

science—cannot enter into the feelings of one who has so long lived in utter forgetfulness of all that is good and holy—of one whose course downwards has been gradual, but sure, until she has, as I have said, reached the very abyss. Nor have I much hope for eternity! How can I, who have given up my youth to the service of Satan, now dare to raise my thoughts to Heaven, or look for the enjoyment of that heavenly kingdom ‘prepared for those who love Him and keep His commandments?’ No, no! nor peace nor rest on earth or in heaven can Margaret Morton hope for. But as my time here is drawing to a close, I must hasten to tell you, in as few words as may be, that is if you know it not already, that she whom you once believed pure as an angel, was even in those young days stained with many sins—foremost in which was deceit—dark, deliberate treachery! You may believe me when I say, that of all my numerous accomplishments, dissimulation was the one on which I most prided myself. Though one of the most artful of human beings, I was enabled to maintain an appearance of unaffected simplicity, which imposed on all my acquaintance. Of this fact you must be well aware, for during the years of our intimacy, you never had the slightest suspicion that I was other than the affectionate and artless being to whom you, in our very school-days, vowed everlasting friendship. Trust me, even now I can scarcely forbear laughing at the deceit I practised upon you, who were wont to pique yourself on your superior penetration. Ah! I feel the pangs of death even now—my hand trembles—let me then hasten to tell you that it was I who sowed distrust and dissension between you and Horatio. If I ever truly loved, that love was for Arthur, but I could not tamely behold you bearing away the prize of Campbell’s favor, so I set myself to give him a wrong estimate of your character, and so artfully did I work out my scheme, that I appeared to him to be only actuated by friendship for both parties. Having once succeeded in turning his affection from you, it was comparatively easy to fix it on myself. Whether he really and truly loved me I cannot now say—the fact is, I have reason to believe, that he was merely dazzled by my syren charms, and that his heart never ceased to retain a tender remembrance of you, to whom his earliest love was given. However that might be, I had attained my object—I had conquered—and was happy. As for Arthur, I could never entirely deceive him—and yet I loved him—oh! how I did love him!—I believe he never revealed to any one—not even yourself—his opinion of me, and for this generosity I now thank him—now that life is for me at an end. True, he saw me not as

I really was—he deemed me vain and frivolous, but never suspected me of perfidy or wilful deceit. And yet, I sometimes think that he loved me with all my faults—*then*, the thought sent a rush of joy to my heart—*now* it produces only bitter regret, for if I had succeeded in winning his affection—if I had been his wife—oh, Mary! how far, far different might have been my fate. But I must finish—death is approaching—I already feel his iron grasp strong upon me. I have no time for vain retrospections. Let me then tell you that my sudden departure from Ballyhaise Castle, was owing to a conversation which I had had with Arthur on the previous night. He then assured me that unless my character underwent a thorough change, (which he deemed impossible,) he could never think of me as a wife. He begged of me to withdraw quietly from the castle, lest in the event of my remaining, his father should insist on our marriage, as in that case, he said, he would be compelled to explain the nature of his objections. As a friend, Margaret,” he added, “I shall ever remember you, but by no nearer tie than that of friendship can we ever be united. Forgive this frankness, and let us be indeed friends.” So far from forgiving him, I left him with a heart full of revenge, but fearing lest he should be tempted to disclose his sentiments with regard to me, and being well assured that whatever love he once had for me was completely extinguished, I next morning took a French leave, as you must remember. My career since then has been one of mingled wickedness and folly. Horatio was not slow in discovering my real character, and the consequence was, that when I addressed to him a letter full of affection, and entreating him to visit me in Dublin, he returned my letter without a word of comment. Poor fellow! I have never seen him since, and I have the additional pain of knowing that *his* happiness also I destroyed, for I am sure he loved you, Mary!—Well! he lived not long to deplore his disappointment; but what is death to one virtuous and honorable, and true, like him? To me it is full of horrors—oh, agony!—unutterable torments!—how shall I face that God whom I have so often and so deliberately insulted by my crimes!—Oh, Mary! pity—no, no, do not pity me! I only ask you to forget that you ever knew me—let my memory go down to oblivion, and be no trace left to speak of

“MARGARET MORTON.”

So great was Eleanor’s agitation that she could scarcely conclude this most afflicting letter; when she did, however, she looked at Mary, and saw her motionless, with clasped hands, and eyes