

Before this ghastly deed seared my eyes, I was young, buoyant—a girl; in a moment I felt grey and old.

Here is a terrible wrong, cruelty of the most horrible and cowardly kind. I realise that I must deal with it; and, Jean, Jean, I *will* deal with it! but not on the spur of the moment. I must have time—I must give thought, calm, passionless, deliberate thought.

I move farther into the shadow, and wait and watch.

After a few moments of intense silence (the whole Ward is hushed as if by magic), the fiend in a cap and apron turns and moves from the cot. My eyes devour her face—a thin, livid face, narrow nose, compressed lips, and two little, wicked, glinting, colourless eyes, deeply sunk in their sockets, peer through the dim light in search of prey.

Where have I seen that face before and those little murderous eyes?

It is the 10th Thermidor, 1794; four o'clock in the afternoon. I am standing in the Place de la Révolution, at the foot of the scaffold. An immense crowd fills the Rue St. Honoré, the Tuilleries, and the spacious Place. Above the blasphemous imprecations of the mob comes the low, growling, rumble of the tumbrils over

the blood-stained stones of Paris. A ghastly figure stands between us and the sun, his head enveloped in a blood-stained cloth. The executioner tears the bandage from his face; the lower jaw, smashed by his own suicidal hand, drops on his breast. The horror of his yell can be re-echoed only in hell. For some minutes the frightful figure is held up before us; with convulsive agitation the blinking eyelids disclose the little, deep-set, tigerish eyes.

Ah! now I remember.

I remember also, Jean, to my comfort, the words of the *sans culottes*, over the headless trunk, "There is a Supreme Being."

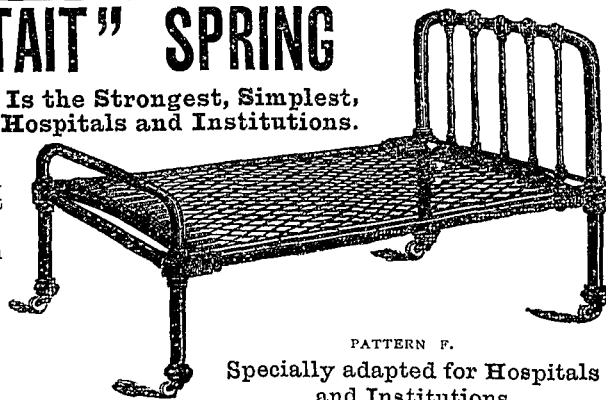
I creep away across the garden to the Nursing Home. I must have air. Am I a coward? Am I conniving at crime? No, Jean; but this horrible cruelty to a *little child in pain* by one in power, is a great festering sore, not to be cleansed or healed by a few words of comfort to one poor lamb, by a "mere Probationer," or by reporting the delinquent to her *patroness* the Matron. Remember, the Matron here has absolute authority; she is a subtle woman, who knows well I am in keen antipathy to all the duplicity and subterfuge whereby she maintains her tyrannical supremacy, and would grasp at the opportunity to dispense with my services. She can discharge

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