

my school pension, but never visited or wrote to me. My youthful imagination delighted in decorating this unknown mother with all the loveliest attributes of humanity. I loved to make my young companions describe their respective mothers, and from each I stole some grace or charm wherewith to deck my visionary parent.—Night and day I prayed and pined to see my mother—in her all my hopes and affections centred, and often have I envied some little ragged urchin, when I have witnessed the maternal caresses bestowed on it. Alas! alas! I have since found my own. And what a mother! to avoid her I would flee to the ends of the earth—to the depths of the sea—to the gloom of the grave. The only information that my governess could give me concerning her was, that when she left me at school, about twelve years before, she was a beautiful woman, in the prime of life, and called herself Mrs. Ormond. Since that time the remittance had been sent regularly, often from provincial towns in various parts of the United Kingdom, but in winter they came chiefly from London. From this, and some peculiarities of dress and manner, which she had noted in their sole interview, my governess conjectured that my mother was an actress, though she had never been able to discover any of celebrity who bore that name.

“About two months ago this long expected parent came to remove me from school. She had, she said, withdrawn from the stage, and intending to reside privately in the neighborhood of Dublin, wished naturally for the society of her daughter. I hung enraptured on every word and every glance of my beautiful mother, and though to me there seemed something strange and startling in her manner I carefully combated this impression, and imputed it to my own ignorance of the world. Though I shed some regretful tears on leaving my young companions, yet regret was soon lost in glad anticipation. And when I found myself seated beside my mother in her elegant chariot, I was conscious only of tenderness and joy. We arrived at our new home (a neat villa within a few miles of this city) on the third day of our journey. Here I was allotted a sumptuously furnished apartment, and my mother's confidential waiting-woman, Catharine, was appointed to attend me and superintend my toilet. I often remonstrated against the gaudy adornments that were heaped

upon me, but with a laughing tyranny which I could not resist, I was compelled to wear them. Every day my mother drove me to town in her phaeton, and every day seemed to add to the number of gentlemen who attended and escorted us. Two or three times a week my mother gave splendid supper parties, but at these few, very few of her own sex were present; indeed, her associates were almost all gentlemen. Of these Sir Lawrence Harwell paid me the most assiduous attention—but there was a boldness, a presumption in his manner, which made me receive his addresses with unqualified disgust and terror. Indeed, the society in which I now found myself was well calculated to inspire such feelings. Levity and profaneness ruled the conversation of the guests.—And the hostess—but in what words can a daughter paint a mother's moral deformity? How shall I describe my horror when veil after veil fell from my eyes, and I looked clearly on my mother's dishonour. She sedulously encouraged the addresses of Sir Lawrence, and frowned severely on me whenever I ventured to treat him with disdain in her presence. Though this grieved me, it did not lessen my respect for her, as I considered it pardonable in her to desire so wealthy an alliance for me; but I was soon cruelly undeceived. One day when Harwell had teased me out of patience by his importunate profession, I exclaimed petulently, ‘Sir Lawrence Harwell, spare yourself and me a repetition of these scenes, for I solemnly assure you that I would not marry you if you were monarch of the world.’ I do not remember the words in which the wretch replied, but their import aroused in me a passion of indignation, such as I had believed myself incapable of experiencing. I commanded him instantly to leave the house, and declared that I would prevent the possibility of his return, by informing my mother of the deep baseness of his designs. ‘Your mother, my pretty baby,’ scoffed the fiend, ‘will feel very slightly obliged by your communication. However, I see that she has sadly neglected your education. And I shall, as you desire, relieve you of my presence; but to-morrow I shall hope to find you more tractable! a little maternal advice will improve you amazingly. But I vow we must have you on the boards. That melo dramatic air is divine, and would make your fortune.’ Appalled and terror stricken