

going to confess that the foregoing obvious moral, being at the expense of people with whom I specially disagree, if it did not exactly reconcile me to the miserable facts that suggested it, at least made me look at them in a less lugubrious light. In the middle of this mood a slight sound disturbed me. I looked round, and there—with her feet on a bed of violets—was poor Metaphora, blowing her nose in her petticoat.

Poor Metaphora! She seemed to reconcile me to everything. She again supplied us at dinner with un-failing amusement, and afterwards Colonel Falkland, when we were smoking our cigarettes together, asked me if I ever had heard this strange creature's history. I had not, and so he told it to me. 'Metaphora was once in prison,' he said. 'Metaphora was tried for murder. Yes,' he went on, 'I can see what I say surprises you. What happened was this. Some years ago, just before we came here, she—she was hardly fifteen—was seduced by a Turkish official. She had twins, and both of the twins were murdered. She was accused of the crime and tried for it, but medical evidence showed her to have been at the time so weak that she could not have committed it—it was a physical impossibility. The real criminal was most probably her mother. Anyhow, the event for the time—and I am sure it is no wonder—quite deranged the poor girl's faculties, and to this day she has never quite recovered them. So the other night,' he added, 'when Mrs. Falkland called her half-witted, what she