## THE GALAXY.

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## OSBORNE'S REVENGE.

I.

PHILIP OSBORNE and Robert Graham were intimate friends. The latter had been spending the summer of court. the use of which had been recommended by his physician. Osborne, on the other hand—a lawyer by profession, and with a rapidly increasing practice—had been confined to the city, and had suffered June and July to pass, not unheeded, heaven knows, but utterly unhonored. Toward the middle of July he began to feel uneasy at not hearing from his friend, habitually the best of correspondents. Graham had a charming literary talent, and plenty of leisure, being without a family, and without business. Osborne wrote to him, asking the reason of his silence, and demanding an immediate reply. He received in the course of a few days the following letter:

DEAR PHILIP: I am, as you conjectured, not well. These infernal waters have done me no good. On the contrary—they have poisoned me. They have poisoned my life, and I wish to God I had never come to them. Do you remember the White Lady in The Monastery, who used to appear to the hero at the spring? There is such a one here, at this spring—which you know tastes of sulphur. Judge of the quality of the young woman. She has charmed me, and I can't get away. But I mean to try again. Don't think I'm cracked, but expect me next week. Yours always,

The day after he received this letter, Osborne met, at the house of a female friend detained in town by the illness of one of her children, a lady who had just come from the region in which Graham had fixed himself. This lady, Mrs. Dodd by name, and a widow, had seen a great deal of the young man, and she drew a very long face and threw great expression into her eyes as she spoke of him. Seeing that she was inclined to be confidential, Osborne made it possible that she should converse with him privately. She assured him, behind her fan, that his friend was dying of a broken heart. Something should be done. The story was briefly this. Graham had made the acquaintance, in the early part of the summer, of a young lady, a certain Miss Congreve, who was living in the neighborhood with a married sister. She was not pretty, but she was clever, graceful, and pleasing, and Graham had immediately fallen in love with her.

She had encouraged his addresses, to the knowledge of all their friends, and at the end of a month—heart-histories are very rapid at the smaller watering places -their engagement, although not announced, was hourly expected. But at this moment a stranger had effected an entrance into the little society of which Miss Congreve was one of the most brilliant ornaments-a Mr. Holland, out of the West—a man of Graham's age, but better favored in person. Heedless of the circumstance that her affections were notoriously preoccupied, he had immediately begun to be attentive to the young girl. Equally reckless of the same circumstance, Henrietta Congreve had been all smiles-all seduction. In the course of a week, in fact, she had deliberately transferred her favors from the old love to the new. Graham had been turned out into the cold; she had ceased to look at him, to speak to him, to think of him. He nevertheless remained at the springs, as if he found a sort of fascination in the sense of his injury, and in seeing Miss Congreve and Holland together. Besides, he doubtless wished people to fancy that, for good reasons, he had withdrawn his suit, and it was therefore not for him to hide himself. He was proud, reserved, and silent, but his friends had no difficulty in seeing that his pain was intense, and that his wound was almost mortal. Mrs. Dodd declared that unless he was diverted from his sorrow, and removed from contact with the various scenes and objects which reminded him of his unhappy passion-and above all, deprived of the daily chance of meeting Miss Congreve-she would not answer for his sanity.

Osborne made all possible allowance for exaggeration. A woman, he reflected, likes so to round off her story-especially if it is a dismal one. Nevertheless he felt very anxious, and he forthwith wrote his friend a long letter, asking him to what extent Mrs. Dodd's little romance was true, and urging him to come immediately to town, where, if it was substantially true, he might look for diversion. Graham answered by arriving in person. At first, Osborne was decidedly relieved. friend looked better and stronger than he had looked for months. But on coming to talk with him, he found him morally, at least, a sad invalid. He was listless, abstracted, and utterly inactive in mind. Osborne observed with regret that he made no response to his attempts at interrogation and to his proffered sympathy. Osborne had by nature no great respect for sentimental woes. He was not a man to lighten his tread because his neighbor below stairs was laid up with a broken heart. But he saw that it would never do to poke fun at poor Graham, and that he was quite proof against the contagion of gayety. Graham begged him not to think him morbid or indifferent to his kindness, and to allow him not to speak of his trouble until it was over. He had resolved to forget it. When he had forgotten it—as one forgets such things—when he had contrived to push the further end of it at least into the past—then he would tell him all about it. For the present he must occupy his thoughts with something else. It was hard to decide what to do. It was hard to travel without an aim. Yet the intolerable heat made it impossible that he should stay in New York. He might go to Newport.

- "A moment," said Osborne. "Has Miss Congreve gone to Newport?"
- "Not that I know of."
- "Does she intend to go?"

Graham was silent. "Good heavens!" he cried, at last, "forbid it then! All I want is to have it forbidden. I can't forbid it. Did you ever see a human creature so degraded?" he added, with a ghastly smile. "Where shall I go?"

Philip went to his table and began to overhaul a mass of papers fastened

with red tape. He selected several of these documents and placed them apart. Then turning to his friend, "You're to go out to Minnesota," he said, "looking him in the eyes. The proposal was a grave one, and gravely as it was meant, Osborne would have been glad to have Graham offer some resistance. But he sat looking at him with a solemn stare which (in the light of subsequent events) cast a lugubrious shade over the whole transaction. "The deuce!" thought Osborne. "Has it made him stupid?—What you need," he said aloud, "is to have something else to think about. An idle man can't expect to get over such troubles. I have some business to be done at St. Paul, and I know that if you'll give your attention to it, you're as well able to do it as any man. It's a simple matter, but it needs a trustworthy person. So I shall depend upon you."

Graham came and took up the papers and looked over them mechanically.

"Never mind them now," said Osborne; "its past midnight; you must go to bed. To-morrow morning I'll put you au fait, and the day after, if you like, you can start."

The next morning Graham seemed to have recovered a considerable portion of his old cheerfulness. He talked about indifferent matters, laughed, and seemed for a couple of hours to have forgotten Miss Congreve. Osborne began to doubt that the journey was necessary, and he was glad to be able to think, afterwards, that he had expressed his doubts, and that his friend had strongly combatted them and insisted upon having the affair explained to him. He mastered it, to Osborne's satisfaction, and started across the continent.

During the ensuing week Philip was so pressed with business that he had very little time to think of the success of Graham's mission. Within the fortnight he received the following letter:

DEAR PHILIP: Here I am, safe, but anything but sound. I don't know what to think of it, but I have completely forgotten the terms of my embassy. I can't for my life remember what I'm to do or say, and neither the papers nor your notes assist me a whit. 12th.—I wrote so much yesterday and then went out to take a walk and collect my thoughts. I have collected them, once for all. Do you understand, dearest Philip? Don't call me insane, or impious, or anything that merely expresses your own impatience and intolerance, without throwing a ray of light on the state of my own mind. He only can understand it who has felt it, and he who has felt it can do but as I do. Life has lost, I don't say its charm—that I could willingly dispense with—but its meaning. I shall live in your memory and your love, which is a vast deal better than living in my own self-contempt. Farewell.

R. G.

Osborne learned the circumstances of his friend's death three days, later, through his correspondent at St. Paul—the person to whom Graham had been addressed. The unhappy young man had shot himself through the head in his room at the hotel. He had left money, and written directions for the disposal of his remains—directions which were, of course, observed. As Graham possessed no near relative, the effect of his death was confined to a narrow circle; to the circle, I may say, of Philip Osborne's capacious personality. The two young men had been united by an almost passionate friendship. Now that Graham had ceased to be, Osborne became sensible of the strength of this bond; he felt that he cared more for it than for any human tie. They had known each other ten years, and their intimacy had grown with their growth during the most active period of their lives. It had been strengthened within and without by the common enjoyment of so many pleasures, the experience of so many hazards, the exchange of so much advice, so much confidence, and so many pleages of mutual

interest, that each had grown to regard it as the single absolute certainty in life, the one fixed fact in a shifting world. As constantly happens with intimate friends, the two were perfectly diverse in character, tastes and appearance. Graham was three years the elder, slight, undersized, feeble in health, sensitive, indolent, whimsical, generous, and in reality of a far finer clay than his friend, as the latter, moreover, perfectly well knew. Their intimacy was often a puzzle to observers. Disinterested parties were at loss to discover how Osborne had come to set his heart upon an insignificant, lounging invalid, who, in general company, talked in monosyllables, in a weak voice, and gave himself the airs of one whom nature had endowed with the right to be fastidious, without ever having done a stroke of work. Graham's partisans, on the other hand, who were chiefly women (which, by the way, effectually relieves him from the accusation occasionally brought against him of being "effeminate") were quite unable to penetrate the motives of his interest in a commonplace, hard-working lawyer, who addressed a charming woman as if he were exhorting a jury of grocers and undertakers, and viewed the universe as one vast "case." This account of Osborne's mind and manners would have been too satirical to be wholly just, and yet it would have been excusable as an attempt to depict a figure in striking contrast with poor Graham. Osborne was in all respects a large fellow. He was six feet two in height, with a chest like a boxing-master, and a clear, brown complexion, which successfully resisted the deleterious action of a sedentary life. He was, in fact, without a particle of vanity, a particularly handsome man. His character corresponded to his person, or, as one may say, continued and completed it, and his mind kept the promise of his character. He was all of one piece—all health and breadth, capacity and energy. Graham had once told his friend somewhat brutally-for in his little, weak voice Graham said things far more brutal than Osborne, just as he said things far more fine-he had told him that he worked like a horse and loved like a dog.

Theoretically, Osborne's remedy for mental trouble was work. He redoubled his attention to his professional affairs, and strove to reconcile himself, once for all, to his loss. But he found his grief far stronger than his will, and felt that it obstinately refused to be pacified without some act of sacrifice or devotion. Osborne had an essentially kind heart and plenty of pity and charity for deserving objects; but at the bottom of his soul there lay a well of bitterness and resentment which, when his nature was strongly shaken by a sense of wrong, was sure to ferment and raise its level, and at last to swamp his conscience. These bitter waters had been stirred, and he felt that they were rising fast. His thoughts travelled back with stubborn iteration from Graham's death to the young girl who figured in the prologue to the tragedy. He felt in his breast a savage need of hating her. Osborne's friends observed in these days that he looked by no means pleasant; and if he had not been such an excellent fellow he might easily have passed for an intolerable brute. He was not softened and mellowed by suffering; he was exasperated. It seemed to him that justice cried aloud that Henrietta Congreve should be confronted with the results of her folly, and made to carry forever in her thoughts, in all the hideousness of suicide, the image of her miserable victim. Osborne was, perhaps, in error, but he was assuredly sincere; and it is strong evidence of the energy of genuine affection that this lusty intellect should have been brought, in the interest of another, to favor a scheme which it would have deemed wholly, ludicrously impotent to assuage the injured dignity of its own possessor. Osborne must have been very fond of his friend not to have pronounced him a drivelling fool. It is true that he had always pitied him as much as he loved him, although Graham's incontestable gifts and virtues had kept this feeling in the background. Now that he was gone, pity came uppermost, and bade fair to drive him to a merciless disallowance of all claims to extenuation on the part of the accused. It was unlikely that, for a long time at least, he would listen to anything but that Graham had been foully wronged, and that the light of his life had been wantonly quenched. He found it impossible to sit down in resignation. The best that he could do, indeed, would not call Graham back to life; but he might at least discharge his gall, and have the comfort of feeling that Miss Congreve was the worse for it. He was quite unable to work. He roamed about for three days in a disconsolate, angry fashion. On the third, he called upon Mrs. Dodd, from whom he learned that Miss Congreve had gone to Newport, to stay with a second married sister. He went home and packed up a valise, and—without knowing why, feeling only that to do so was to do something, and to put himself in the way of doing moredrove down to the Newport boat.

## H.

His first inquiry on his arrival, after he had looked up several of his friends and encountered a number of acquaintances, was about Miss Congreve's whereabouts and habits. He found that she was very little known. She lived with her sister, Mrs. Wilkes, and as yet had made but a single appearance in company. Mrs. Wilkes, moreover, he learned, was an invalid and led a very quiet life. He ascertained the situation of her house and gave himself the satisfaction of walking past it. It was a pretty place, on a secluded by-road, marked by various tokens of wealth and comfort. He heard, as he passed, through the closed shutters of the drawing-room window, the sound of a high, melodious voice, warbling and trilling to the accompaniment of a piano. Osborne had no soul for music, but he stopped and listened, and as he did so, he remembered Graham's passion for the charming art and fancied that these were the very accents that had lured him to his sorrow. Poor Graham! here too, as in all things, he had showed his taste. The singer discharged a magnificent volley of roulades and flourishes and became silent. Osborne, fancying he heard a movement of the lattice of the shutters, slowly walked away. A couple of days later he found himself strolling, alone and disconsolate, upon the long avenue which runs parallel to the Newport cliffs, which, as all the world knows, may be reached by five minutes' walk from any part of it. He had been on the field, now, for nearly a week, and he was no nearer his revenge. His unsatisfied desire haunted his steps and hovered in a ghostly fashion about thoughts which perpetual contact with old friends and new, and the entertaining spectacle of a heterogeneous throng of pleasure seekers and pleasure venders, might have made free and happy. Osborne was very fond of the world, and while he still clung to his resentment, he yet tacitly felt that it lurked as a skeleton at his banquet. was fond of nature, too, and betwixt these two predilections, he grew at moments ashamed of his rancor. At all events, he felt a grateful sense of relief when as he pursued his course along this sacred way of fashion, he caught a glimpse of the deep blue expanse of the ocean, shining at the end of a cross road. He forthwith took his way down to the cliffs. At the point where the road ceased, he found an open barouche, whose occupants appeared to have wandered out of

sight. Passing this carriage, he reached a spot where the surface of the cliff communicates with the beach, by means of an abrupt footpath. This path he descended and found himself on a level with the broad expanse of sand and the rapidly rising tide. The wind was blowing fresh from the sea and the little breakers tumbling in with their multitudinous liquid clamor. In a very few moments Osborne felt a sensible exhilaration of spirits. He had not advanced many steps under the influence of this joyous feeling, when, on turning a slight projection in the cliff, he descried a sight which caused him to hasten forward. On a broad flat rock, at about a dozen yards from the shore, stood a child of some five years—a handsome boy, fair-haired and well dressed—stamping his feet and wringing his hands in an apparent agony of terror. It was easy to understand the situation. The child had ventured out on the rock while the water was still low, and had become so much absorbed in paddling with his little wooden spade among the rich marine deposits on its surface, that he had failed to observe the advance of the waves, which had now completely covered the intermediate fragments of rock and were foaming and weltering betwixt him and the shore. The poor little fellow stood screaming to the winds and waters, and quite unable to answer Osborne's shouts of interrogation and comfort. Meanwhile, the latter prepared to fetch him ashore. He saw with some disgust that the channel was too wide to warrant a leap, and yet, as the child's companions might at any moment appear, in the shape of distracted importunate women. he judged it imprudent to divest himself of any part of his apparel. He accordingly plunged in without further ado, waded forward, seized the child and finally restored him to terra firma. He felt him trembling in his arms like a frightened bird. He set him on his feet, soothed him, and asked him what had become of his guardians.

The boy pointed toward a rock, lying at a certain distance, close under the cliff, and Osborne, following his gesture, distinguished what seemed to be the hat and feather of a lady sitting on the further side of it.

"That's Aunt Henrietta," said the child.

- "Aunt Henrietta deserves a scolding," said Osborne. "Come, we'll go and give it to her." And he took the boy's hand and led him toward his culpable relative. They walked along the beach until they came abreast of the rock, and approached the lady in front. At the sound of their feet on the stones, she raised her head. She was a young woman, seated on a boulder, with an album in her lap, apparently absorbed in the act of sketching. Seeing at a glance that something was amiss, she rose to her feet and thrust the album into her pocket. Osborne's wet trousers and the bespattered garments and discomposed physiognomy of the child revealed the nature of the calamity. She held out her arms to her little nephew. He dropped Philip's hand, and ran and threw himself on his aunt's neck. She raised him up and kissed him, and looked interrogatively at Osborne.
- "I couldn't help seeing him safely in your hands," said the latter, removing his hat. "He has had a terrific adventure."
- "What is it, darling?" cried the young lady, again kissing the little fellow's bloodless face.
- "He came into the water after me," cried the boy. "Why did you leave me there?"
- "What has happened, sir?" asked the young girl, in a somewhat peremptory tone.

"You had apparently left him on that rock, madam, with a channel betwixt him and the shore deep enough to drown him. I took the liberty of displacing him. But he's more frightened than hurt."

The young girl had a pale face and dark eyes. There was no beauty in her features; but Osborne had already perceived that they were extremely expressive and intelligent. Her face flushed a little, and her eyes flashed; the former, it seemed to Philip, with mortification at her own neglect, and the latter with irritation at the reproach conveyed in his accents. But he may have been wrong. She sat down on the rock, with the child on her knees, kissing him repeatedly and holding him with a sort of convulsive pressure. When she looked up, the flashes in her eyes had melted into a couple of tears. Seeing that Philip was a gentleman, she offered a few words of self-justification. She had kept the boy constantly within sight, and only within a few minutes had allowed her attention to be drawn away. Her apology was interrupted by the arrival of a second young woman—apparently a nursery-maid—who emerged from the concealment of the neighboring rocks, leading a little girl by the hand. Instinctively, her eyes fell upon the child's wet clothes.

"Ah! Miss Congreve," she cried, in true nursery-maid style, "what'll Mrs. Wilkes say to that?"

"She will say that she is very thankful to this gentleman," said Miss Congreve, with decision.

Philip had been looking at the young girl as she spoke, forcibly struck by her face and manner. He detected in her appearance a peculiar union of modesty and frankness, of youthful freshness and elegant mannerism, which suggested vague possibilities of further acquaintance. He had already found it pleasant to observe her. He had been for ten days in search of a wicked girl, and it was a momentary relief to find himself suddenly face to face with a charming one. The nursery-maid's apostrophe was like an electric shock.

It is, nevertheless, to be supposed that he concealed his surprise, inasmuch as Miss Congreve gave no sign of having perceived that he was startled. She had come to a tardy sense of his personal discomfort. She besought him to make use of her carriage, which he would find on the cliff, and quickly return home. He thanked her and declined her offer, declaring that it was better policy to walk. He put out his hand to his little friend and bade him good-by. Miss Congreve liberated the child and he came and put his hand in Philip's.

"One of these days," said Osborne, "you'll have long legs, too, and then you'll not mind the water." He spoke to the boy, but he looked hard at Miss Congreve, who, perhaps, thought he was asking for some formal expression of gratitude.

"His mother," she said, "will give herself the pleasure of thanking you."

"The trouble," said Osborne, "the very unnecessary trouble. Your best plan," he added, with a smile (for, wonderful to tell, he actually smiled) "is to say nothing about it."

"If I consulted my own interests alone," said the young girl, with a gracious light in her dark eyes, "I should certainly hold my tongue. But I hope my little victim is not so ungrateful as to promise silence."

Osborne stiffened himself up; for this was more or less of a compliment. He made his bow in silence and started for home at a rapid pace. On the following day he received this note by post:

Mrs. Wilkes begs to thank Mr. Osborne most warmly for the prompt and generous

relief afforded to her little boy. She regrets that Mr. Osborne's walk should have been interrupted, and hopes that his exertions have been attended with no bad effects.

Enclosed in the note was a pocket-handkerchief, bearing Philip's name, which he remembered to have made the child take, to wipe his tears. His answer was, of course, brief.

Mr. Osborne begs to assure Mrs. Wilkes that she exaggerates the importance of the service rendered to her son, and that he has no cause to regret his very trifling efforts. He takes the liberty of presenting his compliments to Master Wilkes, and of hoping that he has recovered from his painful sensations.

The correspondence naturally went no further, and for some days no additional light was thrown upon Miss Congreve. Now that Philip had met her, face to face, and found her a commonplace young girl-a clever girl, doubtless, for she looked it, and an agreeable one-but still a mere young lady, mindful of the proprieties, with a face innocent enough, and even a trifle sad, and a couple of pretty children who called her "aunt," and whom, indeed, in a moment of enthusiastic devotion to nature and art, she left to the mercy of the waves, but whom she finally kissed and comforted and handled with all due tendernessnow that he had met Miss Congreve under these circumstances, he felt his mission sitting more lightly on his conscience. Ideally she had been repulsive; actually, she was a person whom, if he had not been committed to detest her, he would find it very pleasant to like. She had been humanized, to his view, by the mere accidents of her flesh and blood. Philip was by no means prepared to to give up his resentment. Poor Graham's ghost sat grim and upright in his memory, and fed the flickering flame. But it was something of a problem to reconcile the heroine of his vengeful longings, with the heroine of the little scene on the beach, and to accommodate this inoffensive figure, in turn, to the color of his retribution. A dozen matters conspired to keep him from coming to the point, and to put him in a comparatively good humor. He was invited to the right and the left; he lounged and bathed, and talked, and smoked, and rode, and dined out, and saw an endless succession of new faces, and in short, reduced the vestments of his outward mood to a suit of very cheerful half-mourning. And all this, moreover, without any sense of being faithless to his friend. Oddly enough, Graham had never seemed so living as now that he was dead. In the flesh, he had possessed but a half-vitality. His spirit had been exquisitely willing, but his flesh had been fatally weak. He was at best a baffled, disappointed man. It was his spirit, his affections, his sympathies and perceptions, that were warm and active, and Osborne knew that he had fallen sole heir to these. felt his bosom swell with a wholesome sense of the magnitude of the heritage, and he was conscious with each successive day, of less desire to invoke poor Graham in dark corners, and mourn him in lonely places. By a single solemn, irrevocable aspiration, he had placed his own tough organism and his energetic will at the service of his friend's virtues. So as he found his excursion turning into a holiday, he stretched his long limbs and with the least bit of a yawn whispered Amen.

Within a week after his encounter with Miss Congreve, he went with a friend to witness some private theatricals, given in the house of a lady of great social repute. The entertainment consisted of two plays, the first of which was so flat and poor that when the curtain fell Philip prepared to make his escape, thinking he might easily bring the day to some less impotent conclusion. As he passed along the narrow alley between the seats and the wall of the drawing-room, he

brushed a printed programme out of a lady's hand. Stooping to pick it up, his eye fell upon the name of Miss Congreve among the performers in the second piece. He immediately retraced his steps. The overture began, the curtain rose again, and several persons appeared on the stage, arrayed in the powder and patches of the last century. Finally, amid loud acclamations, walked on Miss Congreve, as the heroine, powdered and patched in perfection. She represented a young countess—a widow in the most interesting predicament—and for all good histrionic purposes, she was irresistibly beautiful. She was dressed, painted, and equipped with great skill and in the very best taste. She looked as if she had stepped out of the frame of one of those charming full-length pastel portraits of fine ladies in Louis XV.'s time, which they show you in French palaces. But she was not alone all grace and elegance and finesse; she had dignity; she was serious at moments, and severe; she frowned and commanded; and, at the proper time, she wept the most natural tears. It was plain that Miss Congreve was a true artist. Osborne had never seen better acting-never, indeed, any so good; for here was an actress who was at once a perfect young lady and a consummate mistress of dramatic effect. The audience was roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, and Miss Congreve's fellow-players were left quite in the lurch. The beautiful Miss Latimer, celebrated in polite society for her face and figure, who had undertaken the second female part, was compelled for the nonce to have neither figure nor face. The play had been marked in the bills as adapted from the French "especially for this occasion;" and when the curtain fell for the last time, the audience, in great good humor, clamored for the adapter. Some time elapsed before any notice was taken of their call, which they took as a provocation of their curiosity. Finally, a gentleman made his way before the curtain, and proclaimed that the version of the piece which his associates had had the honor of performing was from the accomplished pen of the young lady who had won their applause in the character of the heroine. At this announcement, a dozen enthusiasts lifted their voices and demanded that Miss Congreve should be caused to re-appear; but the gentleman cut short their appeal by saying that she had already left the house. This was not true, as Henrietta was sitting on a sofa behind the Osborne subsequently learned. scenes, waiting for her carriage, fingering an immense bouquet, and listening with a tired smile to compliments-hard by Miss Latimer, who sat eating an ice beside her mother, the latter lady looking in a very grim fashion at that very plain, dreadfully thin Miss Congreve.

Osborne walked home thrilled and excited, but decidedly bewildered. He felt that he had reckoned without his host, and that Graham's fickle mistress was not a person to be snubbed and done for. He was utterly at a loss as to what to think of her. She broke men's hearts and turned their heads; whatever she put her hand to she marked with her genius. She was a coquette, a musician, an artist, an actress, an author—a prodigy. Of what stuff was she made? What had she done with her heart and her conscience? She painted her face, and frolicked among lamps and flowers to the clapping of a thousand hands, while poor Graham lay imprisoned in eternal silence. Osborne was put on his mettle. To draw a penitent tear from those deep and charming eyes was assuredly a task for a clever man.

The plays had been acted on a Wednesday. On the following Saturday Philip was invited to take part in a picnic, organized by Mrs. Carpenter, the lady who had conducted the plays, and who had a mania for making up parties. The

persons whom she had now enlisted were to proceed by water to a certain pastoral spot consecrated by nature to picnics, and there to have lunch upon the grass, to dance and play nursery-games. They were carried over in two large sailing boats, and during the transit Philip talked awhile with Mrs. Carpenter, whom he found a very amiable, loquacious person. At the further end of the boat in which, with his hostess, he had taken his place, he observed a young girl in a white dress, with a thick, blue veil drawn over her face. Through the veil, directed toward his own person, he perceived the steady glance of two fine dark eyes. For a moment he was at a loss to recognize their possessor; but his uncertainty was rapidly dispelled.

- "I see you have Miss Congreve," he said to Mrs. Carpenter—"the actress of the other evening."
- "Yes," said Mrs. Carpenter, "I persuaded her to come. She's all the fashion since Wednesday."
  - "Was she unwilling to come?" asked Philip.
- "Yes, at first. You see she's a good, quiet girl; she hates to have a noise made about her."
  - "She had enough noise the other night. She has wonderful talent."
- "Wonderful, wonderful. And heaven knows where she gets it. Do you know her family? The most matter-of-fact, least dramatic, least imaginative people in the world—people who are shy of the theatre on moral grounds."
  - "I see. They won't go to the theatre; the theatre comes to them."
- "Exactly. It serves them right. Mrs. Wilkes, Henrietta's sister, was in a dreadful state about her attempting to act. But now, since Henrietta's success, she's talking about it to all the world."

When the boat came to shore, a plank was stretched from the prow to an adjacent rock for the accommodation of the ladies. Philip stood at the head of the plank, offering his hand for their assistance. Mrs. Carpenter came last, with Miss Congreve, who declined Osborne's aid but gave him a little bow, through her veil. Half an hour later Philip again found himself at the side of his hostess, and again spoke of Miss Congreve. Mrs. Carpenter warned him that she was standing close at hand, in a group of young girls.

- "Have you heard," he asked, lowering his voice, "of her being engaged to be married—or of her having been?"
- "No," said Mrs. Carpenter, "I've heard nothing. To whom?—stay. I've heard vaguely of something this summer at Sharon. She had a sort of flirtation with some man, whose name I forget."
  - "Was it Holland?"
- "I think not. He left her for that very silly little Mrs. Dodd—who hasn't been a widow six months. I think the name was Graham."

Osborne broke into a peal of laughter so loud and harsh that his companion turned upon him in surprise. "Excuse me," said he. "It's false."

- "You ask questions, Mr. Osborne," said Mrs. Carpenter, "but you seem to know more about Miss Congreve than I do."
- "Very likely. You see I knew Robert Graham." Philip's words were uttered with such emphasis and resonance that two or three of the young girls in the adjoining group turned about and looked at him.
  - "She heard you," said Mrs. Carpenter.
  - "She didn't turn round," said Philip.
  - "That proves what I say. I meant to introduce you, and now I can't."

"Thank you," said Philip. "I shall introduce myself." Osborne felt in his bosom all the heat of his old resentment. This perverse and heartless girl, then, his soul cried out, not content with driving poor Graham to impious self-destruction, had caused it to be believed that he had killed himself from remorse at his own misconduct. He resolved to strike while the iron was hot. But although he was an avenger, he was still a gentleman, and he approached the young girl with a very civil face.

"If I am not mistaken," he said, removing his hat, "you have already done me the honor of recognizing me."

Miss Congreve's bow, as she left the boat, had been so obviously a sign of recognition, that Philip was amazed at the vacant smile with which she received his greeting. Something had happened in the interval to make her change her mind. Philip could think of no other motive than her having overheard his mention of Graham's name.

"I have an impression," she said, "of having met you before; but I confess that I'm unable to place you."

Osborne looked at her a moment. "I can't deny myself," he said, "the pleasure of asking about little Mr. Wilkes."

"I remember you now," said Miss Congreve, simply. "You carried my nephew out of the water."

"I hope he has got over his fright."

"He denies, I believe, that he was frightened. Of course, for my credit, I don't contradict him."

Miss Congreve's words were followed by a long pause, by which she seemed in no degree embarrassed. Philip was confounded by her apparent self-possession—to call it by no worse name. Considering that she had Graham's death on her conscience, and that, hearing his name on Osborne's lips, she must have perceived the latter to be identical with that dear friend of whom Graham must often have spoken, she was certainly showing a very brave face. But had she indeed heard of Graham's death? For a moment Osborne gave her the benefit of the doubt. He felt that he would take a grim satisfaction in being bearer of the tidings. In order to confer due honor on the disclosure, he saw that it was needful to detach the young girl from her companions. As, therefore, the latter at this moment began to disperse in clusters and couples along the shore, he proposed that they should stroll further a-field. Miss Congreve looked about at the other young girls as if to call one of them to her side, but none of them seemed available. So she slowly moved forward under Philip's guidance, with a half-suppressed look of reluctance. Philip began by paying her a very substantial compliment upon her acting. It was a most inconsequential speech, in the actual state of his feelings, but he couldn't help it. She was perhaps as wicked a girl as you shall easily meet, but her acting was perfect. Having paid this little tribute to equity, he broke ground for Graham.

"I don't feel, Miss Congreve," he said, "as if you were a new acquaintance. I have heard you a great deal talked about." This was not literally true, the reader will remember. All Philip's information had been acquired in his half hour with Mrs. Dodd.

- "By whom, pray?" asked Henrietta.
- "By Robert Graham."
- "Ah, yes. I was half prepared to hear you speak of him. I remember hearing him speak of a person of your name."

Philip was puzzled. Did she know, or not? "I believe you knew him quite well yourself," he said, somewhat peremptorily.

- "As well as he would let me-I doubt if any one knew him well."
- "So you've heard of his death," said Philip.
- "Yes, from himself."
- "How, from himself?"
- "He wrote me a letter, in his last hours, leaving his approaching end to be inferred, rather than positively announcing it. I wrote an answer, with the request that if my letter was not immediately called for, it should be returned by the post office. It was returned within a week.—And now, Mr. Osborne," the young girl added, "let me make a request."

Philip bowed.

"I shall feel particularly obliged if you will say no more about Mr. Graham." This was a stroke for which Osborne was not prepared. It had at least the merit of directness. Osborne looked at his companion. There was a faint flush in her cheeks, and a serious light in her eyes. There was plainly no want of energy in her wish. He felt that he must suspend operations and make his approach from another quarter. But it was some moments before he could bring himself to accede to her request. She looked at him, expecting an answer, and he felt her dark eyes on his face.

"Just as you please," he said, at last, mechanically.

They walked along for some moments in silence. Then, suddenly coming upon a young married woman, whom Mrs. Carpenter had pressed into her service as a lieutenant, Miss Congreve took leave of Philip, on a slight pretext, and entered into talk with this lady. Philip strolled away and walked about for an hour alone. He had met with a check, but he was resolved that, though he had fallen back, it would be only to leap the further. During the half-hour that Philip sauntered along by the water, the dark cloud suspended above poor Miss Congreve's head doubled its portentous volume. And, indeed, from Philip's point of view, could anything well be more shameless and more heartless than the young girl's request?

At last Osborne remembered that he was neglecting the duties laid upon him by Mrs. Carpenter. He retraced his steps and made his way back to the spot devoted to the banquet. Mrs. Carpenter called him to her, said that she had been looking for him for an hour, and, when she learned how he had been spending his time, slapped him with her parasol, called him a horrid creature, and declared she would never again invite him to anything of hers. She then introduced him to her niece, a somewhat undeveloped young lady, with whom he went and sat down over the water. They found very little to talk about. Osborne was thinking of Miss Congreve, and Mrs. Carpenter's niece, who was very timid and fluttering, having but one foot yet, as one may say, in society, was abashed and unnerved at finding herself alone with so very tall and mature and handsome a gentleman as Philip. He gave her a little confidence in the course of time, however, by making little stones skip over the surface of the water for her amusement. But he still kept thinking of Henrietta Congreve, and he at last bethought himself of asking his companion whether she knew her. Yes, she knew her slightly; but she threw no light on the subject. She was evidently not of an analytical turn of mind, and she was too innocent to gossip. She contented herself with saying that she believed Henrietta was wonderfully clever, and that she read Latin and Greek.

"Clever, clever," said Philip, "I hear nothing else. I shall begin to think she's a demon."

"No, Henrietta Congreve is very good," said his companion. "She's very religious. She visits the poor and reads sermons. You know the other night she acted for the poor. She's anything but a demon. I think she's so nice."

Before long the party was summoned to lunch. Straggling couples came wandering into sight, gentlemen assisting young girls out of rocky retreats into which no one would have supposed them capable of penetrating, and to which—more wonderful still—no one had observed them to direct their steps.

The table was laid in the shade, on the grass, and the feasters sat about on rugs and shawls. As Osborne took his place along with Mrs. Carpenter's niece, he noticed that Miss Congreve had not yet re-appeared. He called his companion's attention to the circumstance, and she mentioned it to her aunt, who said that the young girl had last been seen in company with Mr. Stone—a person unknown to Osborne—and that she would, doubtless, soon turn up.

"I suppose she's quite safe," said Philip's neighbor—innocently or wittily, he hardly knew which; "she's with a clergyman."

In a few moments the missing couple appeared on the crest of an adjacent hill. Osborne watched them as they came down. Mr. Stone was a comelyfaced young man, in a clerical necktie and garments of an exaggerated sacerdotal cut-a divine, evidently of strong "ritualistic" tendencies. Miss Congreve drew near, pale, graceful, and grave, and Philip, with his eyes fixed on her in the interval, lost not a movement of her person, nor a glance of her eyes. She wore a white muslin dress, short, in the prevailing fashion, with trimmings of yellow ribbon inserted in the skirt; and round her shoulders a shawl of heavy black lace, crossed over her bosom and tied in a big knot behind. In her hand she carried a great bunch of wild flowers, with which, as Philip's neighbor whispered to him, she had "ruined" her gloves. Osborne wondered whether there was any meaning in her having taken up with a clergyman. Had she suddenly felt the tardy pangs of remorse, and been moved to seek spiritual advice? Neither on the countenance of her ecclesiastical gallant, nor on her own, were there any visible traces of pious discourse. On the contrary, poor Mr. Stone looked sadly demoralized; their conversation had been wholly of profane things. > His white cravat had lost its conservative rigidity, and his hat its unimpassioned equipoise. Worse than all, a little blue forget-me-not had found its way into his button-hole. As for Henrietta, her face wore that look of half-severe serenity which was its wonted expression, but there was no sign of her having seen her lover's ghost.

Osborne went mechanically through the movements of being aftentive to the insipid little person at his side. But his thoughts were occupied with Miss Congreve and his eyes constantly turning to her face. From time to time, they met her own. A fierce disgust muttered in his bosom. What Henrietta Congreve needed, he said to himself, was to be used as she used others, as she was evidently now using this poor little parson. He was already over his ears in love—vainly feeling for bottom in midstream, while she sat dry-shod on the brink. She needed a lesson; but who should give it? She knew more than all her teachers. Men approached her only to be dazzled and charmed. If she could only find her equal or her master! one with as clear a head, as lively a fancy, as relentless a will as her own; one who would turn the tables, anticipate her, fascinate her, and then suddenly look at his watch and bid her good morning. Then, perhaps, Graham might settle to sleep in his grave. Then she would feel

what it was to play with hearts, for then her own would have been as glass against bronze. Osborne looked about the table, but none of Mrs. Carpenter's male guests bore the least resemblance to the hero of his vision—a man with a heart of bronze and a head of crystal. They were, indeed very proper swains for the young ladies at their sides, but Henrietta Congreve was not one of these. She was not a mere twaddling ball-room flirt. There was in her coquetry something serious and exalted. It was an intellectual joy. She drained honest men's hearts to the last drop, and bloomed white upon the monstrous diet. As Philip glanced around the circle, his eye fell upon a young girl who seemed for a moment to have forgotten her neighbors, her sandwiches and her champagne, and was very innocently contemplating his own person. As soon as she perceived that he had observed her, she of course dropped her eyes on her plate. But Philip had read the meaning of her glance. It seemed to say—this lingering virginal eyebeam-in language easily translated, Thou art the man! It said, in other words, in less transcendental fashion, My dear Mr. Osborne, you are a very good looking fellow. Philip felt his pulse quicken; he had received his baptism. Not that good looks were a sufficient outfit for breaking Miss Congreve's heart; but they were the outward sign of his mission.

The feasting at last came to an end. A fiddler, who had been brought along, began to tune his instrument, and Mrs. Carpenter proceeded to organize a dance. The débris of the collation was cleared away, and the level space thus uncovered converted into a dancing floor. Osborne, not being a dancing man, sat at a distance, with two or three other spectators, among whom was the Rev. Mr. Stone. Each of these gentlemen watched with close attention the movements of Henrietta Congreve. Osborne, however, occasionally glanced at his companion, who, on his side, was quite too absorbed in looking at Miss Congreve to think of anyone else.

"They look very charming, those young ladies," said Philip, addressing the young clergyman, to whom he had just been introduced. "Some of them dance particularly well."

"Oh, yes!" said Mr. Stone, with fervor. And then, as if he feared that he had committed himself to an invidious distinction unbecoming his cloth: "I think they all dance well."

But Philip, as a lawyer, naturally took a different view of the matter from Mr. Stone, as a clergyman. "Some of them very much better than others, it seems to me. I had no idea that there could be such a difference. Look at Miss Congreve, for instance."

Mr. Stone, whose eyes were fixed on Miss Congreve, obeyed this injunction by moving them away for a moment, and directing them to a very substantial and somewhat heavy-footed young lady, who was figuring beside her. "Oh, yes, she's very graceful," he said, with unction. "So light, so free, so quiet!"

Philip smiled. "You, too, most excellent simpleton," he said, to himself—"you, too, shall be avenged." And then—"Miss Congreve is a very remarkable person," he added, aloud.

- "Oh, very!"
- "She has extraordinary versatility."
- " Most extraordinary."
- "Have you seen her act?"
- "Yes—yes; I infringed upon my usage in regard to entertainments of that nature, and went the other evening. It was a most brilliant performance."

"And you know she wrote the play."

"Ah, not exactly," said Mr. Stone, with a little protesting gesture; "she translated it."

"Yes; but she had to write it quite over. Do you know it in French?"—and Philip mentioned the original title.

Mr. Stone signified that he was unacquainted with the work.

"It would never have done, you know," said Philip, "to play it as it stands. I saw it in Paris. Miss Congreve eliminated the little difficulties with uncommon skill."

Mr. Stone was silent. The violin uttered a long-drawn note, and the ladies curtsied low to their gentlemen. Miss Congreve's partner stood with his back to our two friends, and her own obeisance was, therefore, executed directly in front of them. As she bent toward the ground, she raised her eyes and looked at them. If Mr. Stone's enthusiasm had been damped by Philip's irreverent freedom, it was rekindled by this glance. "I suppose you've heard her sing," he said, after a pause.

"Yes, indeed," said Philip, without hesitation.

"She sings sacred music with the most beautiful fervor."

"Yes, so I'm told. And I'm told, moreover, that she's very learned—that she has a passion for books."

"I think it very likely. In fact, she's quite an accomplished theologian. We had this morning a very lively discussion."

"You differed, then?" said Philip.

"Oh," said Mr. Stone, with charming naïveté, "I didn't differ. It was she!"

"Isn't she a little—the least bit—" and Philip paused, to select his word.

"The least bit?" asked Mr. Stone, in a benevolent tone. And then, as Philip still hesitated—"The least bit heterodox?"

"The least bit of a coquette?"

"Oh, Mr. Osborne!" cried the young divine—"that's the last thing I should call Miss Congreve."

At this moment, Mrs. Carpenter drew nigh. "What is the last thing you should call Miss Congreve?" she asked, overhearing the clergyman's words.

"A coquette."

"It seems to me," said the lady, "that it's the first thing I should call her. You have to come to it, I fancy. You always do, you know. I should get it off my mind at once, and then I should sing her charms."

"Oh, Mrs. Carpenter!" said Mr. Stone.

"Yes, my dear young man. She's quiet but she's deep—I see Mr. Osborne knows," and Mrs. Carpenter passed on.

"She's deep—that's what I say," said Mr. Stone, with mild firmness.—"What do you know, Mr. Osborne?"

Philip fancied that the poor fellow had turned pale; he certainly looked grave.

"Oh, I know nothing," said Philip. "I affirmed nothing. I merely inquired."

"Well then, my dear sir"—and the young man's candid visage flushed a little with the intensity of his feelings—"I give you my word for it, that I believe Miss Congreve to be not only the most accomplished, but the most noble-minded, the most truthful, the most truly christian young lady—in this whole assembly.

"I'm sure, I'm much obliged to you for the assurance," said Philip. "I shall value it and remember it."

It would not have been hard for Philip to set down Mr. Stone as a mere softhearted, philandering parson—a type ready made to his hand. Mrs. Carpenter, on the other hand, was a shrewd sagacious woman. But somehow he was impressed by the minister's words, and quite untouched by those of the lady. At last those of the dancers who were tired of the sport, left the circle and wandered back to the shore. The afternoon was drawing to a close, the western sky was beginning to blush crimson and the shadows to grow long on the grass. Only half an hour remained before the moment fixed for the return to Newport. Philip resolved to turn it to account. He followed Miss Congreve to a certain rocky platform, overlooking the water, whither, with a couple of elderly ladies, she had gone to watch the sunset. He found no difficulty in persuading her to wander aside from her companions. There was no mistrust in her keen and delicate face. It was incredible that she should have meant defiance; but her very repose and placidity had a strangely irritating action upon Philip. They affected him as the climax of insolence. He drew from his breast-pocket a small portfolio, containing a dozen letters, among which was the last one he had received from Graham.

- "I shall take the liberty, for once, Miss Congreve," he said, "of violating the injunction which you laid upon me this morning with regard to Robert Graham. I have here a letter which I should like you to see."
  - "From Mr. Graham himself?"
- "From Graham himself—written just before his death." He held it out, but Henrietta made no movement to take it.
- "I have no desire to see it," she said. "I had rather not. You know he wrote also to me at that moment."
  - "I'm sure," said Philip, "I should not refuse to see your letter."
  - "I can't offer to show it to you. I immediately destroyed it."
  - "Well, you see I've kept mine.—It's not long," Osborne pursued.

Miss Congreve, as if with a strong effort, put out her hand and took the document. She looked at the direction for some moments, in silence, and then raised her eyes toward Osborne. "Do you value it?" she asked. "Does it contain anything you wish to keep?"

- "No; I give it to you, for that matter."
- "Well then!" said Henrietta. And she tore the letter twice across, and threw the scraps into the sea.
  - "Ah!" cried Osborne, "what the devil have you done?"
- "Don't be violent, Mr. Osborne," said the young girl. "I hadn't the slightest intention of reading it. You are properly punished for having disobeyed me."

Philip swallowed his rage at a gulp, and followed her as she turned away.

## III.

In the middle of September Mrs. Dodd came to Newport, to stay with a friend—somewhat out of humor at having been invited at the fag end of the season, but on the whole very much the same Mrs. Dodd as before; or rather not quite the same, for, in her way, she had taken Graham's death very much to heart. A couple of days after her arrival, she met Philip in the street, and



Drawn by W. J. Hennessy.

"AND SHE TORE THE LETTER TWICE ACROSS, AND THREW THE SCRAPS INTO THE SEA."—Page 20.

stopped him. "I'm glad to find some one still here," she said; for she was with her friend, and having introduced Philip to this lady, she begged him to come and see her. On the next day but one, accordingly, Philip presented himself, and saw Mrs. Dodd alone. She began to talk about Graham; she became very much affected, and with a little more encouragement from Osborne, she would certainly have shed tears. But, somehow, Philip was loth to countenance her grief; he made short responses. Mrs. Dodd struck him as weak and silly and morbidly sentimental. He wondered whether there could have been any truth in the rumor that Graham had cared for her. Not certainly if there was any truth in the story of his passion for Henrietta Congreve. It was impossible that he should have cared for both. Philip made this reflection, but he stopped short of adding that Mrs. Dodd failed signally to please him, because during the past three weeks he had constantly enjoyed Henrietta's society.

For Mrs. Dodd, of course, the transition was easy from Graham to Miss Congreve. "I'm told Miss Congreve is still here," she said. "Have you made her acquaintance?"

"Perfectly," said Philip.

- "You seem to take it very easily. I hope you have brought her to a sense of her iniquities. There's a task, Mr. Osborne. You ought to convert her."
  - "I've not attempted to convert her. I've taken her as she is."
  - "Does she wear mourning for Mr. Graham? It's the least she can do."
- "Wear mourning?" said Philip. "Why, she has been going to a party every other night."
- "Of course I don't suppose she has put on a black dress. But does she mourn here?" And Mrs. Dodd laid her hand on her heart.
- "You mean in her heart? Well, you know, it's problematical that she has one."
- "I suppose she disapproves of suicide," said Mrs. Dodd, with a little acrid smile. "Bless my soul, so do I."
- "So do I, Mrs. Dodd," said Philip. And he remained for a moment thoughtful. "I wish to heaven," he cried, "that Graham were here! It seems to me at moments that he and Miss Congreve might have come to an understanding again."

Mrs. Dodd threw out her hands in horror. "Why, has she given up her last lover?"

"Her last lover? Whom do you mean?"

"Why, the man I told you of-Mr. Holland."

Philip appeared quite to have forgotten this point in Mrs. Dodd's recital. He broke into a loud, nervous laugh. "I'll be hanged," he cried, "if I know! One thing is certain," he pursued, with emphasis, recovering himself; "Mr. Holland—whoever he is—has for the past three weeks seen nothing of Miss Congreve."

Mrs. Dodd sat silent, with her eyes lowered. At last, looking up, "You, on the other hand, I infer," she said, "have seen a great deal of her."

"Yes, I've seen her constantly."

Mrs. Dodd raised her eyebrows and distended her lips in a smile which was emphatically not a smile. "Well, you'll think it an odd question, Mr. Osborne," she said, "but how do you reconcile your intimacy with Miss Congreve with your devotion to Mr. Graham?"

Philip frowned-quite too severely for good manners. Decidedly, Mrs.

Dodd was extremely silly. "Oh," he rejoined, "I reconcile the two things perfectly. Moreover, my dear Mrs. Dodd, allow me to say that it's my own business. At all events," he added, more gently, "perhaps, one of these days, you'll read the enigma."

"Oh, if it's an enigma," cried the lady, "perhaps I can guess it."

Philip had risen to his feet to take his leave, and Mrs. Dodd threw herself back on the sofa, clasped her hands in her lap, and looked up at him with a penetrating smile. She shook her finger at him reproachfully. Philip saw that she had an idea; perhaps it was the right one. At all events, he blushed. Upon this Mrs. Dodd cried out.

- "I've guessed it," she said. "Oh, Mr. Osborne!"
- "What have you guessed?" asked Philip, not knowing why in the world he should blush.
- "If I've guessed right," said Mrs. Dodd, "it's a charming idea. It does you credit. It's quite romantic. It would do in a novel."
  - "I doubt," said Philip, "whether I know what you are talking about."
- "Oh, yes, you do. I wish you good luck. To another man I should say it was a dangerous game. But to you!"—and with an insinuating movement of her head, Mrs. Dodd measured with a glance the length and breadth of Philip's fine person.

Osborne was inexpressibly disgusted, and without further delay he took his leave.

The reader will be at a loss to understand why Philip should have been disgusted with the mere foreshadowing on the part of another, of a scheme which, three weeks before, he had thought a very happy invention. For we may as well say outright, that although Mrs. Dodd was silly, she was not so silly but that she had divined his original intentions with regard to Henrietta. The fact is that in three weeks Philip's humor had undergone a great change. The reader has gathered for himself that Henrietta Congreve was no ordinary girl, that she was, on the contrary, a person of distinguished gifts and remarkable character. Until within a very few months she had seen very little of the world, and her mind and talents had been gradually formed in seclusion, study, and it is not too much to say, meditation. Thanks to her circumscribed life and her long contemplative leisures, she had reached a pitch of rare intellectual perfection. She was educated, one may say, in a sense in which the term may be used of very few young girls, however richly endowed by nature. When at a later period than most girls, owing to domestic circumstances which it is needless to unfold, she made her entrance into society and learned what it was to be in the world and of the world, to talk and listen, to please and be pleased, to be admired, flattered and interested, her admirable faculties and beautiful intellect, ripened in studious solitude, burst into luxuriant bloom and bore the fairest fruit. Miss Congreve was accordingly a person for whom a man of taste and of feeling could not help entertaining a serious regard. Philip Osborne was emphatically such a man; the manner in which he was affected by his friend's death proves, I think, that he had feeling; and it is ample evidence of his taste that he had chosen such a friend. He had no sooner begun to act in obedience to the impulse mystically bestowed, as it were, at the close of Mrs. Carpenter's feast —he had no sooner obtained an introduction at Mrs. Wilkes's, and, with excellent tact and discretion, made good his footing there, than he began to feel in his inmost heart that in staking his life upon Miss Congreve's favor, poor Graham

had indeed revealed the depths of his exquisite sensibility. For a week at least -a week during which, with unprecedented good fortune and a degree of assurance worthy of a better cause, Philip contrived in one way and another to talk with his fair victim no less than a dozen times—he was under the empire of a feverish excitement which kept him from seeing the young girl in all her beautiful integrity. He was pre-occupied with his own intentions and the effect of his own manœuvres. But gradually he quite forgot himself while he was in her presence, and only remembered that he had a sacred part to play, after he had left the house. Then it was that he conceived the intensity of Graham's despair, and then it was that he began to be sadly, wofully puzzled by the idea that a woman could unite so much loveliness with so much treachery, so much light with so much darkness. He was as certain of the bright surface of her nature as of its cold and dark reverse, and he was utterly unable to discover a link of connection between the two. At moments he wondered how in the world he had become saddled with this metaphysical burden: que diable venait-il faire dans cette galère? But nevertheless he was afloat; he must row his boat over the current to where the restless spirit of his friend paced the opposite shore.

Henrietta Congreve, after a first movement of apparent aversion, was very well pleased to accept Osborne as a friend and as an habitué of her sister's house. Osborne fancied that he might believe without fatuity-for whatever the reader may think, it is needless to say that Philip was very far from supposing his whole course to be a piece of infatuated coxcombry—that she preferred him to most of the young men of her circle. Philip had a just estimate of his own endowments, and he knew that for the finer social purposes, if not for strictly sentimental ones, he contained the stuff of an important personage. He had no taste for trivialities, but trivialities played but a small part in Mrs. Wilkes's drawing-room. Mrs. Wilkes was a simple woman, but she was neither silly nor frivolous; and Miss Congreve was exempt from these foibles for even better reasons. "Women really care only for men who can tell them something," Osborne remembered once to have heard Graham say, not without bitterness. "They are always famished for news." Philip now reflected with satisfaction that he could give Miss Congreve more news than most of her constituted gossips. He had an admirable memory and a very lively observation. In these respects Henrietta was herself equally well endowed; but Philip's experience of the world had of course been tenfold more extensive, and he was able continually to complete her partial inductions and to rectify her false conjectures. Sometimes they seemed to him wonderfully shrewd, and sometimes delightfully innocent. He nevertheless frequently found himself in a position to make her acquainted with facts possessing the charm of absolute novelty. He had travelled and seen a great variety of men and women, and of course he had read a number of books which a woman is not expected to read. Philip was keenly sensible of these advantages; but it nevertheless seemed to him that if the exhibition of his mental treasures furnished Miss Congreve with a great deal of entertainment, her attention, on the other hand, had a most refreshing effect upon his mind.

At the end of three weeks Philip might, perhaps not unreasonably, have supposed himself in a position to strike his blow. It is true that, for a woman of sense, there is a long step between thinking a man an excellent friend and a charming talker, and surrendering her heart to him. Philip had every reason to believe that Henrietta thought these good things of himself; but if he had hereupon

turned about to make his exit, with the conviction that when he had closed the parlor-door behind him he should, by lending an attentive ear, hear her fall in a swoon on the carpet, he might have been sadly snubbed and disappointed. He longed for an opportunity to test the quality of his empire. If he could only pretend for a week to be charmed by another woman, Miss Congreve might perhaps commit herself. Philip flattered himself that he could read very small signs. But what other woman could decently serve as the object of a passion thus extemporized? The only woman Philip could think of was Mrs. Dodd; and to think of Mrs. Dodd was to give it up. For a man who was intimate with Miss Congreve to pretend to care for any other woman (except a very old friend) was to act in flagrant contempt of all verisimilitude. Philip had, therefore, to content himself with playing off his own assumed want of heart against Henrietta's cordial regard. But at this rate the game moved very slowly. Work was accumulating at a prodigious rate at his office, and he couldn't dangle about Miss Congreve forever. He bethought himself of a harmless artifice for drawing her out. It seemed to him that his move was not altogether unsuccessful, and that, at a pinch, Henrietta might become jealous of a rival in his affections. Nevertheless, he was strongly tempted to take up his hand and leave the game. It was too confoundedly exciting.

The incident of which I speak happened within a few days after Osborne's visit to Mrs. Dodd. Finding it impossible to establish an imaginary passion for an actual, visible young lady, Philip resolved to invent not only the passion, but the young lady, too. One morning, as he was passing the show-case of one of the several photographers who came to Newport for the season, he was struck by the portrait of a very pretty young girl. She was fair in color, graceful, well dressed, well placed, her face was charming, she was plainly a lady. Philip went in and asked who she was. The photographer had destroyed the negative and had kept no register of her name. He remembered her, however, distinctly. The portrait had not been taken during the summer; it had been taken during the preceding winter, in Boston, the photographer's headquarters. "I kept it," he said, "because I thought it so very perfect a picture. And such a charming sitter! We haven't many like that." He added, however, that it was too good to please the masses, and that Philip was the first gentleman who had had the taste to observe it.

"So much the better," thought Philip, and forthwith proposed to the man to part with it. The latter, of course, had conscientious scruples; it was against his principles to dispose of the portraits of ladies who came to him in confidence. To do him justice, he adhered to his principles, and Philip was unable to persuade him to sell it. He consented, however, to give it to Mr. Osborne, gratis. Mr. Osborne deserved it, and he had another for himself. By this time Philip had grown absolutely fond of the picture; at this latter intelligence he looked grave, and suggested that if the artist would not sell one, perhaps he would sell two. The photographer declined, reiterated his offer, and Philip finally accepted. By way of compensation, however, he proceeded to sit for his own portrait. In the course of half an hour the photographer gave him a dozen reflections of his head and shoulders, distinguished by as many different attitudes and expressions.

"You sit first-rate, sir," said the artist. "You take beautifully. You're quite a match for my young lady."

Philip went off with his dozen prints, promising to examine them at his leisure, select and give a liberal order.

In the evening he went to Mrs. Wilkes's. He found this lady on her verandah, drinking tea in the open air with a guest, whom in the darkness he failed to recognize. As Mrs. Wilkes proceeded to introduce him, her companion graciously revealed herself as Mrs. Dodd. "How on earth," thought Philip, "did she get here?" To find Mrs. Dodd instead of Miss Congreve was, of course, a gross discomfiture. Philip sat down, however, with a good grace, to all appearance, hoping that Henrietta would turn up. Finally, moving his chair to a line with the drawing room window, he saw the young girl within, reading by the lamp. She was alone and intent upon her book. She wore a dress of white grenadine, covered with ornaments and arabesques of crimson silk, which gave her a somewhat fantastical air. For the rest, her expression was grave enough, and her brows contracted, as if she were completely absorbed in her book. Her right elbow rested on the table, and with her hand she mechanically twisted the long curl depending from her chignon. Watching his opportunity, Osborne escaped from the ladies on the verandah and made his way into the drawingroom. Miss Congreve received him as an old friend, without rising from her chair.

Philip began by pretending to scold her for shirking the society of Mrs. Dodd.

- "Shirking!" said Henrietta. "You are very polite to Mrs. Dodd."
- "It seems to me," rejoined Osborne, "that I'm quite as polite as you."
- "Well, perhaps you are. To tell the truth, I'm not very polite. At all events, she don't care to see me. She must have come to see my sister."
  - "I didn't know she knew Mrs. Wilkes."
- "It's an acquaintance of a couple of hours' standing. I met her, you know, at Sharon in July. She was once very impertinent to me, and I fancied she had quite given me up. But this afternoon, during our drive, as my sister and I got out of the carriage, on the rocks, who should I see but Mrs. Dodd, wandering about alone, with a bunch of sea-weed as big as her head. She rushed up to me; I introduced her to Anna, and finding that she had walked quite a distance, Anna made her get into the carriage. It appears that she's staying with a friend, who has no carriage, and she's very miserable. We drove her about for an hour. Mrs. Dodd was fascinating, she threw away her sea-weed, and Anna asked her to come home to tea. After tea, having endured her for two mortal hours, I took refuge here."
  - "If she was fascinating," said Philip, "why do you call it enduring her?"
  - "It's all the more reason, I assure you."
  - "I see, you have not forgiven her impertinence."
  - "No, I confess I have not. The woman was positively revolting."
  - "She appears nevertheless, to have forgiven you."
  - "She has nothing to forgive."

In a few moments, Philip took his photographs out of his pocket, handed them to Henrietta, and asked her advice as to which he should choose. Miss Congreve inspected them attentively, and selected but one. "This one is excellent," she said. "All the others are worthless in comparison."

"You advise me then to order that alone?"

"Why, you'll do as you please. I advise you to order that, at any rate. If you do, I shall ask you for one; but I shall care nothing for the rest."

Philip protested that he saw very little difference between this favored picture and the others, and Miss Congreve declared that there was all the difference in the world. As Philip replaced the specimens in his pocket-book, he dropped on the carpet the portrait of the young lady of Boston.

"Ah," said Henrietta, "a young lady. I suppose I may see it."

"On one condition," said Philip, picking it up. "You'll please not to look at the back of the card."

I am very much ashamed to have to tell such things of poor Philip; for in point of fact, the back of the card was a most innocent blank. If Miss Congreve had ventured to disobey him, he would have made a very foolish figure. But there was so little that was boisterous in Henrietta's demeanor, that Osborne felt that he ran no risk.

- "Who is she?" asked Henrietta, looking at the portrait. "She's charming."
- "She's a Miss Thompson, of Philadelphia."
- "Dear me, not Dora Thompson, assuredly."
- "No indeed," said Philip, a little nervously. "Her name's not Dora—nor anything like it."
  - "You needn't resent the insinuation, sir. Dora's a very pretty name."
  - "Yes, but her own is prettier."
  - "I'm very curious to hear it."

Philip suddenly found himself in deep waters. He struck out blindly and anwered at random, "Angelica."

Miss Congreve smiled—somewhat ironically, it seemed to Philip. "Well," she said, "I like her face better than her name."

- "Dear me, if you come to that, so do I!" cried Philip, with a laugh.
- "Tell me about her, Mr. Osborne," pursued Henrietta. "She must be, with that face and figure, just the nicest girl in the world."
- "Well, well," said Philip, leaning back in his chair, and looking at the ceiling—"perhaps she is—or at least, you'll excuse me if I say I think she is."
- "I should think it inexcusable if you didn't say so," said Henrietta, giving him the card. "I'm sure I've seen her somewhere.

"Very likely. She comes to New York," said Philip. And he thought it prudent, on the whole, to divert the conversation to another topic. Miss Congreve remained silent and he fancied pensive. Was she jealous of Angelica Thompson? It seemed to Philip that, without fatuity, he might infer that she was, and that she was too proud to ask questions.

Mrs. Wilkes had enabled Mrs. Dodd to send tidings to her hostess of her whereabouts, and had promised to furnish her with an escort on her return. When Mrs. Dodd prepared to take her leave, Philip, finding himself also ready to depart, offered to walk home with her.

"Well, sir," said the lady, when they had left the house, "your little game seems to be getting on."

Philip said nothing.

"Ah, Mr. Osborne," said Mrs. Dodd, with ill-concealed impatience, "I'm afraid you're too good for it."

"Well, I'm afraid I am."

"If you hadn't been in such a hurry to agree with me," said Mrs. Dodd, "I should have said that I meant, in other words, that you're too stupid."

"Oh, I agree to that, too," said Philip.

The next day he received a letter from his partner in business, telling him of a great pressure of work, and urging him to return at his earliest convenience. "We are told," added this gentleman, "of a certain Miss —, I forget the

name. If she's essential to your comfort, bring her along; but, at any rate, come yourself. In your absence the office is at a stand-still—a fearful case of repletion without digestion."

This appeal came home to Philip's mind, to use a very old metaphor, like the sound of the brazen trumpet to an old cavalry charger. He felt himself overwhelmed with a sudden shame at the thought of the precious hours he had wasted and the long mornings he had consigned to perdition. He had been burning incense to a shadow, and the fumes had effaced it. In the afternoon he walked down toward the cliffs, feeling wofully perplexed, and exasperated in mind, and longing only to take a farewell look at the sea. He was not prepared to admit that he had played with fire and burned his fingers; but it was certain that he had gained nothing at the game. How the deuce had Henrietta Congreve come to thrust herself into his life-to steal away his time and his energies and to put him into a savage humor with himself? He would have given a great deal to be able to banish her from his thoughts; but she remained, and, while she remained, he hated her. After all, he had not been wholly cheated of his revenge. He had begun by hating her and he hated her still. On his way to the cliffs he met Mrs. Wilkes, driving alone. Henrietta's place, vacant beside her, seemed to admonish him that she was at home, and almost, indeed, that she expected him. At all events, instead of going to bid farewell to the sea, he went to bid farewell to Miss Congreve. He felt that his farewell might easily be cold and formal, and indeed bitter.

He was admitted, he passed through the drawing-room to the verandah, and found Henrietta sitting on the grass, in the garden, holding her little nephew on her knee and reading him a fairy tale. She made room for him on the garden bench beside her, but kept the child. Philip felt himself seriously discomposed by this spectacle. In a few moments he took the boy upon his own knees. He then told Miss Congreve briefly that he intended that evening to leave Newport. "And you," he said, "when are you coming?"

"My sister," said Henrietta, "means to stay till Christmas. I hope to be able to remain as long."

Poor Philip bowed his head and heard his illusions tumbling most unmusically about his ears. His blow had smitten but the senseless air. He waited to see her color fade, or to hear her voice tremble. But he waited in vain. When he looked up and his eyes met Henrietta's, she was startled by the expression of his face.

"Tom," she said to the child, "go and ask Jane for my fan."

The child walked off, and Philip rose to his feet. Henrietta, hesitating a moment, also rose. "Must you go?" she asked.

Philip made no answer, but stood looking at her with blood-shot eyes, and with an intensity which puzzled and frightened the young girl.

- "Miss Congreve," he said, abruptly, "I'm a miserable man!"
- "Oh, no!" said Henrietta, gently.
- "I love a woman who doesn't care a straw for me!"
- "Are you sure?" said Henrietta, innocently.
- "Sure! I adore her!"
- "Are you sure she doesn't care for you?"
- "Ah, Miss Congreve!" cried Philip. "If I could imagine, if I could hope —" and he put out his hand, as if to take her own.

Henrietta drew back, pale and frowning, carrying her hand to her heart. "Hope for nothing!" she said.

At this moment, little Tom Wilkes re-appeared, issuing from the drawing-room window. "Aunt Henrietta," he cried, "here's a new gentleman!"

Miss Congreve and Philip turned about, and saw a young man step out upon the verandah from the drawing-room. Henrietta, with a little cry, hastened to meet him. Philip stood in his place. Miss Congreve exchanged a cordial greeting with the stranger, and led him down to the lawn. As she came toward him, Philip saw that Henrietta's pallor had made way for a rosy flush. She was beautiful.

"Mr. Osborne," she said, "Mr. Holland."

Mr. Holland bowed graciously; but Philip bowed not at all. "Good-by, then," he said, to the young girl.

She bowed, without speaking.

- "Who's your friend, Henrietta?" asked her companion, when they were alone.
- "He's a Mr. Osborne, of New York," said Miss Congreve; "a friend of poor Mr. Graham."
  - "By the way, I suppose you've heard of poor Graham's death."
- "Oh, yes; Mr. Osborne told me. And, indeed—what do you think? Mr. Graham wrote to me that he expected to die."
  - "Expected? Is that what he said?"
  - "I don't remember his words. I destroyed the letter."
  - "I must say, I think it would have been in better taste not to write."
  - "Taste! He had long since parted company with taste."
- "I don't know. There was a method in his madness; and, as a rule, when a man kills himself, he shouldn't send out circulars.
- "Kills himself? Good heavens, George! what do you mean?" Miss Congreve had turned pale, and stood looking at her companion with eyes dilated with horror.
- "Why, my dear Henrietta," said the young man, "excuse my abruptness. Didn't you know it?"
- "How strange—how fearful!" said Henrietta, slowly. "I wish I had kept his letter."
  - "I'm glad you didn't," said Holland. "It's a horrible business. Forget it."
- "Horrible—horrible," murmured the young girl, in a tremulous tone. Her voice was shaken with irrepressible tears. Poor girl! in the space of five minutes, she had been three times surprised. She gave way to her emotion and burst into sobs. George Holland drew her against him, and pressed his arm about her, and kissed her, and whispered comfort in her ear.

In the evening, Philip started for New York. On the steamer, he found Mrs. Dodd, who had come to an end of her visit. She was accompanied by a certain Major Dodd, of the Army, a brother of her deceased husband, and in addition, as it happened, her cousin. He was an unmarried man, a good-natured man, and a very kind friend to his sister-in-law, who had no family of her own, and who was in a position to be grateful for the services of a gentleman. In spite of a general impression to the contrary, I may affirm that the Major had no desire to make his little services a matter of course. "I'm related to Maria twice over already," he had been known to say, in a moment of expansion. "If I ever marry, I shall

prefer to do it not quite so much in the family." He had come to Newport to conduct his sister home, who forthwith introduced him to Philip.

It was a clear, mild night, and, when the steamer had got under way, Mrs. Dodd and the two gentlemen betook themselves to the upper deck, and sat down in the starlight. Philip, it may be readily imagined, was in no humor for conversation; but he felt that he could not wholly neglect Mrs. Dodd. Under the influence of the beautiful evening, the darkly-shining sea, the glittering constellations, this lady became rabidly sentimental. She talked of friendship, and love, and death, and immortality. Philip saw what was coming. Before many moments, she had the bad taste (considering the Major's presence, as it seemed to Philip) to take poor Graham as a text for a rhapsody. Osborne lost patience, and interrupted her by asking if she would mind his lighting a cigar. She was scandalized, and immediately announced that she would go below. Philip had no wish to be uncivil. He attempted to restore himself to her favor by offering to see her down to the cabin. She accepted his escort, and he went with her to the door of her state-room, where she gave him her hand for good-night.

"Well," she said-"and Miss Congreve?"

Philip positively scowled. "Miss Congreve," he said, "is engaged to be married."

- "To Mr. ---?"
- "To Mr. Holland."
- "Ah!" cried Mrs. Dodd, dropping his hand, "why didn't you break the engagement!"
- "My dear Mrs. Dodd," said Philip, "you don't know what you're talking about."

Mrs. Dodd smiled a pitiful smile, shrugged her shoulders, and turned away. "Poor Graham!" she said.

Her words came to Philip like a blow in the face. "Graham!" he cried. "Graham was a fool!" He had struck back; he couldn't help it.

He made his way up stairs again, and came out on the deck, still trembling with the violence of his retort. He walked to the edge of the boat and leaned over the railing, looking down into the black gulfs of water which foamed and swirled in the wake of the vessel. He knocked off the end of his cigar, and watched the red particles fly downward and go out in the darkness. He was a disappointed, saddened man. There in the surging, furious darkness, yawned instant death. Did it tempt him, too? He drew back with a shudder, and returned to his place by Major Dodd.

The Major preserved for some moments a meditative silence. Then, at last, with a half apologetic laugh, "Mrs. Dodd," he said, "labors under a singular illusion."

- "Ah?" said Philip.
- "But you knew Mr. Graham yourself?" pursued the Major.
- "Oh, yes; I knew him."
- "It was a very melancholy case," said Major Dodd.
- "A very melancholy case;" and Philip repeated his words.
- "I don't know how it is that Mrs. Dodd was beguiled into such fanaticism on the subject. I believe she went so far as once to blow out at the young lady."
  - "The young lady?" said Philip.
  - "Miss Congreve, you know, the object of his persecutions."

- "Oh, yes," said Philip, painfully mystified.
- "The fact is," said the Major, leaning over, and lowering his voice confidentially, "Mrs. Dodd was in love with him—as far, that is, as a woman can be in love with a man in that state."
- "Is it possible?" said Philip, disgusted and revolted at he knew not what; for his companion's allusions were an enigma.
- "Oh, I was at Sharon for three weeks," the Major continued; "I went up for my sister-in-law; I saw it all. I wanted to bring poor Graham away, but he woulnd't listen to me—not that he wasn't very quiet. He made no talk, and opened himself only to Mrs. Dodd and me—we lived in the same house, you know. Of course, I very soon saw through it, and I felt very sorry for poor Miss Congreve. She bore it very well, but it must have been very annoying."

Philip started up from his chair. "For heaven's sake, Major Dodd," he cried, "what are you talking about?"

The Major stared a moment, and then burst into a peal of laughter. "You agree, then, with Mrs. Dodd?" he said, recovering himself.

- "I understand Mrs. Dodd no better than I do you."
- "Why, my dear sir," said the Major, rising to his feet and extending his hand, "I beg a hundred pardons. But you must excuse me if I adhere to my opinion."
  - "First, please, be so good as to inform me of your opinion."
  - "Why, sir, the whole story is simply bosh."
  - "Good heavens," cried Philip, "that's no opinion!"
  - "Well, then, sir, if you will have it: the man was as mad as a March hare."
- "Oh!" cried Philip. His exclamation said a great many things, but the Major took it as a protest.
  - "He was a monomaniac."

Philip said nothing.

- "The idea is not new to you?"
- "Well," said Philip, "to tell the truth, it is.
- "Well," said the Major, with a courteous flourish, "there you have it--for nothing."

Philip drew a long breath. "Ah, no!" he said, gravely, "not for nothing." He stood silent for some time, with his eyes fixed on the deck. Major Dodd puffed his cigar and eyed him askance. At last Philip looked up. "And Henrietta Congreve?"

- "Henrietta Congreve," said the major, with military freedom and gallantry, "is the sweetest girl in the world. Don't talk to me! I know her."
  - "She never became engaged to Graham?"
  - "Engaged? She never looked at him."
  - "But he was in love with her."
- "Ah, that was his own business. He worried her to death. She tried gentleness and kindness—it made him worse. Then, when she declined to see him, the poor fellow swore that she had jilted him. It was a fixed idea. He got Mrs. Dodd to believe it."

Philip's silent reflections—the hushed eloquence of his amazed unburdened heart—we have no space to interpret. But as the major lightened the load with one hand, he added to it with the other. Philip had never pitied his friend till now. "I knew him well," he said, aloud. "He was the best of men. She might very well have cared for him."

- "Good heavens! my dear sir, how could the woman love a madman?"
- "You use strong language. When I parted with him in June, he was as sane as you or I."
- "Well, then, apparently, he lost his mind in the interval. He was in wretched health.
  - "But a man doesn't lose his mind without a cause."
- "Let us admit, then," said the major, "that Miss Congreve was the cause. I insist that she was the innocent cause. How should she have trifled with him? She was engaged to another man. The ways of the Lord are inscrutable. Fortunately," continued the Major, "she doesn't know the worst."
  - "How, the worst?"
  - "Why, you know he shot himself."
  - "Bless your soul, Miss Congreve knows it."
  - "I think you're mistaken. She didn't know it this morning."

Philip was sickened and bewildered by the tissue of horrors in which he found himself entangled. "Oh," he said, bitterly, "she has forgotten it then. She knew it a month ago."

- "No, no, no," rejoined the major, with decision. "I took the liberty, this morning, of calling upon her, and as we had had some conversation upon Mr. Graham at Sharon, I touched upon his death. I saw she had heard of it, and I said nothing more—"
  - "Well then?" said Philip.
- "Well, then, my dear sir, she thinks he died in his bed. May she never think otherwise!"

In the course of that night—he sat out on deck till two o'clock, alone—Philip, revolving many things, fervently echoed this last wish of Major Dodd.

Aux grands maux les grands remèdes. Philip is now a married man; and curious to narrate, his wife bears a striking likeness to the young lady whose photograph he purchased for the price of six dozen of his own. And yet her name is not Angelica Thompson—nor even Dora.

HENRY JAMES, JR.