

one engrossing object, on which, even in this last scene of human weakness and decay, they dwelt with the same tenacity as they had done through the many long and wasted years that were ranged in fearful record against him.

Thus constantly engrossed, Madelaine found it impossible to fulfil her engagement with Mrs. Dunmore, as the little leisure which she could spare from more pressing duties, she felt it necessary to employ in the construction of such small and simple articles as could be speedily made, and commanded a ready sale, thereby leaving her not utterly unable to meet the expences which she could not avoid incurring; for her grandfather was sometimes willing to partake of her bounty, when offered to him in the shape of nourishing broth, or tempting jelly, viands, which his unaccustomed palate seemed particularly to crave, though never, even while he felt the world receding from his eager grasp, did he so far overcome the sordid avarice which held his soul in bondage, as to offer to that gentle girl, who with the filial duty of a child ministered to his wants, when all others would have forsaken him, one small coin from his exhaustless hoards, to lighten the toil and anxiety which was her constant doom.

Under these circumstances, Madelaine felt it incumbent upon her to inform Mrs. Dunmore of her inability to complete the flowers, which she had delayed giving up the task entirely till now, still hoping that some favourable change in her grandfather would leave her at leisure to accomplish it, but on this morning he appeared so much worse, that she resolved to call in Doctor Moreland, which the violent opposition of the old man had alone prevented her from doing before, and then to proceed to Bowdoin Square and inform Mrs. Dunmore of the circumstances which obliged her to leave the flowers unfinished.

Her grandfather having fallen asleep, she gave old Phoebe, who was too apt, in her absence, to wander off "on household cares intent," a strict injunction not to quit his room till her return, and then, with a reluctant step, set forth upon her mission. She dreaded again to enter that house, for her two former visits to it had touched her heart and thoughts with unwonted sadness; not that she envied the splendour which she there beheld, though it is true the sight of tasteful apartments, and the air of luxury and ease that pervaded the establishment, forced upon her the painful contrast presented by her own isolated, gloomy and ill-furnished home. But this did not ruffle her serenity, nor awake a murmuring thought in her breast,—for even in this cheerless and lonely home, she had found so many heartfelt enjoyments in the quiet exercise of duty, and of that holy faith which sheds a noon-day splendour through the darkest cell of poverty, so many blessings checquering her humble path, so many joyous emotions springing from

kind and pure affections, and such a source of pleasure and improvement in the ever-active mind's exhaustless powers, that she had learned, young as she was, to regard in their true light the empty distinctions of worldly wealth, and to despise, as far as one so gentle could harbour such a sentiment, the ostentation and vanity, that seeks by costly displays of apparel, furniture, and equipage, to cover the emptiness of conceit, or the grossness and vulgarity of ignorance.

It was no emotion of envy or discontent then, that embittered for an instant, the calm and well-balanced mind of Madelaine,—but it was, that in presence of Mrs. Dunmore and her sister, she felt herself degraded—not by her employment, she was superior to such weakness—but by being made to learn how deeply the haughty insolence of pride can crush a gentle heart. Yet in her two first visits, this had been manifested only by gestures, looks, and transient phrases, that, wounding as they were to the sensitive girl, gave her less gross and palpable pain, than the vehement and angry language she was compelled to bear in that interview which caused Mrs. Dunmore such excitement. Though when she related its details in Beaufort's presence, she forebore to repeat the aggravating expressions she had used, or to do justice to the mild and dignified deportment of the injured object of her anger.

Madelaine left the house oppressed with a sense of insult and wrong, which she had never experienced before—but she had too many causes of anxiety pressing on her mind, and was too much habituated to the control of her feelings, to permit their morbid indulgence, when the voice of duty called upon her for action. Quickly drying the tears, which had gushed forth despite her efforts to restrain them, she hastened towards Summer Street, hoping to find Doctor Moreland at home, to whom she wished to state the circumstances of her grandfather's illness. But he was unluckily out, and having left a message requesting his attendance immediately on his return, she bethought herself of calling at Madame Merveille's, from whom a small balance had been for some time due her, but which only her present straitened circumstances could have induced her to ask for.

But, as it happened, the milliner was also from home, and as one of the apprentices remarked Madelaine's look of disappointment, she told her by way of consolation, she might bless her lucky stars that Madame Merveille was not in, for she would have found her in a very bad humour, owing to the failure of a manufactory in which she had invested a very considerable sum, and that, besides, there were several heavy demands now pressing against her, and she was out endeavouring to collect money to meet them." And so poor Madelaine's hope was crushed in this quarter, and she turned to leave the shop with a heavy heart, cheered, however, by the