THE ATOMS OF CHLADNI.

GUSTAV MOHLER, the once celebrated inventor and mathematician, died last year (1858) in a private lunatic asylum. His wife, more accomplished than her husband, even in his best days, has also departed. The peace of God and the love of all went with her. To disclose the causes of Mohler's alienation from her, and of the insanity which overtook him soon after, will offend no man's pride, no woman's vanity. I wish, as a friend of Madam Mohler, to justify her. None who enjoyed her splendid hospitality or the delights of her conversation will be displeased with me for the attempt.

My first interview with Mohler was preconcerted by my friend P——, the *savant*. This was in the winter of 1854. We three met by appointment in a public library. My friend had been deceived by the serene enthusiasm of the inventor, and believed that he could communicate some valuable secrets. We sat at a round table in an alcove of the library inspecting plans and diagrams. For an hour the inventor explained, calculated; plunged into abysses of constructive dynamics; his voice sounded drearily, under the Gothic hollows of the room. The old folios of alchemy and philosophy, twin children of ignorance, that cumbered three sides of the alcove where we sat listening to this madman, seemed at last to nod and shake, in sympathy with his wild, interminably worded digressions. It was like the clown fighting with the hoop; intellect struggling in a vicious circle, maddened with its own exertion.

The enthusiast seemed to be between thirty and forty years of age; well formed, well dressed; a gentleman in manners. His voice and address were mild and insinuating, but the feeling he inspired most was compassion. His inventions were for the most part mere lunacies, violating every mechanical law. The *instinct* of common sense, a suspicion that he might be wrong, made him appear timid in his statements. He deferred to P——'s superior knowledge; asked him to point out the errors; smiled sadly when P—— intimated, with some asperity, his contempt for the whole matter.

I would willingly have talked to Mohler about himself, but his personal reserve repelled sympathy. He begged P—— to look farther into the invention (a new motive power); said that something might have escaped him in the calculations; but that, "as all these things were imparted to him by spiritual communication, he dared not abandon the research."

"Spirits," replied P——, with one of his cutting scientific laughs, "will not enable you to circumvent God; and it is He, the Maker of the universe, who condemns your invention. It would wreck the universe."

Mohler replied, meekly, that "he should be grieved to think that his spirit-friends had deceived him." He then drew me aside, and with a gleaming look askance at P——, who remained yawning and fretting over the table, "He," said Mohler, "is a materialist; but in you I have confidence." He then alluded to another invention of his own, which, he said, had been perfected by evil spirits, and had ruined him.

The eyes of the lunatic dilated, and a visible tremor shook his frame, as he described the machine. "It was a means," he said, "to discover falsehood and treachery." The spirit of Chladni communicated that to him—Chladni, the Frenchman who discovered the dancing of the atoms. "It is the same," he said, "in the atoms of the brain; they vibrate in geometrical forms, which the soul reads."

P——, who had been watching us, alarmed at the maniacal excitement of Mohler, interrupted our conversation and hurried me away. Though the froth of madness had gathered upon his lips, the unfortunate inventor had still power enough over himself to show, in leave-taking, the urbanity of a gentleman.

As P—— and I left the library together, I expressed a wish to learn something of the previous life of Gustav Mohler. P—— said I was over-curious in such matters; for his part, the history of a madman was, of all, least entertaining, and useful only to those intelligent but unhappy persons who have charge of asylums. Of Gustav Mohler he neither knew nor desired to know any thing farther, and regretted the hour wasted in his company; which had delayed an important analysis of earths in which he was about to engage that day, in company with Professor M. "I suppose," he added, with a half sneer, "you are seeking characters for a novel, and you fancy the history of this creature might furnish you a high-seasoned dish of the horrible."

And so we parted, in no very good humor with each other—I to my meditations, he to his earths.

Several months had passed, after this interview, before my accomplished and practical friend, the *savant*, saw fit to honor me with a visit. One cold, rainy night in November of the succeeding year I heard his firm, quick step in the hall. There was a knock, and the door of my room opened intrusively.

The *savant* stood in the door-way, his sharp nose peering under a glazed hat, and his form made shapeless by an ungainly water-proof cloak against the wind and rain of the night.

"Ah!" said he, "you are a fixture, I fear, by the fireside. But if you have courage to face this storm, I have a pleasure to propose."

"Come in; lay off your storm armor, and we will talk about your pleasure."

He complied in the hasty, discontented manner peculiar to him, threw his wet hat and cloak over a table covered with books and papers, and drew a chair.

"You will go with me," he said, authoritatively, "to Charles Montague's this evening."

"Forty-second Street—through a northeasterly storm! Be wise—I have ordered whisky and hot water, with lemons." I rang the bell.

Professor P—— had a weakness for punch,

especially when I made it. He acquiesced, with a sigh.

"We can go late," said he. "There is to be a meeting of rare people. At least two entomologists, an antiquarian, and a collector of curiosities from Germany, who has a tourmalin which I must steal or buy; it is yellow, or rather gold-colored. Then there will be a woman there—a Mrs. Bertaldy, American; a wonder of science, whom you must see."

"P——, you are a fool. Scientific women are more odious to me than womanish men. The learning of a woman is only a desperate substitute for some lost attraction."

"Very true, perhaps; I will think about that: but Mrs. Bertaldy *is* a beautiful, not to say a fascinating woman; only thirty years of age—rich, independent, and a delightful conversationist."

"Hum! a widow?"

"Yes, at least I am so informed."

"A friend of the Montagues?"

"They vouch for her."

"And an American, you say?"

"Yes, with a foreign name—assumed, I suppose, to avoid some unpleasant recollections; scientific women, you know, have these things happen to them. Husband dead, and no children. Charles Montague swears that it is so; his wife protests it is so; and, of course, it must be so."

"Another glass, and I am with you. We will visit the Montagues, and talk with Mrs. Bertaldy; but if you oblige me to listen to any of your alchemists or virtuosi, I promise to insult them."

My first ten minutes' conversation with Mrs. Bertaldy was a disappointment. She was of the quiet school of manners, low-voiced, and without gesture or animation. Her features were regular, well formed, rather dark, with just the merest trace of sadness.

The difference between mediocrity in a woman and the *mean* of perfection is not instantly visible, unless to very fine observers. Mrs. Bertaldy made no impression at the first view, but I found myself returning often to speak with her. Her talk was neither apophthegm, argument, nor commentary; it was a kind of sympathetic music. She bore her part in the concert of good words in a subdued and tasteful manner, putting in a note of great power and sweetness here and there, when there was a rest or silence.

P—— was dissatisfied. Mrs. Bertaldy took no part in the noisy and tedious discussions of the *savans*. On our way home he pronounced her "a humbug—a false reputation." I, on the contrary, resolved to cultivate the acquaintance. It was agreeable. P—— sees no points but the salient, in men or things; he is merely a naturalist.

My new acquaintance was domiciled with the Montagues, and I soon became an expected visitor and friend of their guest. Not, I beg to have it understood, in the manner of a lover, or wife hunter, but simply of one seeking agreeable society. The fastidious Montague and his good lady were impenetrable about the "antecedents" of Mrs. Bertaldy; but they treated her with a confidence and respect which satisfied me that her previous history was known to them, and that their sentiments toward her were grounded in esteem. They seemed to be afraid of losing a word of hers, when she was conversing. Her knowledge was various and positive, but she spoke of things and persons as if each were a feeling more than an object. I was not long in discovering that a part of the charm of Mrs. Bertaldy's society lay in the graceful and kind attention with which she listened. She encouraged one to talk, and shaped and turned conversation with an easy power.

One morning in April, while we were enjoying the first warm air of spring, and the odor of flowers, in Montague's magnificent conservatory —the windows open to the south, and the caged birds cheering and whistling to each other amidst the orange-trees—I was describing a garden in the South; my language was apt and spontaneous. The lady listened with her delightful manner of pleased attention.

She was certainly a beautiful woman!

Her eyes dwelt upon mine, when, by I know not what association, the vision of the spirit-haunted enthusiast rose before me, and I was silent.

Mrs. Bertaldy became pale, and gazing on my face with an expression of terror, she exclaimed,

"You were thinking of him. How strange!"

"Yes," I said; "but do you know of *whom* I am thinking?"

"He is no longer living," she replied; "and we may now speak of him without wrong."

"Of Mohler, the enthusiast?"

"The same."

"How came you to know it was he I thought of?"

"You need not be surprised. We have been much together, and though you have not named Mohler—he was my husband—you have made remarks and allusions which convinced me that you at least knew *him*, if not his history."

"True, I have spoken of his inventions, and often wished they were real and possible."

"And your allusions have made me shudder. Mohler was mad. You will think me mad, I am afraid, if I assure you that some of his inventions, the most wonderful of all, were perfected and applied before his reason left him."

"You were, then, the wife of this man?" I said, with a feeling of compassion.

"Yes. Our parents were foreign, though Gustav and I were born and educated in America."

"Will you tell me something of this marriage?" said I, touched with deep interest.

She sighed, but after a moment's meditation spoke with her usual manner.

"We were united by our parents. Mohler was in his twenty-first year; I but seventeen. We had no children; were rich, educated, luxurious. Mohler addicted himself to inventions,

I to society. He faded into a recluse; I became a woman of the world. Our home was divided against itself. We occupied a double house in D—— Street. One half was reserved by Mohler for himself and his mechanics; the other half by me for my friends and visitors, whom he seldom saw. Within five years after our marriage I was left to my own guidance. Our parents died. Fearing the wasteful expenditure of Mohler on his strange inventions, they willed their property exclusively to me. Their fears for him were well-founded. On the anniversary of the seventh year of our marriage, at midnight, after a musical entertainment—I was then passionately fond of music—Mohler entered my chamber, which he had not visited for a year. He closed the door, locked it quietly, drew a chair to the bedside, facing me, and seated himself.

"'Maria Bertaldy,' he said, after a silence which I took pains not to break, 'we are no longer man and wife.'

"I made no reply. My heart did not go out, as formerly, to meet him.

"'My name is not yours,' he added.

"'No? And why, Gustav?'

"'My lawyer is about to furnish me with evidence which will make our continued union impossible.'

"'Your lawyer!' I exclaimed, starting up, involuntarily. '*My* friend, Raymond Bonsall?'

"'Your *friend*, Maria! Has he deceived me? Forgive me if I have wronged you. My soul is dark sometimes.'

"There was a manner so wretched and pleading with what he said, I could not forbear pity. His dress was soiled; his hair hung in elf locks; his eyes were bloodshot with glowering over furnace-fires. The poisonous fume of the crucible had driven the healthy tinge from his face, and given it the hue of parchment.

"'It is many a long year,' said I, 'since you have looked at me with kindness.'

"'I have deserved,' he answered, 'to lose your affection; but you should have taken better care of my honor and your own.'

"'The guardianship of both seems to have been transferred to your lawyer.'

"'I may believe, then, that you are indifferent in regard to that?'

"'You may believe what you will. I have been long enough my own guardian to look to no one for advice or protection.'

"'You are rich.'

"'That is a consolation, truly. I am thus not without means of defense—more fortunate than most women.'

"'And I have nothing but that of which you have been willing to deprive me.'

"'Your accusations—more especially as you are the last person who is entitled to make them—I repel with contempt. For your loss of fortune, miserably expended in futilities, I am deeply grieved. If you are in need of money for your personal expenses, take freely of mine.'

"'I am in debt.'

"'How much?'

"He named a large sum. I rose, and going to the escritoir, wrote an order for the amount. He followed me. The tears were streaming from his eyes. Kneeling at my feet, he seized my hands and covered them with kisses.

"I had formerly entertained an affectionate regard for Gustav. We were at one time playmates, friends. Regret made me look kindly upon him.

"He caught eagerly at the indication.

"'I will not rise, Maria,' he said, 'until you have forgiven the cruel accusation. So much goodness and generosity can not proceed from a faithless or dishonored wife.'

"'You judge truly, my husband.'

"He rose from his knees, still holding my hands in both of his.

"'You have saved me,' he said, 'by your liberality. Grant me still another favor: let the reconciliation be perfect.'

"'Any thing for a better life; but only on one condition can you and I live happily, as at first.'

"'And that is—?'

"'That you change your occupation—give up these wild researches—spare your body and your soul, and live as other men do, in simplicity.'

"'But,' said he, stammering, 'I have an invention of incalculable value. To give it up now would be to lose the labor of years.'

"'And this other favor is—?'

"'I must have means to continue my work.'

"'I will not furnish you with the means of self-destruction.'

"'Limit me. Your income is large; you will hardly miss what I require.'

"'For how long?'

"'One year. I shall then have perfected what will immortalize and enrich me. Pity me, Maria! We have no children. You have *your* pleasures and pursuits; I, only this; and this you deny me!' he exclaimed, with a slight bitterness, so artfully mingled with affection and repentance, my heart gave way. I consented.

"Gustav was not without personal beauty or manliness of character. He now studied again to please my tastes. We resumed our former relations. Though his days were devoted to labor, his evenings were given to me and my guests. His cheerfulness seemed to have returned. I was so happy in the change, I allowed him to draw from me large sums. My fortune was still ample; and I looked forward to the happy ending of the appointed year.

"You are doubtless surprised that I could so easily forgive his accusations. Satisfied that Raymond Bonsall, the lawyer, who had persecuted me, before the reconciliation, with unsolicited attentions, was the originator and cause of Mohler's suspicions, I had dismissed the subject from my thoughts. Indeed, my happiness expelled revengeful passions, even against Bonsall himself. As the friend of Gustav, I received him with courtesy, and he continued an accepted

member of the refined and elegant society with which it was our good fortune to be surrounded.

"With surprising address Bonsall changed his plan. As before he had been secretly attentive, now he was openly and constantly devoted, but shunned me when alone.

"Bonsall's influence over Mohler became, at last, absolute and inscrutable. It did not satisfy me to hear them repeat, often and openly, that they were partners in the invention; that Bonsall had purchased an interest; and that they consulted together daily on its progress. Anxiety led me to observe them. Daily, at a certain hour in the afternoon, Bonsall entered the house and passed into the lower work-shop. There he would remain a while, and then retire. In the evening he appeared often in the drawing-room, and never failed to make himself agreeable to our friends.

"The instinct of a woman, correct in appreciating character and motives, fails always in sounding the complicated and strategic depth of masculine perfidy. I soon knew that Bonsall had become my enemy, and that his ultimate purpose was to avenge my repulses and defeat my reconciliation with Mohler; but the singularity and constancy of his behavior—attentive in public, and reserved and cautious when alone with me—together with the pains he used to create for himself relations more and more intimate with my husband, puzzled and confused me.

"'Could it be,' thought I, 'that his public attentions, so embarrassing and yet so blameless; his watchfulness of my desires, when others could see them as well as he, are to impress a belief that his private relations are too intimate?'

"The suspicion gave me excessive uneasiness. I gradually broke the matter to Mohler; but he assured me I was mistaken; that Bonsall suffered remorse for the injury he had inflicted upon both of us; that our reconciliation alone consoled him; that Bonsall was his adviser in the invention, which already, at the eighth month of the stipulated period, had nearly reached perfection. His tenderness quieted my fears, and I too easily believed him.

"Soon after he proposed certain changes in the architecture and furniture of my apartments. His reasons seemed to me satisfactory and kind. I vacated the rooms for a month, leaving him to improve and alter. He wished to give me a surprise. The apartment was large, with a dressing-room and ante-chamber. These were refitted under Mohler's direction; after which, in company with a few friends, we visited the new rooms.

"The ceiling had been made slightly concave; in the centre was a large oval mirror. This mirror, so strangely placed overhead, excited general admiration. Bonsall was, or pretended to be, in raptures with it. I observed that the mirror, beautifully fair and polished, was not of glass, but of a metal resembling silver.

"From this brilliant centre-piece radiated panels exquisitely carved, with frescoes of graceful and simple design. The carpets, wall mirrors, fountain, statuettes, jewel and book-cases, tapestries, tinted and curtained windows, all were perfectly elegant, and fresh with living colors in harmonious combination.

"In the centre of the ceilings of the dressing-room and ante-chambers were smaller mirrors of the same metal. This new style of ornament, supported by adequate elegances, and a perfection of detail of which I had never before seen the parallel, occupied continual notice and remark. Some criticised and laughed, but the most admired; for the beauty of the effect was undeniable.

"I was surprised and delighted at the results of my husband's labors. That Mohler, a great inventor and mechanic, was also a master of design, I had always believed. With the genius of Benvenuto Cellini he united a philosophical intellect, and by long years of research in the metallurgic arts had acquired extraordinary tact. In the least details of the work of these rooms there was novelty and beauty, though, with the sole exception of the metal mirrors, I observed nothing absolutely new in material.

"Mohler did not fail to observe, and turn to his own advantage, my gratification and surprise. He at once sought and obtained leave from me to occupy a suit of apartments next above mine, in exchange for others on his side of the house, which, he said, were too dark and narrow for his purpose.

"I sent immediately for my housekeeper, ordered the change to be made, and the keys given to the master.

"By a tacit understanding we had never intruded upon each other. I had not penetrated the privacy of Mohler's work-rooms, where certain confidential artisans labored night and day; nor had he overstepped the limit on my side of the house. He breakfasted, and generally dined, in his atelier, superintending operations which required a constant oversight.

"For more than two months after the completion of my own apartments I was disturbed day and night by noises of repairs and changes going on above. Mohler assured me that this would not continue; that he had perfected and was erecting the delicate machinery of his invention.

"Want of curiosity is, I believe, a greater fault than the excess of it. I am naturally incurious. It did not irritate my fancy to remain in ignorance of secrets that did not seem to concern me. My husband and I lived together in a manner that was at least satisfactory. Our affection was only an agreeable friendship, such as many consider the happiest relation that can exist between husband and wife. Our too early and hasty marriage had kept us in ignorance of the joys and miseries dreamed of and realized only by mature and long-expectant passion.

"You will not suppose that life was therefore tedious or fruitless. My parents had given me

a full and judicious education. I could speak and write several languages. Mature and difficult studies — philosophy, natural history, and even astronomy—established for me relations of amity with learned and accomplished men. I wrote verse and prose, attempted plays, observed and sympathized with political movements. In order to perfect myself in languages, I cultivated the admirable art of phonography, and would sometimes fix in writing the rapid and brilliant repartee of accomplished persons, who could forget my presence in the excitement of conversation. I learned to prefer the living to the written word. Literature for me was only a feeble reflection of reality; for I have never found in books that vivacity, that grace, that unfolding of the interior life, which makes social converse the culmination of all that is excellent and admirable.

"At the expiration of the year Mohler announced the completion of his grand work, which he had been seven years in perfecting. I thought he would have told me its purpose; but with a cold and embarrassed manner he presented me with a check upon his banker, just equal to the sum of all I had advanced to him during the year. His behavior was mortifying, and even alarming. I noticed a gradual change in the manners and conversation of Bonsall. He assumed airs of authority. Mohler gradually withdrew himself, and began to be reserved and serious; criticising my conduct, friends, principles, and tastes. More mysterious still was the gradual loss and defection of my most valued female acquaintances. My parlors were gradually deserted. Old friends dropped away. It was as though I had become suddenly poor, when, in fact, my wealth and magnificence of living had increased. Persons of good name no longer responded to or returned my invitations. I was alone with my wealth, dispossessed of its power and its enjoyments.

"I knew that Bonsall continued to visit the friends who had deserted me. He still frequented our house, was daily closeted with my husband, and treated me now with a careless indifference. Mohler, on the other hand, withdrew until he and I were completely separated. We no longer spoke to or even saw each other. My servants became insolent; I procured others, who, in their turn, insulted me. I grew careless of externals; lived retired, occupied with books and music. Through these I acquired fortitude to resist the contempt of the world. My knowledge increased. These sad months, interrupted by short visits to the country, produced no change in my social or marital relations, but gave me an inward strength and consolation which since then has served me like an arm of God whereon one may lean and sleep.

"While these changes were succeeding I enjoyed a source of consolation which I need only name and you will appreciate it; that was the correspondence of Charles Montague, then in Europe. He had been the friend and counselor of my parents, and continued his goodness to me after their death. I confided to him all my troubles, giving him each month a written narrative of events. He replied always in general terms, mentioning no names, and giving advice in such a form that it could be understood by no person but myself. This was a just precaution, for I had discovered a system of espionage which Bonsall and my husband maintained over me, a part of which was the inspection of private papers.

"Gradually all my valuable papers, receipts, copies of deeds, important correspondence with the agents who had charge of my large and increasing property, Montague's letters, my private journal, were abstracted. I made no complaint, trusted no person with my secrets.

"At the expiration of this year of estrangement and solitude, in the fall, Montague returned from Europe with his family, and fitted up this house. Mrs. M. I had not known until then. Neither of them had visited at my house, nor were they on terms of intimacy with any of my friends. Even Bonsall was a stranger to Montague, and Mohler had disliked and avoided him. Plain sense and honesty ran counter to his dreamy vanity.

"I was received by the Montagues with great kindness. I found the lady, as you have, intelligent and amiable, and the man himself become, from a mere guardian of my property, a warm and devoted friend. I consumed almost an entire day in narrating what had passed between myself, Bonsall, my husband, servants, and acquaintances.

"Montague made minutes, and compared the narrative with my correspondence.

"'I am convinced,' he said, 'that there is a conspiracy; but whether your life and property, or merely a divorce, is the object, can not be determined without some action on your part. Find out the purpose of the changes that have been made in your apartments, and by all means visit and inspect those that are above you. You must do this for and by yourself. You are observing and not easily intimidated. You have a right to use any means that may be convenient —to pick locks, force open doors, seize and inspect papers, bribe servants, and in other ways defend yourself and obtain advantages over the enemy. Count no longer upon the good-will or affection of Mohler. He is resolved to sacrifice you and possess himself of your property, but is still at a loss for evidence.'

"With these words Montague concluded his advice. He then led me to a front window, and pointed to a dark figure in the shadow on the opposite side of the street.

"'That person,' said Montague, 'is certainly a spy employed by Mohler and Bonsall. He arrived at the same moment with yourself, has passed the house many times, and now watches for your departure. He has an understanding with your coachman. I saw them conversing in the area about noon.'

"It was late, and I proposed to return home. Montague and his wife wished me to pass the

night with them. 'But first,' said Charles, 'we will amuse ourselves a little with the spy.' He took pistols from a drawer, went out by the basement, and returned in a few moments to the study, where Mrs. M. and I were sitting, driving in the spy before him.

"'Now, Sir,' said Charles, 'sit you down and tell your story. Out with it. You are employed by Bonsall and Mohler to watch this lady.'

"The man grinned, nodded, and seated himself quietly near the door, much in the manner of a cat preparing to run.

"'This person,' said Montague to us, 'is a volunteer detective, employed chiefly by weak-minded husbands and jealous wives. You can not insult him. He will voluntarily expose his person to any degree of violence short of maiming or murder. Kicks he pays no heed to. He passes in public for a sporting gentleman, and is, in fact and name, a Vampire. By-the-by, Mr. Crag,' said he, changing his tone, 'you may have forgotten me. You were employed, if I remember right, in the Parkins murder case, were you not?'

"'Yes, Sir. You were counsel for defense.'

"'Exactly. I think you followed me to my lodgings several times at night, and were shot through the leg for taking so much unnecessary trouble.'

"'Yes.'

"'Well, Mr. Crag, I caution you that the same, or a worse matter, will happen to you again, if you continue to watch persons entering my house. I may fire upon you.'

"'The law will protect me.'

"'Not at all. You watch my house; you are not a qualified policeman; you are consequently either a burglar or a conspirator. I can shoot you if I wish. You have admitted that Bonsall and Mohler employed you to watch this lady. Go to the table and write a full testimonial of the fact, or take a lodging in the Tombs to-night. Write dates, facts—all in full.'

"The Vampire did not evince any emotion, but refused to write. After some hesitation, however, he made a general confession of his motives in following and watching myself. It was to the effect that, on the 20th of October, of the year 185–, Raymond Bonsall, lawyer, of New York, and Gustav Mohler had sent for him to the house of said Mohler, and had there proposed to him to watch, follow, and dog the wife of Mohler, at all hours of the day and night, and to employ others to do the same, for the space of one month from that date; and to report all her actions, movements, speech, disguises, the names and occupations of all persons with whom she associated—in short, every particular of her conduct and life; for which they were to give the sum of twenty dollars a day, the half to Crag, and the rest to coachmen and assistants in his employ; that he had been occupied in this work ten days, and had each day given in a written account of his espionage. Crag rose to depart.

"'You will see Bonsall and Mohler to-night,' said Montague, 'and report to them what has happened.'

"'That,' said Crag, 'is impossible—they are out of town.'

"'Good; then you can not. Please observe that I shall be in possession of Bonsall's papers within a month. If any of yours are found among them you will be terribly handled.'

"'How?' said Crag, anxiously.

"'I will have you up in the Parkins affair, and some other little matters—the burglary in D Street, for instance, 25th of June.'

"The Vampire's impassible countenance relaxed into a horrible smile. 'I see, Mr. Montague, that you are watching me. I will go; but let *her* look out. Bonsall has made up his mind; and he's got Swipes—a better man than I; and if they can't convict her of something they'll have her poisoned. Bonsall's a better man than you, Mr. Montague, and he's got the papers.'

"'What papers?'

"'Proofs against the lady. All kinds. A *will*, for instance.'

"'A forgery?'

"'In course; but you can't prove it.'

"'How came you to know that?'

"'Well, you know Bonsall wanted to get rid of Mohler and marry his widow, years ago. He was afraid to go the common way to work; so he encouraged him in working at his lunatic notions—some kind of machinery that no man ever heard of, thinking it would kill or craze him; but Mohler succeeded, and Bonsall had to lay a new plan. He furnished Mohler with the money to repay the loan he made from his wife. A German chemist Mohler has in his laboratory told me this. He can't speak English, but understands it, and I speak German. Well, Bonsall and Mohler have got a quantity of written evidence against Madam Mohler—a volume of it—all in writing—conversations of hers with some person who visits her room.'

"At this point of Crag's narrative Montague's innocent wife looked at me with a sorrowing and pitiful expression. I paid no heed to it.

"'With your permission, Mr. Montague,' said I, 'let me continue the examination.'

"He acquiesced.

"'Mr. Crag,' said I, 'do you believe that I conversed with any person in my room?'

"'It's a common thing, marm, and it might be, for aught I know. Mohler believes it; but he is awfully perplexed to know who it was you were talking with. I believe Bonsall knew who it was, but he would not tell Mohler.'

"'How came you to be so minutely informed?'

"'Why, marm, you must know every profession has its ins and outs; it isn't enough to earn money, you must know how to get it when you have earned it; that is more than half. Now, when I am employed by any party to watch another I watches both; else I couldn't make it pay. I spend half my time watching Mohler and Bonsall, when they suppose I am after you. I thought there was small chance of a convic-

tion, and I wanted to threaten Mohler and Bonsall for conspiracy, and make 'em pay a bonus at the end of the business, afore they gev up.'

"'Well?'

"'The German chemist, you must know, marm, agreed to divide with me, and will be ready with his evidence when he finds there is nothing more to be made out of Mohler, who agreed to give him a share in the invention, but was obliged to sell the chemist's share to Bonsall.'

"'What is the invention?'

"'I don't know—never could find out. These Germans are naterally mysterious about mechanical and chemical matters, though they'll tell any thing else.'

"'What was the real purpose of Bonsall?'

"'He hated you because you had slighted him. He has forged a will of old Bertaldy, your father. The chemist helped him to do that. This forged will leaves every thing to Mohler instead of yourself, and Mohler has mortgaged all in advance to Bonsall for funds to carry on the work. The chemist says that the invention is worth more than the telegraph; that Mohler is the greatest genius in the world or that ever lived; but, he says, a man without any feelings, marm, only bitter jealous—'

"'Had Mohler a hand in the forging of the will?'

"'No, that was Bonsall's work; but the other knew of it. He thought that the property should have been left to him to accomplish the "great and beneficial work;" so he called it, meaning the invention. You, madam, he said, spent money in frivolities; he, in doing good to the world.'

"'Did he or Bonsall converse about my death?'

"'No, marm; it is Mohler, I believe, who is to be made away with, if any one — not you; and then Bonsall would find a means to make you marry himself.'

"'What means?' interposed Montague.

"'Why, the common means, I suppose. He'd scare the lady into it. He'd have a pile of evidence against her to hurt her reputation, and women, you know, like the madam, are afraid of that. And there is the forged will in his possession, leaving all the property to Mohler, and Bonsall holding claims and notes covering the estate. In fact, he'd be sure to do it, Sir.'

"During the conversation I had written, in phonographic characters, all that had been said. Coming forward, I laid my note-book on the table. 'Mr. Crag,' I said, 'the testimony you have given is written here, word for word. I shall copy it in full, and I expect you to sign your name to it.'

"'Not without pay, marm,' replied the Vampire, rising.

"'You will remember,' said Montague, 'that these ladies are witnesses to your demand.'

"'Black-mail, eh!' chuckled the Vampire. 'I never testify unless I am paid, and I never sign.'

"'It is unnecessary,' said I, coming before Crag. 'You are one of three engaged in a double conspiracy against Mr. Mohler and myself for life, or money, or both.'

"'I will dispense with the signature,' interposed Montague; 'but you must leave the city immediately, or suffer arrest for conspiracy.'

"'It's a good job,' said the Vampire, reflectively, 'and I don't like to leave it. Can't you make an offer?—say fifty dollars on account, marm—and I'll keep dark for a month.'

"'I'm afraid not.'

"'In that case I can't go.'

"Montague looked at his wife; she pulled a bell-rope. The sight of Montague's pistol, which he cocked and held ready, kept the Vampire from moving, though he was near the door. A servant entered.

"'John, go to Captain Melton, and tell him to send me a good officer.'

"Fifteen minutes of silence followed, during which time the Vampire neither moved nor spoke. The officer entered, recognized Crag, and took him away.

"The movement of our lives is a tide that floats us on toward an unknown destiny. This we call Providence. It is doubtless the will of God working in events and circumstances. It is rather like the motion of the great globe, moving silent and irresistible through the void of space. We struggle and fret with trifles, while Divinity wafts us onward. All is for the development of the soul; to strengthen, expand, and purify its powers. Grandeur will come hereafter; in this life there is only a nursing germ of goodness and power.

"These thoughts came first into my mind while I sat looking at the miserable face of the Vampire, waiting to be taken away like a rat in a cage. Anger, terror, revenge passed away like a cloud. I hated not Mohler, nor feared the wiles of the demoniacal Bonsall. Montague wished me to remain with him, using his house as an asylum. I thanked him, but declined the offer. He feared for my life. I knew too well the weakness of my enemies to entertain such fears.

"Montague imaged to himself, in the secret invention, some unheard-of infernal machine which would take life quietly. He believed that the metallic mirrors fixed in the ceilings of my apartments were a portion of the machinery. I promised that I would not sleep until the mystery of the mirrors had been explained.

"It was the third hour of the morning when I reached home, and entered, as usual, by the side-door of the garden. My servants were junketing in the kitchen. On Mohler's side of the house all was dark, closed, and silent. The conspirators were absent. I passed in unobserved, changed my dress, and went up stairs to the rooms above mine. The doors were locked. The door of the German chemist's room opposite stood ajar. A gas-jet, turned low, as the occupant had left it, guided me to a table. In a small side-drawer were several pass-keys of un-

usual shape. With one of these I succeeded in entering the machine-room, over my own. After closing the shutters and lighting the burners, I looked around me with a novel sensation of intense curiosity, not unmingled with fear.

"The apartment was of the full depth and width of the house; all the partitions having been removed, and the floors above supported by posts of wood. Over the centre of each room of my apartments, and consequently over each of the three metallic mirrors, stood a table about six feet square, of the usual height, solidly framed, and supporting pieces of machinery—a combination of clock-work, galvanic engines, wires coiled myriads of times around poised, pendent, or vibrating magnets; a microcosm of mechanical powers which it were impossible to describe. The three tables were connected by decuple systems of copper wires suspended from the ceiling by glass rods, and associated with a gang of batteries, sixty in number, arranged in double tiers along the side of the room, ten paces in length. From these came out a sickening fume of acid corrosion, the death and decay of metals. From these, it seemed to me, an electric power might be drawn equal to the lightning in destructive force.

"A shuddering horror seized and shook me as I gazed around upon this vast and gloomy apparatus, which some secret intimation told me had been accumulated and connected here to work for me either death or ruin; but the terror was momentary, and again I addressed myself with courage to the investigation.

"The floor of the apartment had been covered first with moss, and then with thick felt, which deadened the sound of footsteps. Around each of the tables, from their edges, depended threefold curtains of green baize. I raised one of these curtains, and the light penetrating beneath, revealed the upper surface of the metallic mirror, perfectly polished, of which the lower was a part of the ceiling of my rooms. Points of platina wire, as fine and pliable as spider-webs—perhaps a hundred in number—touched the mirror in a certain regular order, the surface upon which they rested being divided into the same number of mathematical figures, representing, as it seemed to me, the system of vibrations of the plate. The wires were connected above with the complicated magnetic machinery which rested on the table. The same arrangement appeared under each of the three tables.

"Equidistant from the tables, and nearly in the centre of the apartment, stood a wide desk, or writing-table, on which rested another piece of machinery, less complex than the others, but connected with all of them by a system of wires. This was evidently a telegraphic apparatus for the transmission of signals generated by the larger machinery. On the desk lay a record book, and a card marked with phonographic signs, for the use of the operator, corresponding with others upon the signal-wheel, and which were marked by a needle-point on a coil of paper, as in the ordinary telegraph.

"Facing the seat of the operator, on the table, stood a clock marking hours, minutes, and seconds.

"I seated myself at the desk, placed the record before me, and opened it at hazard. It was a journal of months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, and even seconds. There were three handwritings, giving the dates and moments of making entries. In these I recognized the alternate work of Mohler, Bonsall, and the German.

"Although the writings were phonographic, representing only the elementary sounds of the human voice, I read them easily.

"I had but just begun the perusal of the record when the touch of a cold hand upon my shoulder, like the fingers of a corpse, caused me to spring from my seat with a cry.

"It was Bonsall. He stepped forward as I rose. The short figure of this man, my persecutor, in his slouched hat and traveling cloak, with the eternal saturnine smile, and eyes twinkling savagely under black projecting brows, reminded me of all I had read of conspirators. His face, at that moment of horror, seemed to me like that of a vulture; the livid skin clung to the cheek-bones, and the lines of the mouth were cruel and cold.

"'I should not have returned here to-night,' he said, 'but for an accident. I was not so far distant but that a messenger could reach me with information of Crag's arrest by our friend Montague. He has, of course, betrayed every thing?'

"'Yes,' I replied, reassured by the quiet manner of Bonsall, 'I am acquainted with the particulars of your conspiracy to destroy Mohler and myself.'

"'Are you not afraid to confess the knowledge, alone with me in this solitary place?'

"'Are you a murderer?'

"'Alas! Madam, it is you who are the destroyer. I fear you now as one who controls my destiny, and can blast my good name and fortune with a word.'

"A long, deep sigh of relief escaped silently from me. I no longer feared Bonsall. He saw his advantage and hastened to improve it.

"'Montague is my own and your husband's enemy. We employed a spy to observe him. The spy endeavored to extort money from your terrors. Lying is his vocation. Reasonable persons should not confide in the assertions of a Vampire. Cease to fear and believe him and he is powerless.'

"'Mohler's first enemy,' I answered, 'is his own unnatural jealousy. You may, perhaps, claim a second place. But we need not speak of that at present.'

"'Were not you tempted by an equal jealousy to penetrate the privacy of this apartment?'

"'Beware, Sir, how you trespass upon my hospitality. Your presence in this house is merely tolerated. Retire. If you have any repentance or apology to submit, let it be in the light of day and in the presence of witnesses, *as heretofore*.'

"A flash of rage lighted up the noble but vulturine face. It was momentary. He assumed an attitude of polite humility, bowed low, and seemed willing to leave me, as I desired, but hesitated.

"'Speak,' I said, quickly, 'if you have any thing to add: I wish to be alone.'

"'Forget, if only for a moment,' said Bonsall, doubling his effort to appear humble and repentant—'forget your enmity, while I explain to you the uses of this mysterious apparatus. As a piece of mechanism it is the grandest achievement of modern science, and besides that,' he added, in a significant tone, 'you have an interest in the matter. It was made partly for you.'

"There was a cold, malicious impudence in the expression, 'It was partly for you,' that made me shrink; but I remembered my promise to the Montagues, and allowed the wily conspirator to engage my attention by a lucid and wonderfully condensed and simple explanation of the machinery. I had read and seen enough of chemistry and mechanics to comprehend all.

"'It was you,' he said, 'who suggested the idea of the invention, though you were not conscious of it at the time. Five years ago, in the winter of the fifth year after your marriage, Mohler became intimately acquainted with me. The following summer he disclosed to me his suspicion of your fidelity. He knew that your affection for him had declined into a temperate and sisterly friendship, and he believed that you had given your heart to a man of more brilliancy and personal power than himself.'

"'Whom did he suspect?'

"'I am his counselor, and dare not violate confidence. His suspicions were soon after transferred to a person much more innocent.'

"'Yourself?'

"'Yes. I own that, at first, I was deeply impressed by your beauty and intelligence; but I soon learned that these were defended by your virtue against ordinary, or even extraordinary, temptations.'

"'The "extraordinary" being the seductive manners and the wit of Mr. Bonsall.'

"'The same, Madam,' replied the lawyer, coldly.

"'Men of genius, Mr. Bonsall, are said to be the best judges of their own ability.'

"'Even when it is a secret from the rest of the world. I admire the sarcasm; but let me proceed. You were reading aloud, to a circle of *savans*, a chapter from a French journal, reviving, with the vivacity and elegance peculiar to the scientific literature of France, the old discoveries of Chladni, who found that musical vibrations imparted to tablets of glass or metal caused particles of sand, or finer powders, which he strewed upon their surfaces, to assume a regular distribution, dancing and arranging themselves, like sentient beings, to the sound of music. The hand which held the pamphlet was a delicate, a beautiful hand, sparkling with diamonds, and blushing with the same intellectual enthusiasm which inspired a melodious voice that warbled, more than it uttered, the mellow periods of the author. The face, the form, the lips, the eyes, the fair rounded arm, and the grace of attitude—much more than the interest of what you read—inspired your auditors with admiration. Mohler alone suffered in that circle: jealousy devoured his heart. The admiring *savans* listened with delight while you spoke of the atoms of Chladni and of Epicurus, and led us, by a ravishing disquisition, from the cold, angular ideas of mechanics into the rich sunlight of poetry and philosophy. While the dancing atoms of Chladni became to me the cause of passionate admiration, they suggested to your jealous spouse a means, as he conceived, of proving your suspected infidelity, even in its least and slightest expressions.'

"'Miserable man!' I exclaimed, with an expression of equal pity and scorn.

"Bonsall smiled furtively, and continued:

"'Mohler found it necessary to have an adviser and a confidant. I became both. Yes, Madam, I confess it. An irresistible passion seized upon my heart. I burned to separate you, by all and any means, even the most criminal, from him, that I might induce you to become the wife of a man who could better appreciate you. You seemed to me a woman worthy of my highest ambition. I was ready to devote my existence to the hope of one day possessing you.

"'Ah! beware, Madam, of despising me. You rejected my involuntary admiration. You made me, at last, an enemy; but,' he added, quietly, 'I am now repentant, and desire to become your friend.'

"Without waiting for my reply, Bonsall, throwing off his cloak, directed my attention first to a broad plate of thin metal suspended from the ceiling by threads of silk. Over this he strewed fine dust from a woolen bag, and then, as he drew a violin bow over its edge, I saw the dust gather and arrange itself in geometrical forms, consonant with the tone imparted.

"'See,' said he, '*The* ATOMS *of Chladni*. They mark the tone; but the plate, as you well know, has become electrified by vibration. The mirrors of your ceiling are each a vibrating plate. From the upper surface of these rise wire conductors of the electric power generated by the vibration. This is faint and feeble at first, but, by passing through metallic threads coiled a thousand times round small magnets—each geometrical division of the plate corresponding with a magnet and with a radical sound of the human voice—it has power to connect and disconnect the keys of the batteries ten thousand times more powerful, giving motion to the wheels and pendulums, which, in their turn, move the needles of the register—with a slow or swift motion—piercing more or fewer points in this strip of paper, from which, by such wonderful means, has been read off and written every clearly articulated sound uttered in your apartments.'

"Not until that moment did the horrible reality flash through my heart, attended by a thrill of hatred and disgust as though given by the touch of a serpent. Hatred for Bonsall and withering scorn of my wretched husband took full possession of me.

"After a brief silence, during which I succeeded in mastering the violence of these emotions: 'This record, then,' I said, 'is the result of your labors?'

"'Yes,' he answered, with the old furtive smile playing about the cruel mouth; 'in that book your most secret and confidential conversations are recorded.'

"'Stolen property,' I said, taking up the book, 'goes back to the right owner.'

"'Ah!' said he, laughing, 'we have a duplicate, a copy to which you are welcome; but this one,' snatching the volume with a slight of hand, 'belongs to me.'

"'A gentleman!' I said, with I know not what sneering addition, for the littleness of the action inspired me with contempt.

"'A fine word, Madam, properly used—counterpart of the word "lady;" both significant of many virtues; and among those I class purity of mind and conduct. Look,' said he, placing and opening the volume before me. 'Read for yourself.'

"The day of the entry was Saturday of the week previous, one hour and five minutes past midnight. I read under this date the transcript of a conversation between two lovers, one of whom deplored the folly and jealousy of a silly husband; the other urged an elopement. Then followed signs of inarticulate sounds.

"Immediately after, dated at ten in the morning of the next day, was a conversation of mine with Marian, my dressing maid, concerning certain garments which she asked from me. I remembered the conversation.

"'There are ninety distinct entries of the record,' said Bonsall, closing the book, 'and of these, more than twenty are conversations between the same pair of affectionate lovers. All must have taken place in your room; and please observe, that whenever these interesting conversations have occurred you were at home and in your room.'

"'Either your machinery, or yourself, Mr. Bonsall, is a contemptible liar. I confess the ingenuity of the contrivance; but it seems to me that half a dozen perjured witnesses would have been a much less expensive and troublesome apparatus. Have you no better or more reasonable testimony than this? You are a lawyer; so am not I.'

"'It would be a profound gratification—yes, a happiness to me,' he answered, 'could you establish your innocence.'

"'I will do it here, and now. Put your machinery in order for its work. The ninety-first entry will explain the others.'

"The lawyer hesitated; but seeing no change of countenance or movement on my part, but only a certain resolute passivity, he proceeded—maintaining his *rôle* of disinterested friend—to adjust the telegraphic machinery and connect the galvanic apparatus in a continued chain. He may have been five minutes occupied in this manner, during which time a low murmur, like the frothing of the sea, rose from the three thousand couplets of electrified metals, eroded by the biting fluids of the troughs; then touching a heavy pendulum on each of the three tables, and communicating life to the apparatus by winding a powerful spring, he stood aside, and asked me what I would have him do next.

"Without replying, I raised the thick baize curtain which concealed the metal mirror under the larger of the tables, and, stooping down, uttered, slowly, a few distinct words. The clicking of the needle showed that they had been recorded, as I spoke, on the slip of paper at the telegraph desk.

"'It appears to me,' said I, glancing at the scowling, troubled face of my enemy, 'that you do not at this moment enjoy so greatly the proof of my innocence, and—pardon me if I add—of your own villainy. Your villainous machine records words spoken in this room, above the mirror, as clearly as though they had been uttered below it, in my chamber. The enamored conversations that occupy so many pages of this volume, resembling a poor novel, have been composed by yourself; proving, Sir, the just equality of your literary talent and your virtue.'

"The dark eyes of Bonsall flashed malignant fires. Shuddering and shrugging with impotent rage, he began pacing with heavy strides, his hands clasped nervously behind him, back and forth the long room. Twice, as he passed me, he threw deadly glances. I wished to retire, but would not. There is something awfully attractive in the exhibition of destructive passions. My eyes followed the man, who at that moment contemplated every possibility of violence, with a fixed regard of terror and curiosity. I felt that we were acting a part, but the actors were sincere, and thought nothing of the possible scorn or applause that might follow the lifting of the curtain.

"At length utterance returned to him, and he gave vent to his accumulated rage in a curse. Raising his right arm, he cursed me as he passed before me, with the addition of such words as the man uses when he would destroy all possibility of reconciliation with the woman. The nervous arm, raised to enforce the language, in falling broke a link of the strong connecting-wire looped along from column to column. The surging murmurs of the batteries, the whirl of the magnets, and the click of the heavy pendulums, ceased on the instant. He stopped in his way.

"'I see,' said he, 'that you, such as you are, have the advantage of me in self-command.'

"With a deep sigh he expelled the tumult from his breast.

"'As easily,' he continued, 'as I can repair the slight injury my foolish rage has inflicted

upon this thread of metal, so easily can I mend the mischief you have brought upon me by your discovery.'

"When Bonsall uttered this threat I lost all fear. Contempt made me laugh.

"'There was a time,' he continued, 'when I loved you with a passion equal to my present hate.'

"'Pray, Sir,' I said, 'may I inquire the cause of this heroical hatred?'

"'Is it nothing to have suffered, year after year, the pangs of incurable love, until every thought, every action was absorbed in that one grief? If the passion soured into hate—'

"'I gave you no invitation to indulge such folly.'

"'True, you gave none. Becoming daily more beautiful, more lovely; as the days wore on, estranged more and more from your miserable husband—'

"'Not a word of that, Sir! You were my accuser.'

"'Yes, I own it. It was a crime—'

"'Crime upon crime, Raymond. First, an unlawful passion; then treachery to a friend; then hatred of the object unlawfully loved; then futile conspiracy to defame, to rob. Do you call that *love?* Oh, fool!'

"'It was not I who planned it; the wretch, Mohler, a mean, suspicious creature, cowardly, an intellect without a heart—it was he, Maria, who devised your ruin. He called on me to help him.'

"'And you answered the call?'

"Bonsall was silent.

"'There is no excuse. Your nature is evil. What you call love is an unholy passion that would sacrifice every thing to itself.'

"'Would not the highest virtue do the same, Maria?'

"'You are more subtle than I. Your subtlety of intellect has destroyed you.'

"'Mixed motives. I loved you, nevertheless; ay, worshiped—that is the word; I love you still. Bid me die, and I will.'

"'Love!'

"'Yes, deep, absolute. It was your silence, your avoidance, aversion, that ruined me. Now I can speak freely with you, and I no longer hate.'

"In every woman's heart (surely in mine) there is a degree of compassion and forgiveness for those who suffer by the effects of love. It is God's will that it should be so; else all women would fly from men. Great as my abhorrence was—thoroughly as I despised the baseness of Raymond—an old secret preference, a long-suppressed feeling, crept up into my throat and choked me.

"'Raymond,' I exclaimed, with an accent, I fear, not wholly harsh, 'you have chosen a base and crooked path to the favor of a woman who was once proud to call you friend. During the last two of seven tedious years you have not acted the part even of a friend—much less—'

"'It was the accursed silence,' he exclaimed, eagerly. 'We should have been more honest.'

"'*We*, Raymond?'

"'Yes, *we*. You loved me once.'

"I had gone too far to recede. My courage rose. Prudery would have been cruel and absurd. Could I, then, terminate this long career of crime by a simple explanation?

"'A word more,' I said, 'before we end this conference—which, I hope, may save us both. Tell me for what purpose you conspired to deprive me of my fortune? That was the act, not of a despairing lover, but of an unprincipled sensualist. Why this complicated and cumbrous mass of conspiracy against me and mine?'

"'Judge me as you will,' he answered. 'I have told you all. I would have restored all that I had taken from Mohler to you. I wished to load you with obligations. See, here are all the evidences.'

"He opened a drawer of the desk, drew forth a package of papers, and placed them in my hand. I accepted the gift. It was prudent to do so.

"'Destroy these papers,' he continued, eagerly, 'and the work of infamy is undone.'

"'I appreciate the motive, but how can I forget the crime?'

"'By extending pardon to the criminal.'

"Oh! my friend, when the sun-rays of mercy spread over the soul their warm and tender light, are we to be blamed if we forget the strict laws of social propriety?

"'Come near to me,' I said.

"He came and stood before me, with downcast eyes.

"'If I will forget the past, will you forget it? Will you leave me now forever, and let silence cover all?'

"'Death—death! I could not outlive the separation. Though it must come, while I live let me live near you!' he exclaimed, turning away, pale and convulsed.

"'See,' he said, taking up one end of the broken wire, 'this poor mechanism is like your favor: while the wires are united—that is, your good-will, your pity—it gives life, power, hope; the strong currents of the soul flow on, and the man is powerful, useful, happy. Without this he is only a self-corroding machine. Pardon me,' he added, while a blush mantled his features, 'if my long study of these magnetic laws has suggested an illustration that may seem mean and trivial to you; but the great laws work in souls as in matter. Give me, then, your favor, or—'

"He touched, as he spoke, the other depending piece of the broken wire. A murmurous sound arose from the batteries. The pent-up, concentrated lightnings rushed from the wires through his frame, and he fell *dead* like one who has dropped suddenly asleep.

"I went to him, and regarded for a time, in silent awe, the upturned face of the dead. Ah!

what a terrible anguish is compassion! It is the grief of God. Kneeling by the side of Raymond Bonsall, slain by a sudden, unlooked-for vengeance — the work, inadvertent, of his own hand—all the past fled away, and I thought only of the ages of remorse that, in another world, would punish the repentant but malformed, misguided soul. The tears were falling freely from my eyes as I knelt by the dead, when I heard behind me a step that I knew to be Mohler's.

"As I arose I saw the sordid figure of the German chemist creeping behind. When he saw me, and at a glance divined the nature of the accident that had befallen Bonsall, he shrank away and fled. As for Mohler, he could hardly clear his sense sufficiently to comprehend the calamity that had fallen upon himself. His jaw dropped; he fumbled with his hands. I felt no pity for him—why, I can not tell.

"'Maria! What has happened to Bonsall? How did you get in here? Oh! I suppose you understand all now?'

"'I do.'

"'Bonsall is dead!' he murmured. 'Yes, I see the wires are broken. Three thousand pairs of plates—it would kill an ox! You say you understand the affair. Hum! You have read the evidence against you in the book?'

"'Enough to know that Bonsall, who lies here dead, is the author of these infamous conversations attributed to me.'

"'How—how?'

"'Voices above the mirror are recorded as well as those spoken beneath.'

"'I never once thought of that!'

"'You? You, then, are not an accomplice?'

"'No,' he said, hesitating, and placing his hand to his forehead, 'Indeed it troubles me much. Let us go to your room, Maria, and we will talk it over.'

"An insipid, futile smile played over his features. The suddenness of the discovery how he had been duped by Bonsall—the probable loss, in one moment, of wife, honor, friend, all the springs of a good life — smote through and through, and wounded to death the poor brain. I led him away like a child. But why did I feel no pity—none, ever?

"Mohler's lunacy, as you know, was permanent. To the last moment his brain worked upon inventions."

Two silver tears, moved gently from her large eyes by the remonstrance of a smile, coursed quietly down the cheeks of the beautiful narrator. Ah! soul full of great courage and compassion, it was with thee as with the king who did not change countenance when he saw his son led to execution, but wept grievously when a poor drunken bottle-companion went to his death.

It was a history known only to a few. I first have given it to the world. Under the names and dates I have assumed, a few only will recognize the real persons and events.

CARLSBAD ON CRUTCHES.

I.

IT was a fine morning in the month of May that I embarked on board the steamer *Vanderbilt*, of five thousand three hundred and odd tons measurement, with walking-beam attachment, to sail from New York, at reduced rates, baggage at the risk of the owner, and so forth, bound for certain ports to be hereafter casually mentioned. Somewhere about noon the mails came in bags, carefully disregarded by the post-office official in charge, on the box of the huge open wagon, and shortly after they were pitched in bulk on to the deck. Then there was infinite but polite yells for friends of passengers to go on shore, which they did; then a sturdy sailor or two was seen squatting beside the stanchion piles of the pier, quietly but skillfully cutting the seizings to the shore fasts; and presently, by some well-understood signal, those sailors shoved the bights of the hawsers clear, and a seething current of foam told us—had we not seen the giant arms, or legs rather, of the walking-beams in motion—that the wheels were beginning to turn.

Then the crowd on the pier became excited—particularly those individuals perched at imminent personal peril on top of shaky posts, who, perhaps, to show their regret at our departure, began to deluge us with a horizontal tropical shower of over-ripe oranges. It was a queer way of exhibiting grief, but fearful of worse treatment, we esteemed it a compliment and remained on the defensive. Half a minute, however, carried us beyond the reach of those missiles, and even out of ear-shot of the news-boys, when, gliding out upon the Hudson, the steamer took a majestic sweep, the gong struck in a clear, liquid tone, once, twice, thrice. Hereupon a pause; the great beams gave a noiseless, hesitating motion, then the rods rose and fell to their utmost depth in their oily throats and beds of steam, the water flashed in rainbow tints from the guards, and we were off. Before long we went rushing with race-horse speed past the Hook, the low sand spits, hummocks, and beacons seeming to spin round in circles as we passed; then out into the broad Atlantic, and as the sun sank behind us the blue hills of Navesink faded away like a dreamy line along the horizon.

We had about three hundred companions of voyage on board, speaking various dialects, and many of them of desultory habits. The Teutonic race, however, prevailed. They wore asphaltum seal rings on their forefingers, ate voraciously, and in the calm and balmy days of the ocean denounced the grub, never having, perhaps, partaken of such luxurious edible matter in their lives before; but when the sea raged they confined themselves to salads, abandoning strong food and suffering great anguish of mind, to say nothing of the pangs of stomach, in not being able to devour the entire worth of their passage money.

There were likewise a good many of the Hi-