

checked the fierce, passionate words that were already rising to his lips.

A great change was perceptible in Sybil, during these few minutes. The exhortations of the good clergyman had evidently not been without effect, for her pale, worn face had a calm, subdued look, as if she had at last realized the great danger she had escaped.

"Miss Sybil, dear Miss Sybil, can you ever forgive me?" said the sad, sweet voice of Christie, as she held out her hand, and looked wistfully, imploringly into Sybil's face.

"Oh, Christie! I have nothing to forgive you. You were not guilty!" said Sybil, sinking down by the bedside, and hiding her face in Christie's little thin hand.

"Not wilfully, but still I wronged you. And there is another—will you not forgive him?"

"Never, so help me heaven!" fiercely exclaimed Sybil, springing up, and casting upon him a glance of fire.

"Sybil, I am dying! You will not refuse my last request? Oh, Sybil! in a moment of thoughtless passion he married me; but all the time he loved you best. I can see it all, now. He loved you then—he loves you now, better than all the world."

"And you can forgive him for the irreparable wrong he has done you—a deserted home, a blighted life, and an early death! Christie, you are an angel!"

"No, no; only a frail sinner, with so much to be forgiven herself that she can easily, joyfully, forgive that. Sybil, my hours are numbered. Will you render them miserable by refusing my last request?"

"Oh, Christie! you know not what you ask."

"Sybil do you not love Willard still?"

"Oh, I do—I do! God forgive me—I do!" she said, passionately.

"And he loves you. Willard, come here; take Sybil's hand. Now, Sybil, promise when I am gone to be his wife."

There was a fierce struggle in the passionate heart of Sybil—a last struggle between love and pride, and her burning sense of the great wrong he has done her. With her face bowed, her whole frame quivering, she did not look up—would not speak, until the little hand of Christie fell imploringly on her head.