

most of all; the very spirit of the dead would surely rise up to forbid all intercourse between them.

Lucia had not boasted of her self-command without reason. A mind naturally strong, and supported both by pride and affection, had enabled her to meet with courage the bitterness and misery of the past weeks. But she was only a girl still, and had not learned to rule her thoughts as well as her looks and words. So if they grew morbid, and her dreary imagination sometimes tortured her uselessly and cruelly, it was no great wonder. She could suffer and be silent; but she had not yet learnt so to rule her spirit as to save herself needless suffering.

Thus the very intensity of her sympathy for Bella only reacted in loathing and horror of herself; and she had begun to try to devise means for carrying out that avoidance of all most nearly connected with the dead, which seemed to her an imperative duty, when she was startled by her mother's voice.

"If it is he," she said—and it seemed that they both shrank from any plainer expression of their thoughts than these vague phrases—"if it is he