

me now you are sure its quite safe, said the gunmaker. i ought to ask you that, westray rejoined with a smile. do you mean it may go off accidentally in my pocket oh no, its safe enough that way, said the gunmaker. it wont go off unless you pull the trigger. and he loaded the four barrels, measuring out the powder and shot carefully, and ramming in the wads. youll be wanting more powder and shot than this, i suppose, he said. very likely, rejoined the architect, but i can call for that later. he found a heavy country fly waiting for him at lytchett, the little wayside station which was sometimes used by people going to fording. it is a seven mile drive from the station to the house, but he was so occupied in his own reflections, that he was conscious of nothing till the carriage pulled up at the entrance of the park. here he stopped for a moment while the lodge keeper was unfastening the bolt, and remembered afterwards that he had noticed the elaborate iron work, and the nebuly coat which was set over the great gates. he was in the long avenue now, and he wished it had been longer, he wished that it might never end; and then the fly stopped again, and lord blandamer on horseback was speaking to him through the carriage window. there was a seconds pause, while the two men looked each other directly in the eyes, and in that look all doubt on either side was ended. westray felt as if he had received a staggering blow as he came face to face with naked truth, and lord blandamer read westrays thoughts, and knew the extent of his discovery. lord blandamer was the first to speak. i am glad to see you again, he said with perfect courtesy, and am very much obliged to you for taking this trouble in home on earth. there could be no suffering here; who could cry here, who could be sorrowful, who could die here a new train of thought forced itself upon her. she was still so young, and yet she was as familiar with the idea of death as she was with life; for whenever she had happened to tell any minister of her creed that she was an orphan and a slave, and deeply sad and sorrowful, the joys of eternity in paradise had always been described to her for her consolation, and it was in hopes of heaven that her visionary nature found such a modicum of comfort as might suffice to keep the young artist soul from despair. and now it struck her that it must be hard, very hard to die, in the midst of all this splendor. living here must be a foretaste of the joys of paradise and in the next world, among the angels of heaven, in the presence of the saviour would it not be a thousand times more beautiful even than this she shuddered, for, sojourning here, she was no longer to be counted as one of the poor and humble sufferers to whom christ had promised the kingdom of heaven here she was one of the rich, who had nothing to hope for after death. she pushed the peaches away with a feeling of oppression, and closed her eyes that she might no longer see all these perishable splendors and sinful works of the heathen, which pandered only to the senses. she longed to remain miserable and poor on earth, that she might rejoin her parents and dwell with them eternally. to her it was not a belief but a certainty that her father and mother were dwelling in heaven, and she had often felt moved to pray that she might die and be reunited to them; but she must not die yet, for her little brother still needed her care. the kind intimates, bid her stoop, and gave her a kiss, saying kindly: you are a good brave girl. fidelity to your friends is pleasing in the sight of the gods, and finds its reward even among men. dada, obeying a happy impulse, threw herself on her knees before the old woman, kissed her hands, and then, sitting on her heels, nestled at her feet. gorgo, however, noticing heres agitation, asked what had happened to them. some monks, herse explained, had followed them on the road hither, had snatched dadas lyre from the slave who was carrying it and pulled the wreath out of her hair. damia was furious as she heard it, and trembled with rage as she railed at the wild hordes who disgraced and desecrated alexandria, the sacred home of the muses; then she began to speak once more of the young captain, marys son, to whom the troupe of singers owed their lives. marcus, said she, is said to be a paragon of chastity. he races in the hippodrome with all the gallants of the town and yet if it is true it is a miracle he shuns women as though he were a priest already. his mother is very anxious that he should become one; but he, by the grace of aphrodite, is the son of my handsome appelles, who, if he had gazed into those blue eyes all the way from rome to alexandria, would have surrendered at mercy; but