

all plucked and expended before I knew how to enjoy it; and if I win not the hand of the proud beauty of Conway place, I shall be lost indeed."

"I thought it was the beauty; not the gold, you coveted?" said the Gipsy.

"Love grows selfish when poverty presses hard," replied Walter. "Yet, before God, and on my conscience! I would prize possession of that woman beyond the riches of the world. I love her, with a mad, fierce love, which nothing can appease but the realization of its object."

The Gipsy sighed.

"It is your own happiness, not hers, you seek. She loves you not, and this ungenerous passion of yours will prove a curse to you both."

"Did she tell you this?" asked Fenwick, eagerly.

"She did,—nay more. She said that she never would be your wife—that death were preferable!"

"But she shall be mine! I will compel her yet to acknowledge that her fate lies in my hands," said Walter, gnashing his teeth. "But, thank God, I have no rival."

"The strongest on earth—a woman's will!" said the Gipsy, and they parted.

#### CHAPTER XI.

THE story of the Gipsy Azubah had made a strong impression upon the young heart of Monica; and after returning to her chamber, she pondered it long and deeply in her mind. That the poor stranger had loved Hubert Vincent, Monica felt no doubt; and she entered fully into the sad and wounded feelings, the outraged affections, and utter hopelessness of heart, with which the unhappy victim of selfish passion and bigoted prejudice had thrown herself destitute upon the world. She did not hate Master Vincent, but she pitied his weakness, and no longer regarded him as the high spiritual teacher, which she had believed him to be. But that was the age of fanaticism and gloomy enthusiasm. Not one mind in a thousand dared to think for itself. Every age has its own peculiar madness, and that of the sixteenth century was stained with the absurd belief in witchcraft. One marvels, in the present century, when even the long-cherished and natural belief in ghosts has faded before the light of reason and education, how wise and sensible men—men of powerful intellect and great practical abilities, like Judge Hale—could ever have so far joined in a popular mania, as to condemn to the stake young women and old, upon the accusation of credulous and ignorant people. It is much to be feared that witchcraft was used by the revengeful and malicious, as a tool to

destroy those who had, by their superior attainments, called forth their envy, or roused into active operation the base and cruel passions of their nature. In reading the trials for witchcraft, which disgraced the British Isles at that period, the mind is filled with indignation and horror. But when we find that Scotland, that grave and moral country, exceeded England in these unjust and barbarous executions; that her chief witnesses in these disgraceful trials, were pious clergymen of her austere faith; our surprise and astonishment, at their blindness and credulity, know no bounds. That men who had struggled to the death, to cast from them the deluding trammels of superstition and intolerance, should dare to appear against their fellow creatures on such an absurd charge as that of witchcraft, will always appear as one of the inexplicable enigmas of the human mind.

That Hubert Vincent, with all his piety and zeal, firmly believed in the black art, is not to be wondered at, when wiser and more learned men had cherished and publicly avowed the same opinions. Monica, who had a mind above the common prejudices of her age, because she had been accustomed from infancy to reason from natural causes, and to draw her opinions from reality and experience, rather than from the theories of others, held the belief in witchcraft, and the miraculous power of the evil eye, in sovereign contempt, and regarded those who differed from her as doting fools and madmen. The trifling circumstances which had induced the good minister to turn his back upon the child of his adoption, the beautiful and talented creature whom in girlhood he had loved, Monica justly considered did not deserve such severe and cruel censure, and she looked upon Hubert as a cruel bigot, and on Azubah as a much injured and calumniated being. Pondering over these circumstances, she undressed and retired to bed. Whilst reclining upon her pillow, the last injunction of the Gipsy, to remember her dreams, came into her head. "I dream of so many things," she thought; "I shall be sure to forget them before I awake."

Alena smoothed her pillow, and affectionately kissing her hand, bade her good night, and in a few minutes the young lady of Conway Place was wrapped in profound slumber.

The night was fast fading into day, when Monica, following the spirit of her dream, wandered in a lonely part of the park; and met, in the secluded dell which had witnessed her rencontre with Laurence Wilde, the Gipsy Azubah. The Sybil, accosting her with her usual air of mystery, bade her go to the stile which led to the Basket-maker's dwelling, and wait there, and the