

into any course that best may win your approval; knowing that whatever career you may select, the sole reward I shall seek will be your approbation—my only happiness, your affection. You have not heard me unmoved—you cannot, will not refuse me!”

As D'Almayne concluded, he fixed his eyes on Kate's face, as though he sought to read there his sentence before her lips should pronounce it, while his cheeks flushed, and his eyes glistened with unfeigned emotion. For an instant, unable to bear the intensity of his glance, Kate turned away with a heightened colour, then, recovering her self-possession by a powerful effort, she replied calmly,—

“I have heard you thus far, Mr. D'Almayne, without interruption, partly because I believe that, for once, you are speaking under the influence of real feeling; partly because I owe you, as I imagine, a debt of gratitude for your kindness to my brother; these reasons have induced me to listen to addresses, every word of which I consider as the deepest insult which can be offered to a pure-minded woman. You tell me I married Mr. Crane for money; I neither admit nor repel the accusation—like most taunts, it contains a half-truth, so disguised by sarcasm as to appear a whole one. But how doubly sordid should I be, were I to act on your suggestion and quit my husband,—who, if your supposition be correct, I have sufficiently wronged already,—because he has, as you inform me, been swindled out of his wealth—how I leave your own conscience to inform you! The fact that he is poor, and that you profess yourself rich, is enough to carry conviction to my mind. But I will not enter further into the question: suffice it that your sophistries have failed to blind me, and that I am still able to discern the path of duty—let it lead whither it may, I am resolved to follow it. I have given you, as you requested, a fair hearing and a deliberate reply. For your kindness to my brother I again thank you. As I gather that you are about to leave this country, and can well imagine it may be necessary for you to do so, farewell for ever! I set your one good deed against your evil ones, and bear you no ill-will. We part neither as friends nor foes.”

As Kate spoke, she rose to quit the room, but D'Almayne interposed between her and the door—

“One moment,” he said in his usual tone of sarcasm; “my modesty cannot permit me to depart, taking credit for a good deed which I have never performed. It was not I who rescued your brother from his difficulty; though, as a stepping-stone to your favour, I would willingly have done so: for that act of kindness you are indebted to—”

“Whom?” inquired Kate eagerly.

“One to whom, if he had this morning pleaded as I have done, I fancy even your rigid virtue might have afforded a kinder answer—your cousin, Arthur Hazlehurst!”

D'Almayne spoke at random, but the arrow wounded as deeply as

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