some Notables Who Have Handled the Press End of the Business with Marked Success—Adonis Dixey Is Back in the Daly Ranks on a Small Salary.

Little interest and less attention is shown by the theatre-going public to the financial side of plays. Yet could the play-goer realize the vital importance of money-making to every manager, actor and actress, however wedded to their art, he would give it more serious thought, and perhaps be more careful in regulating his attendance.

In the theatre of to-day scenic and mechanical effects of a character never before seen are not only required but are essential to the success of every play, be it by the great Sardou or the more fickle Charlie Hoyt. It is less than a score of years since Edwin Booth used to play in various theatres throughout the country, in fact in nearly all of them except those of New York, Boston, and a few Southern cities, with no scenery at all worth mentioning. It was common to nail a board on one side of the stage and write upon it, "This is a forest." Think of such a proceeding as that to-day.

Should any manager attempt such a thing, nowadays, it would ruin his business for all time. The results are only natural. Large fortunes, such as were built up by Lotta, Maggie Mitchell, and Emma Abbott, are rarely made now by the most prosperous star. Lotta, in the course of her career, has managed to lay by a nest egg of over $500,000; Maggie Mitchell is reputed to have nearly $300,000; Emma Abbott had much valuable real estate and a fortune variously estimated from $100,000 to $200,000. The most prosperous artists of to-day rarely acquire any such wealth, and the artists of the stage who really make the most money are singers like the de Reszkes, Emma Eames, Alvary C. Lassale, getting salaries from $500 to $1,500 a night with virtually no expense, except for their musical bureaus.

ARE FEW BIG MONEY-MAKERS.

The enormous expense of a modern production, which, as I have said, is absolutely essential to any play, makes sad inroads on the profits of the attraction, and at the end of the season what with lithographs, newspaper "ads," printing of other descriptions, hotel bills, railroad fares—which cannot now be economized as formerly, when an astute manager could in some instances by clever management secure passes for some by buying tickets for the remainder of his company—the profit and loss account is often, even with stars of magnitude, just barely balanced.

In other words, there are many clever actors and actresses, well up in their art, industrious, ambitious, and anxious to make money, who find at the termination of their season little or nothing to pass the heated months upon.

This was particularly true last season. The percentage of money-makers in the theatrical firmament was so small that you could easily put them all in a Washington lodging-house. Just who did make the money and who did not it is difficult to say. Henry E. Abbey, with Henry Irving and the spectacle "America" and his Grand Opera Company, is said to have cleared over $300,000 on the season. This, it will be remembered, ran at the Auditorium in Chicago all through the World's Fair.

On the loss side of the ledger Mr. Abbey had Coquilin and Jane Hading, who, I believe, dropped something like $30,000 during that tour for the great impressario.

It is not always merit that succeeds on the stage nowadays, as was profoundly illustrated by the failure of the great comedian and his associate, Mme. Hading. Two more artistic, delightful, and entertaining players do not tread the boards to-day and it was a reflection upon the intelligence of theater-goers that they declined to receive them. I recall the engagement at Albaugh's with great distinctness. There were hardly a hundred people in the house at any performance and yet Washingtonians are supposed to be a cultured people with, of course, a knowledge of the court language.

THE ADVANCE MAN.

The press representative is another important factor in the making of a play of to-day. Have a really good hustler like Jay Durham, Frank O'Neill, Jim Morrissey, or Bailey Avery ahead of your company and he will do more for its success financially than all the ordinary advertising conceivable. Many managers remember how Jay Durham went into Kansas City ahead of Julia Marlowe on the occasion of her debut, hired that old barn, the Auditorium, and played to an enormous business with Jefferson and Florence in their artistic production, "The Rivals," Fanny Davenport in her superb production of "Cleopatra," Donnelly and Girard in their popular comedy "Natural Gas," against them.

Mr. Durham, as soon as he alighted in the town, found that Miss Marlowe had little or no chance against the stellar attractions also playing there that week so he "papered" the immense house, doing so with the greatest care, and only inviting people of prominence the opening night. As a result the newspapers the next morning spoke only of Miss Marlowe's immense audience and the merits of the other attractions.

Morrissey's Emma Abbott kiss and how it was conceived and carried out as a finishing touch is too well known to call for more than passing mention. Little Bailey Avery has also frequently shown his great ability.

The fortunes, more or less large, made by Stuart Robson and his old partner, W. H. Crane, Richard Mansfield, E. H. Sothern, Rhea, Rose Coghlan, Mojeska, and numberless other stars is due in large measure to clever management and the proper press representation. All of these players mentioned have earned their wealth very easily.

NO ROYAL THEATRICAL ROAD.

Mme. Mojeska is probably the wealthiest of those named. She owns an enormous ranch in California, which is managed by her husband, Count Boseffy. She will retire this season, after having been treated with courtesy by every newspaper in the country, which is due perhaps more to her managers than any other cause.

The madame is an old woman yet she still plays Rosalind. Almost any other actress in the country over fifty would be ridiculed for attempting the part.

Money-making plays are confined to a particular class. "The Tin Soldier" and "Holes in the Ground" of Charlie Hoyt have built up a large fortune, while last season nearly every company playing a Shakespearian repetoire went all to pieces.

"The Old Homestead" has made $260,000 for its owner, Denman Thompson, most of which has been lost by that clever actor at the gaming table.

All told "Adonis" cleared about $280,000 for Dixey, and the hinds legs of the heifer blew it in royally and this season he returns to Daly's at a salary of perhaps $50 a week.

It is sad to relate that legitimate plays are not as a general rule at all profitable.

If I am not mistaken Corbett and Madeline Pollard will make as much money as any other "players" the coming season.

R. W. S.

AN INTERESTING FIGURE.

An American Citizen of Influence Who Lives in Korea.

It is not generally known that some of the most important government offices in Korea are held by American citizens, and that for years American influence there has overshadowed that of all other countries, even that of China and Japan. One of the most important and interesting figures in Korea is that of Gen. Charles W. Le Gendre, who, through the civil war, commanded a New York regiment.

Soon after the war he was sent to Amoy as consul general, and there distinguished himself as a diplomatist. It is well known that later he commanded the military operations in the campaign against Formosa. In 1867 he gave up his office and went to Japan, where he arrived at the beginning of the great civil war, during which the Mikado and the shogun tought for supremacy to the bitter end. Many believe that Gen. Le Gendre did much both to help the Mikado to win, and then to change his position toward foreigners.

Some four or five years ago the general began to take great interest in the complicated Korean questions, and he left Japan to go to Seoul as vice-minister of the home affairs of Korea. Ever since then he has been struggling in the most magnificent way to keep Korea free from the iron claws of the Japanese, Chinese, and Russians, and so far he has succeeded! He must doubtless be taking a most active part in the events now taking place. Once, according to an amusing story which is related of the general, he was having a hot discussion with some Chinese officials, and in spite of all his efforts he could not obtain from them what he wanted. To all he had to say the Chinese would answer: "We have expressed our master's will."

"Your master! Your master!" at last shouted the general very angrily. "Can he do this, your master?" And taking out his glass eye (for he lost one eye during the American civil war), he threw it in the air, caught it again, quickly put it back in its place, and looked at the terrified Chinaman. Of course, they did not know that the eye was glass, having never heard of such a thing, and they became so terribly afraid of a man who had such a power that they quickly agreed to everything he wished.

One's Enough.

Miss Primlips—"When you say your prayers at night do you pray for all men?" Miss Left over—"No, indeed! Just one would be enough." [Life.

How He Knew.

"How did you discover she was a woman masquerading as a man?" "She sent me a letter with two postscripts."—Yankee Blade.

WAR NEWS.

Chew-Hing-Gum: Amelika man got no manners readin' over Chinaman's shoulder.

THE RISING TIDE.

OVER A GLASS OF WINE.

They had been introduced, of course, but he spoke to her first at dinner.

"May I pour you a little wine?" he asked.

"Thank you," she said simply, "a little. I drink only claret."

"You don't care for the sweet wines?"

"I don't think I really care for any wine, but this is what we drink at home. You did not pour any for yourself," she added a moment after.

He smiled.

"It would be for the first time in my life if I had."

"How strange!" She looked at him point blank with a pair of clear and very kind blue eyes. "Have you scruples? Do you think it wrong?"

"Well,"—he drew a long breath—"hardly. Yet, for me it would be wrong."

The color deepened on her cheek a little. He saw her check back a word from her lips, and the shadow that swept over her face was sweeter than any brightness. But he could not appropriate her unmerited sympathy.

"No—no," he declared, laughing slightly. "It is not at all a temptation to me. I have never known the taste of any sort of liquor. I think I have a great advantage against fate in this, and—I mean to keep it."

"Then you are afraid, after all."

"Sometimes we recognize danger though we may not fear it."

"If it be danger you must fear it. You do, or you would not take precautions."

He looked down and met her earnest glance. She was forgetting her dinner.

"If you were not afraid," she went on impulsively, "wine would seem to you as harmless as water. It is because you have a fear that you will not touch it."

He was at loss just here. It was difficult to match her candor without a touch of securing discourtesy.

"Suppose I drink to your better courage," she said. A roguish dimple showed itself. The deadly cup has no terror for me."

He raised his crystal goblet and drank to her in sparkling water, saying gently:

"But of my cup no one need be afraid."

There was a pause. She had not lifted the wine to her lips. A servant came to remove the course and some one spoke to her across the table. When he could claim her attention again he was ready with a bright remark about the beauty of some roses in a vase near them.

"Yes—so pretty—pretty," she said vaguely, and then with purpose in her tone, "We had not exhausted our topic, I think. May I ask—is it your conviction that liquor should not be used in any form?"

"You are unmerciful," he deprecated. "Think how ungrateful it would seem to object to anything amid such surroundings."

"Never mind about being complimentary," she replied, gravely. "I am trying to reflect—to decide. I have never before given one serious thought to this question of temperance. The people I live among—and they are all upright, intelligent and refined—regard a moderate use of liquor as almost indispensable. Surely you must admit that there are thousands and thousands who are not in any way injured by its use?"

"I know," he said quickly, "but there are millions and millions—the jail will tell you—the hospitals——"

He stopped abruptly.

"Yes," she said thoughtfully, "yes. But why not take the good and avoid the evil? We need not become drunkards because we use liquors?"

He met the appeal of her honest eyes with a look as earnest.

"Since you desire it," he answered steadily, "let me say one word, and then, I think, I will say no more. If you never touch liquor you not only need not, you cannot become a drunkard. But, if once it crosses your lips, the first step is made."

There was a long silence between them. The rest of the guests went on talking gayly. Presently she spoke, but so low that he had to bend his ear to listen.

"You have given me a wonderful message," she said. She laid aside her glass of wine, and in the simple act he knew there was consecration.—Madeline S. Bridges.

A Genius for Snoring.

Lord Aberdeen tells the following story of himself. He left London at midnight in a sleeping car for the north. In the morning when he was awakened he saw a stranger opposite him.

"Excuse me," said the stranger, "may I ask if you are rich?"

Somewhat surprised, his lordship replied that he was tolerably well-to-do.

"May I ask," continued the stranger, "how rich you are?"

"Well, if it will do you any good to know," was the reply, "I suppose I have several hundred thousand pounds."

"Well," went on the stranger, "if I were as rich as you and snored as loud as you, I should take a whole car, so as not to interrupt the sleep of others."

Prof. Leonard Arthur

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Something Wrong Somewhere.

[By Jessie M. E. Saxby, Author of "The Lads of Lynda," etc.]

CHAPTER I.

"There's something wrong in that house," I said to myself, after I got into my study, and sat down to smoke a pipe before going to bed.

I had been dining at the house of a patient, Cecil Harrington, and had spent a very pleasant evening, notwithstanding the impression I had carried away of something wrong.

I am afraid we doctors contract a habit of suspecting the family cupboard of containing a skeleton when the livers, brains, or blood of the household do not explain to our entire satisfaction the gloom on one member's forehead, the sigh half suppressed on the lips of another, the temper on edge, the hysterics, the covert glances, the red eyelids, the guarded speech. We know better than either clergymen or lawyer how much of physical disease is the direct product of wrong done somewhere, and we soon learn, when studying a "case," to take for granted, in a large measure, that the root of an obscure complaint springs from somebody's sin.

The little party of six around Mr. Harrington's dinner-table had been what one might call a family party. There was our host, just recovered from a slight but tedious illness, which had worried me more than I liked to acknowledge, because it seemed so trifling and yet would not be exercised as readily as I expected. The seat at the head of the table was charmingly filled by Mrs. Harrington, young, beautiful, and possessed of a pretty, pensive manner, which had a curious fascination in it. I occupied the seat on her right hand. Mr. Harrington's cousin, Amory Rhodes, a handsome, dark-eyed American, was on her left. Two brothers of Mrs. Harrington, home from abroad for a few days, were on either side of Cecil.

Although I had not been many months in the city of Harford I had known Harrington before, for we had been at college together, and, though never very confidential, had yet liked each other enough to reach that point in friendship where titles and surnames cease to be used, and we were "Cecil" and "Edwin" to each other.

The talk around the table was blithe and general, and all were in good spirits; yet once when I asked a question of my fair hostess she replied at random, and when I looked at her inquiringly I noticed a curious, frightened expression in her eyes which were turned on Amory Rhodes at the moment. The expression of his eyes I could not mistake; it was a look of pity and tenderness and profound admiration. The impression made on my mind was gone in a moment, but it came back later to add its weight to other things.

Mrs. Harrington's brothers left the table with her, and Mr. Rhodes fell into a brown study, while Cecil and I continued a little small talk.

We were evidently not a congenial trio at that time, and I soon rose to follow the others to the drawing-room. Rhodes got up with alacrity, and as we walked to the door our host whispered to me, "A word, please, Edwin." His cousin went out at once, and Harrington said to me quickly: "I want to see you alone, and at your house—not here; fix a time—soon, Edwin, soon, for heaven's sake."

"To-morrow evening after 8—will that do?" He nodded. As we ascended the stairs, I asked: "Are you feeling unwell again? You look very well to-night."

"I am quite well. It's not that. I'll tell you all to-morrow;" and he looked at me with so much misery in his face that I was completely startled. But he did not mean me to ask another question, so went up the rest of the stairs three steps at each bound, and opened the drawing-room door for me, revealing Mrs. Harrington standing on the hearth-rug with her face lit by a most beautiful smile, which was shining full on Amory Rhodes. She had evidently risen from a seat between her young brothers to greet him, and possibly had not expected our sudden and immediate entrance after his.

Certain it was that the moment we came in she dropped into her seat again with a shrinking air, and the smile gave place to that pensive expression I spoke of, which added so much to her charm but certainly made me think, "She has a sorrowful secret in her heart."

I had seen very little of Mrs. Harrington until the occasion of her husband's illness threw us a good deal together, and during that time I was greatly pleased with the affection and solicitude she displayed toward him. Nothing could exceed her attention, which he repaid with most lovely devotion. They had been married five years, but they seemed as fond of each other as if it were still honeymoon days with them.

I had never heard even a hasty tone in the voice of either when addressing the other, not even when the nervous irritability, from which Cecil suffered, caused him to tell me my drugs were poisonous rubbish, and kept the servants in considerable fear of what "the master" would say next.

I was therefore more than astonished when I heard him say in a harsh voice, "Why are you not practicing that new song, Mabel? You know I wanted you to accompany me with it to-night."

"I think I know it well enough, dear," she answered, faltteringly, as she rose to go to the piano, but he said in the same angry tones—

"I know you don't know it well enough, so you need not trouble," and he left the room. He was only gone a minute, and on his return he was as gentle and courteous as usual for the rest of the evening. But the cloud seemed to have settled on his wife's spirit, and she spoke very little. I noticed that Rhodes kept near her for the rest of the evening. Once or twice I saw them exchange a glance which seemed to indicate some mutual "understanding," and both seemed to be watching Harrington closely. Yet I solemnly declare nothing in their manner suggested to me any suspicions of an amour or anything of that sort. But in my study (later) I repeated again and again to myself, "There's something wrong in that house. I am quite impatient for to-morrow evening to come."

CHAPTER II.

As the clock struck 8 on the following evening the bell rang, and Harrington was ushered into my study. I had turned the lights low, and was loafing in my arm chair. I know how much external things influence people. It would be more easy for my patient to speak very frankly in the dim light, with a lazy friend smoking and listening, than if he had to face a sharp-eyed doctor reading every feature by the help of three gas jets.

He took the other arm chair I pulled up for him, and he did not speak for a minute or two. My arrangements for facilitating confidential talk had put me at a disadvantage, for I could not study his expression as I should have liked. As I remarked "You wanted to consult me?" I glanced at him, but could not read his face, and his voice was as cool and clear as possible when he replied: "Yes, I want to consult you. You know how happy I have been with Mabel? Did it ever occur to you, Edwin, that she, my wife, is a hypocrite, a beautiful fiend—false to me, and worse than false?"

"Heavens! Cecil, what horrible words!" was all I could say. My affected indolence was gone in a moment. I dropped my pipe, sat bolt upright, and stared in his face. Then I saw that he was very pale, and his brows were knit together like one who is putting restraint upon his temper. The working of his features was in strong contrast to his voice, which was calm and measured.

"You are surprised, of course," he said. "Anybody would be; but I must repeat that she is the veriest sham that walks this earth. And my cousin, Amory Rhodes, is the blackguard who has waked the devil in that beautiful witch."

I knew then what rock he had split upon, and I exclaimed, "Oh! Cecil, for God's sake don't let the demon of jealousy get aboard of you. Because, perhaps you have seen your cousin's undisguised admiration for your wife—we all admire her, you know—and her natural liking for such admiration, you have jumped to a conclusion which is most unworthy of you, and does your wife (so lately your devoted nurse) a great, a shameful injustice."

I spoke hotly, because I believed he was wrong, but he did not resent my words. He merely smiled in a melancholy way, and said: "I quite expected you to look at it so. You could not know as I do. You have not had to mark, as I have, a thousand and one trifles which go to prove to a man that a wall of division has grown up between himself and his wife. You have not seen those two together before last night. I asked you on purpose, and I know—for I watched you—that you noticed more than one incident which confirms my statement. Is that not so Edwin?"

For the life of me I could not deny that I had thought there was something unusual in the action of those two to each other, but I was emphatic in declaring my conviction that their secret—if secret there was—was not that which Harrington affirmed it to be.

"You did not know, of course," he resumed, that Rhodes was very fond of Mabel Hynde years ago. It was that which sent him back to America in such a hurry, and I never supposed he would come here again. But he has come; and he has allured her from me, although he told me he had got over his old fancy. Damn him!" The last two words were spoken as coldly as every other word; and as I had never, during even the experience of a doctor, heard that imprecation spoken without heat, it made me shudder and think, "it is feeling like that which breeds murder."

I said no word, and Harrington went on. "The wife who can be so lured away is not worth much—not worth troubling one's heart about; and yet I loved Mabel, and I love her in spite of it. Moreover, no man or woman shall wrong me, and get off scot free." Then he leaned near me and whispered, "Edwin, you puzzled over my illness; you could not make it out; some of the symptoms baffled you. I will explain these. I was being poisoned—yes, poisoned by my wife."

"Oh, this is awful! too awful!" I exclaimed, springing to my feet, and turning up the gas; for I could not bear the shadowy light and the cold voice speaking of the blackest of crimes any longer. Harrington rose when I did, and we stood for a minute gazing into each other's white faces. Then I recovered myself and said: "What proof have you of this?" I do not mean such proof as may be suggested by the devil to a jealous husband, but such proof as would satisfy a judge and jury of practical men. He drew from his pocket a small phial with the label of a New York chemist on it, and the bottle contained a poison—so said the label on it.

"Where did Mabel get this from?" he said in the same cold whisper as before. "Did she send to America for it or did an American who is now at my house bring it? And why was the bottle concealed in her wardrobe? And why did she always insist upon giving me my medicine and beef tea herself? Can you explain these things, Edwin? Is not that proof enough?"

"I really don't know what to say or to think," I said at last. "Why have you told me this?"

"To secure a competent witness, of course," was the prompt reply.

"But I have not witnessed anything," I answered, hurriedly. "I don't want to spy on a woman even if she is a wicked one."

"I am confiding in my doctor," said Cecil, "and he must hear and be guided by what I tell him."

I do not need to follow our conversation further, except to state that I was gradually led to accept my friend's statements and to agree to say nothing to anyone, but watch and help him when needful. Yet when I saw him out at the door I could not help saying: "Seems to me the shortest and most manly course you can pursue is to kick your cousin out at your door, and tell your wife's brothers to take her to Bombay with them."

He shook his head and walked away.

CHAPTER III.

Among my letters next morning was a little note in a delicate feminine handwriting, and it was signed "Mabel Harrington." She wrote asking me to call next day, and the hour she mentioned was a time when I knew Cecil would be at his office in the city, therefore he could not be ill. I might not have commented on the time chosen but for my conversation with her husband, which had led me, of course, to mark any peculiarity in Mrs. Harrington's conduct.

I wondered what she wished to say to me, for she was never ill, and I could not suppose that she wanted to talk of Cecil's health. I devoutly hoped the wife was not going to take me into her confidence as the husband had done, but I made up my mind if she complained of Cecil I should speak plainly to her of Mr. Rhodes. As I drove up to the door, I saw a man walk away from it. I easily recognised him as Amory Rhodes, and I was exasperated, and not at all in a family physician frame of mind, when I was shown into Mrs. Harrington's parlor.

She came to meet me with a kind of tremble in her air and face and figure. I can't describe her appearance any other way, but I thought as I took her shaking hand and looked at the graceful form vibrating with some strange emotion, "If this creature is a beautiful fiend, capable of the most deliberate, cold-blooded crime, she certainly can act the timid, tender woman to perfection."

"How good of you to come just when I said, doctor," she faltered; and as we sat down she added, "I wanted to talk to you—alone—when—when Cecil was away."

She stopped, as if unable to say more, and I replied: "I supposed you did not wish your husband present when asking me to call in office hours."

"I am afraid he—he would be angry if he knew I had sent for you, or—or spoken to you."

A long pause. I would not help her a bit. I was becoming very angry with her, for there was lying on the table by her side a bunch of fresh roses and a photograph (that of Amory Rhodes). Both flowers and photograph had very recently been laid there, for the papers in which they had been folded were lying beside them.

I am afraid my silence made her more nervous still, for her color went and came, and her breathing was much quickened. At last she said, "Doctor, I am very anxious about Cecil."

"Why so?" I asked gravely.

She glanced timidly at me and replied, "He is so—what shall I call it—fitful. So strange. He never used to be cross with me, never!" And then the tears came—not in a burst, or like the way a woman cries when she feels herself ill-used, but in slow, heavy drops, that fell with a kind of splash on the roses over which she was by that time leaning.

"Do you give Cecil no cause for being what you call 'cross?'" I asked a little sharply; and to my surprise she answered meekly, "Not that I am aware of. I try all I can to please him—except—except—I can't explain, I fear, how his strange ways have made me different, somehow. I feel frightened at times. I don't like to be as—as affectionate as I used to be, and want to be, because he says—he says I am only pretending. It is so hard on me, that—I could have borne anything but that."

Still I was rigid and unhelpful, God pardon me, and when she could she resumed, "Doctor, I often fear Cecil can't be——." A longer pause than before. Then she asked, hesitatingly: "You were sometimes puzzled over his illness. He did not seem to you ill, you said, and yet he did not get well as you expected. Did you never think that perhaps his—perhaps his—his mind might be a little warped—off its balance?"

"Never such a thought occurred to me, Mrs. Harrington; nor do I believe it would have occurred to any doctor."

"Ah, that is the difficulty—the difficulty. Always when he is physically unwell, the—the—mental disturbance disappears. But it is there, doctor; it is there. Poor Cecil can hide it from everybody; but I know, I know."

"Do you wish me to infer that you consider your husband out of his mind?" I asked, sternly.

"I must confide in you, doctor," she said, sobbing; "there is nothing else to do. I have kept the secret for a long time, because I could always pretend to Cecil that I did not know, and while he—he did no one any harm I saw no reason to tell. But now—he has become—suspicious of me and—and—others, and I am so afraid he will—will break out some day."

This story of hers was as startling to me as his had been, and I could not credit it.

"Cecil is the last man I should suspect of going wrong in his mind," I said, "and I do not think you have told me anything to prove it. If he has noticed anything in your conduct to make him 'cross' or 'suspect' that does not indicate mental disorder on his part. You must give me an instance before I can for one moment credit such an appalling statement, Mrs. Harrington."

She wrung her hands. "I wish—I wish I could explain without seeming to blame Cecil. It seems disloyal of me to expose him to you, and yet I must, doctor. I am so afraid of what may happen. He shuts himself into his studio all night, and often I go to the door, and I hear him speaking as if—as if to—to me, or—or some one else. Oh! such horrible things he says, and in such angry tones. Often I hear him stamp and fling things about as if he were—were fighting some one. It terrifies me."

"Repeat some of the words he says at such times, if you please," I said.

Her face crimsoned, and she cast her eyes on the photograph of Amory Rhodes, but she answered, simply enough:

"He often, when making a noise as if he had thrown a person to the ground, calls out, 'Lie there and die, you traitor. No man or woman wrongs me and goes scot free.'"

I thought it curious enough that Mrs. Harrington should quote those words, for they were just what Cecil had said to myself. Still I was not prepared to accept her statement. The woman who can be false to her husband—who can administer poison to him—can be cunning enough to concoct a tale of his insanity to cover her own sin.

CHAPTER IV.

But then, was Mabel Harrington false, and had she tried to poison Cecil? Or was this tale of his mental derangement untrue—fabricated to cover her own wickedness?

I must confess that my prejudice, roused by what my friend had confided to me, became somewhat shaken at sight of the woman's apparent emotion, fear, and simple directness. I did not know how to continue the conversation. I had promised Cecil not to breathe a word of what he had told me; I knew if I did, that would put her on her guard. Yet I did not feel able to say that I did not believe her story.

I took refuge in my professional character, and I said, "Supposing that your idea has some foundation, how is it going to be verified? Or why should any stir be made? No one who sees Cecil—who knows how he transacts business and spends his leisure time in executing the most beautiful works of art—will ever believe that there is anything wrong with his mind. I am prepared to declare that he is as sane as I am." She dropped her hands to her sides, and murmured, "Heaven help me!" in such a tone of anguish that for the life of me I could not help pitying her and saying, "What would you have me do?"

"I thought, doctor, that if you could hear how he goes on in the studio at night——"

"If we were to listen," I interrupted, "outside a clergyman's door when he is committing his sermon to memory, or were to overhear an actor learning his part, we should think them a little mad. Perhaps Cecil is writing a play, and acting parts of it," and I tried to give the matter a less tragic aspect by laughing a little as I spoke.

But Mrs. Harrington did not laugh. "I wish," she said, "that I could look at it so, but I know better. Oh, doctor, I am as sure as can be that some awful deed will be done, if—if you cannot help me."

"Help you to put your husband in a lunatic asylum—is that what you want?"

She shrank and cowered before me, covering her face with both hands, and then I asked, "Have you not consulted your brothers?"

"No, no; I could not do that. Ah, you don't know the past. You cannot understand."

My suspicions were coming back, and I said with a slight sneer, "Perhaps you have thought it better to confide in Cecil's relative—his cousin, Mr. Amory Rhodes."

She started, and looked up at me, but was only off guard for an instant. Recovering herself quickly, she answered, with much dignity, "That would have been the most correct course to take, but I have not required to tell him. He knows, and he would help me if he could. But—but there are circumstances which make it make it impossible for—Mr. Rhodes to move in the matter. He must not; he can't. I will not let him."

An idea came to me just then; and, seeming to fall in with her wishes, I said, "If you could secrete me in the studio some night I might see and judge for myself of Cecil's condition."

"Might that not be dangerous?" she said, as it frightened on my account, yet with a ray of hope in her eyes, and that light spread over her face as she added, "There are cupboards in the room—large closets crowded with lumber, with little window panes in the doors. I could shut you into one of these where you would be safe. I could take the key out of the door, to insure your safety—but Cecil would never think of going to a cupboard he does not use. He used it for his photographing, but since he tired of that he seldom opens its door. But if it should happen that he is not in one of those dreadful moods when you are watching, what then, doctor?"

"I could try again," I said.

"And, doctor, if—if you are convinced on the subject, as I am, what would be the right thing to do?"

"I cannot say. I tell you honestly that I do not believe Cecil is in the smallest degree wrong mentally; but there are things which will drive a man to act as if he were insane. However, you have told me your fears on his account, and told them as a loving, anxious wife would tell his medical adviser. I will comply with your wishes, as I have said, and the result must guide your and my future action."

I flattered myself that she had not learned from my words or manner that I knew of poor Cecil's suspicions regarding her, and I felt sure that my plan (for as she thought) confirming her opinion, should help me to protect my friend from an sinister design on her part, if she had one.

She told me that Harrington was to dine out on Friday (this was Wednesday) and we arranged that I should come to the house that evening and be shut into the cuptboard before he returned. As I walked away I could scarcely refrain from laughing, as the picture of myself acting the "skeleton in the cupboard" presented itself to my mind.

I had taken part in a good many domestic tragedies and comedies, but in nothing quite so peculiar as this, and I wondered what would be the end of it; but I said to myself, "Madame wants to mix poor Cecil's friend and doctor in the mess as if he supported her views, but she will find her mistake."

When I got home I carefully recorded in my diary all that had taken place on the three occasions which I have mentioned here, and I added to the account of it all my unaltered opinion that Harrington was perfectly sane, and that I had suggested the plan of hiding myself in his room because I believed by so doing I should be enabled to prove his wife's theory incorrect, and not as she expected, that I should become a witness on her side. By that time I was fully persuaded of her wickedness; yet I found myself haunted by her pensive face and sorrowful voice, and I often found myself thinking, "How can I believe this of the devoted wife I have seen so fond and anxious during that tedious illness? How can I credit such a tale of so sweet and fair a woman? How can I understand that a couple so attached (seemingly) a few weeks ago have become so bitterly and sinfully estranged?"

CHAPTER V.

I don't know that I ever felt more small and mean than I did on that Friday evening when Mrs. Harrington closed the cupboard door upon me and left me sitting among lumber in darkness and discomfort. Fortunately there was a ventilator in the place, and I did not have to moralize on my position very long, for Harrington came home early, and, as was his wont, went direct to his studio.

His wife was with him, for I heard her voice, but she soon went away; and then I heard the bolt go, and I knew Cecil had shut himself in for the night. He moved noisily about for a few minutes, pulling the sofa, which he had turned into a sleeping couch, near the fire, moving chairs and other heavy articles about the room; but he soon settled himself and there was absolute silence in the room, save once or twice when a deep sigh went echoing through the chamber, caused my heart to ache for the suffering soul whose plaint found no utterance just then. The silence was so absolute that I did not care to move lest I should attract his attention, but my darkness had been dissipated by the light from the studio which shone in through the little square of glass in the door.

Some time passed and then suddenly Cecil broke into a fury of words as if addressing some one. "You villain! You thought you had hoodwinked me! But I bide my time. I can wait till I can strike sure. Take that! and that! and that! and die, you dog!"

He had sprung up as he spoke, I knew, and seemed to be hitting some one who fell with a dull thud to the ground.

I rose noiselessly from the corner, where I had been squatting, and looked cautiously through my tiny window. Cecil was stooping over a prostrate form, stabbing it again and again with a keen bright blade, and with every thrust he spoke some brutal words. For one moment my heart leaped with horror, and I thought a murder had been done; but the next glance reassured me.

The figure was a dummy—a creature of straw, dressed in an evening suit sadly the worse for the stabbing it had received. The straw and cotton with which the figure was stuffed was protruding through the great slits made by the murderous knife, and I could have laughed, if I had not been so horribly affected otherwise, at the ridiculous appearance of the dummy. But no mirth was possible at sight of Cecil stooping with a demoniacal look of hate and triumph over the form of his supposed rival and victim, dabbling his hands in the straw as if it were blood, and shouting his revengeful and jealous feelings in horrible words. The mask he had made for this imaginary enemy was a perfect likeness of Amory Rhodes, and I very well knew (from the scene before me) that the real Rhodes was not likely to fare better at the madman's hand than the dummy had done if an opportunity occurred.

But the night's performance was far from over. When Harrington had so far sated his rage by the assurance that his enemy was dead, he rose upright, and, laying his knife on the table, turned to the sofa muttering, "And now for the woman—the beautiful fiend!"

My eyes followed his, and I saw, stretched on the sofa, with rugs, etc., cast over all but the face, a lovely statuette, which Cecil had made of his wife. I had often admired it for its grace of outline, as well as for its fidelity to the charming model.

The white marble face lying there looked so death-like I felt my pulses thrill, and I was overawed into forgetfulness that Cecil might look round and see me at the window.

He stood beside the sofa, looking at the figure and muttering rapidly, "False as h—l, she never loved me. She deceived me; but she is in my power, and she shall die as he has done."

Then his speech grew more rapid and incoherent, and I soon found that he was quoting copiously from "Othello;" and then I saw that his purpose toward Mabel was being guided by the story of hapless Desdemona.

I need not enlarge further on this, but will merely state that the statuette was "stifled" in cushions; and that Cecil acted the infuriated Moor to perfection.

When he had, as he believed, silenced his wife for all time, the madman began to rage up and down the studio, sometimes muttering, sometimes vociferating the most murderous and horrible language, until my soul grew sick within me.

There was not a doubt that some day he would carry out on his cousin and his wife the intention in his mind vented on their senseless images that night. With the cunning and self-control which lunatics can often exercise he had been able to conceal his mania from us all by promising himself the indulgence of such paroxysms when he was alone in the seclusion of his studio. But such self-restraint could only be temporary, and then——

I had forgotten my position in the intensity of my interest, and made some unwary noise which attracted Cecil's attention on the moment. Sudden as a flash his eyes turned on the cupboard door, and he saw my face, though I don't think he recognized me, for the passion of madness was on him still.

"Ha!" he shouted. "I am discovered, but I have had my revenge. Revenge! How sweet it is. I can die as died the Moor, since vengeance has been wreaked on them."

He caught up the gleaming knife and plunged it into his own breast at the moment I called out, "Cecil! For heaven's sake, Cecil——!"

CHAPTER VI.

I threw my strength wildly against the door in vain. Then I shouted wildly for help, and in a few minutes I heard screams upstairs and people running down, trying to enter the studio, but the door, locked from within, defied the power of women to force. During the commotion Cecil lay with his face to the floor moaning feebly, and I could see a stream of blood flow from his side to the carpet and creep along it like some hideous red reptile.

After a time, that seemed to me ages, I heard men's firm tones outside the door, and I knew efficient help was at hand. The door was soon forced after that, and a policeman, followed by one or two gentlemen, came in. Behind these were Mrs. Harrington and her maids—they half dressed, she in the same garments she had on when I parted with her that evening, which showed she had never gone to bed.

The position of the furniture prevented those who entered from seeing Cecil immediately, and I noticed that Mrs. Harrington's first glance was turned to the cupboard. She saw me at the little window, and instantly ran forward, took the key from her pocket, and opened the door for me. As she she did so the policeman discovered Cecil, and in a moment the men closed around him, while I caught Mabel's hand and said, "Don't go there. Come away with me at once."

But she would not go. She forced her way to her husband's side, and, kneeling there, lifted his head to her bosom, calling him by every tender name which love could suggest.

He looked in her eyes—all the madness and its miserable hallucination gone from his gaze and mind.

"My poor Mabel," he said. "Thank God I have not injured you."

I went near to see what I could do for him, and as I examined the wound Cecil whispered, "No good, Edwin. I'm done for, and it's best so. I want to tell you—some—things."

He was indeed mortally hurt, and though I insisted upon binding up the gash through which his life-blood was flowing, and otherwise making him more comfortable, I knew it was of no use.

His wife hung over him in an agony of sorrow until the time came when I had to say to her brothers, who had been summoned to the house, "Take her way, for it is all over. This is not our poor Cecil."

Before that moment came, however, my most unfortunate friend had, in brief, disconnected sentences, told me his unhappy story in part. The gaps were filled in later by the evidence of others, and by my own convictions.

It was true that Amory Rhodes and Cecil Harrington had been suitors at the same time for Mabel Hynde, but, far from her preferring the former, she had chosen Cecil in spite of the prejudices of her brothers and the knowledge that there was hereditary insanity in his family. If her parents had been alive I do not doubt their influence would have had weight with the girl, but she had been practically her own mistress since she left school. Her brothers were some years younger, and had never shown much sympathy with her. There was no one else to advise or warn her, and she loved Harrington ardently.

Shortly after their marriage she had discovered that he had strange whims at times which could not be satisf