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Published/Created Date	1860
Collection Title	Once a week
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EVAN HARRINGTON; OR, HE WOULD BE A GENTLEMAN.

BY GEORGE MEREDITH.



CHAPTER XLII. JULIANA.

THE sick night-light burned steadily in Juliana's chamber. On a couch beside her bed, Caroline lay sleeping, tired with a long watch. Two sentences had been passed on Juliana: one on her heart: one on her body: 'Thou art not loved' and, 'Thou must die.' The frail passion of her struggle against destiny was over with her. Quiet as that quiet Nature was taking her to, her body reposed. Calm as the solitary night-light before her open eyes, her spirit was wasting away. 'If I am not loved, then let me die!' In such a sense she bowed to her fate.

At an hour like this, watching the round of light on the ceiling, with its narrowing inner rings, a sufferer from whom pain has fled, looks back to the shores she is leaving, and would be well with them who walk there. It is false to imagine that schemers and workers in the dark are destitute of the saving gift of conscience. They have

it, and it is perhaps made livelier in them than with easy people; and therefore, they are imperatively spurred to hoodwink it. Hence, their self-seclusion is deep, and endures. They march to their object, and gaining or losing it, the voice that calls to them is the voice of a blind creature, whom any answer, provided that the answer is ready, will silence. And at an hour like this, when finally they snatch their minute of sight on the threshold of black night, their souls may compare with yonder shining circle on the ceiling, which, as the light below gasps for air, contracts, and extends but to mingle with the darkness. They would be nobler, better, boundlessly good to all;—to those who have injured them;—to those whom they have injured. Alas! for any definite deed the limit of their circle is immovable, and they must act within it. The trick they have played themselves imprisons them. Beyond it, they cease to be.