

The speaker was a beautiful young girl of about sixteen years of age. Her fine eyes shone with an unnatural excitement, the pure rosebud lips were firmly pressed together, while a look of solemn determination overspread her sweet, upturned face, as she stood gazing at the magnificent chandeliers suspended from the richly frescoed ceiling. The library in which she stood was a large, handsome room, perfect in all its appointments; the fire of Newcastle coals burned brightly, and crackled cheerily, and the finely polished grate which, together with its glittering appendages of fire irons and fenders, with the broad low rest for the feet, formed an inviting picture of luxurious ease and enjoyment, especially on such a stormy night as the one on which my story opens. The splendid skin of a royal Bengal tiger was stretched in front of the fire giving a grand effect to the homelike picture. Rich, heavy hangings draped the windows that looked out into the street, but could not shut out the sounds of the storm that was raging fearfully without. The young girl shuddered for a moment as the keen north wind blew the sleet fiercely against the windows; then turning to the fire she knelt upon the rug and pressing her hand tightly over her eyes she murmured in low sympathetic tones: "My dear father, not home yet, and you have to face the storm again this bitter night. Mamma, oh, mamma, how could you go, when you knew he wished for your presence at home, after what he told us would