

light, and play on, but very often don't think much of what I'm playing. it is a sad state for a man to get into, is it not and Westray could not traverse the statement. even in the church, Mr Sharnall went on, I don't care to practise much in the evening by myself. it used to be all right when Cullow was there to blow for me. he is a daft fellow, but still was some sort of company; but now the water engine is put in, I feel lonely there, and don't care to go as often as I used. something made me tell Lord Blandamer how his water engine contrived to make me frightened, and he said he should have to come up to the loft himself sometimes to keep me company. well, let me know the first evening you want to practise, Westray said, and I will come, too, and sit in the loft. take care of yourself, and you will soon grow out of all these fancies, and laugh at them as much as I do. and he feigned a smile. but it was late at night; he was high strung and nervous himself, and the fact that Mr Sharnall should have been brought to such a pitiable state of mental instability depressed him. the report that the bishop was going to lunch with Mr Sharnall on the day of the confirmation soon spread in Cullerne. Miss Joliffe had told Mr Joliffe the pork butcher, as her cousin, and Mr Joliffe, as churchwarden, had told Canon Parkyn. it was the second time within a few weeks that a piece of important news had reached the rector at second hand. but on this occasion he experienced little of the chagrin that had possessed him when Lord Blandamer made the great offer to the restoration fund through Westray. he did not feel resentment against Mr Sharnall; the affair was of too solemn an importance for any such personal and petty sentiments to find a place. any act of any bishop was vicariously an act of God, and to chafe at Brown hair; her beautiful hands were as white as her forehead hands that moved as if they themselves were living and inspired creatures with a soul and language of their own. when she folded them devoutly together it seemed as if they were putting up a mute prayer. she was pliant in form as a young palm tree when it bends, and withal she had a noble dignity, even on the occasion when I first saw her. it was a hideous spot, the revolting prison hall of Rhyakotis. she wore only a threadbare robe that had once been costly, and a foul old woman followed her about as a greedy rat might pursue an imprisoned dove and loaded her with abusive language. she answered not a word, but large heavy tears flowed slowly over her pale cheeks and down on to her hands, which she kept crossed on her bosom. grief and anguish spoke from her eyes, but no vehement passion deformed the regularity of her features. she knew how to endure even ignominy with grace, and what words the raging old woman poured out upon her I had long since been baptized, and all the prisons were open to me, the rich menander, the brother in law of the prefect those prisons in which under Maximin so many Christians were destined to be turned from the true faith. but she did not belong to us. her eye met mine, and I signed my forehead with the cross, but she did not respond to the sacred sign. the guards led away the old woman, and she drew back into a dark corner, sat down, and covered her face with her hands. a wondrous sympathy for the hapless woman had taken possession of my soul; I felt as if she belonged to me, and I to her, and I believed in her, even when the turnkey had told me in coarse language that distance there was a large triangle of candles flickering on the main altar, was not certain whether he had seen them earlier. perhaps they had only just been lit. church staff creep silently as part of their job, you don't notice them. when happened to turn round he also saw a tall, stout candle attached to a column not far behind him. it was all very pretty, but totally inadequate to illuminate the pictures which were usually left in the darkness of the side altars, and seemed to make the darkness all the deeper. it was discourteous of the Italian not to come but it was also sensible of him, there would have been nothing to see, they would have had to content themselves with seeking out a few pictures with his electric pocket torch and looking at them one small part at a time. went over to a nearby side chapel to see what they could have hoped for, he went up a few steps to a low marble railing and leant over it to look at the altar picture by the light of his torch. the eternal light hung disturbingly in front of it. the first thing that partly saw and partly guessed at was a large knight in armour who was shown at the far edge of the painting. he was leaning on his sword that he had stuck into the naked ground in