

Courey had won Ida's consent to consult the fortune-teller, when just as I had turned the angle of a rock to depart: I heard slow foot-steps approaching, and immediately the tones of Moll's voice caught my ear, and I paused behind a ledge which secured me from sight; impelled by a sudden desire to overhear her words. Another crone who looked even more wicked than herself, was with her—for through a narrow fissure I could scan their persons,—to whom she was relating something that seemed to afford her both triumph and amusement. In a moment the subject of her discourse was made evident to me for I heard her say:

"Yes, it was just here the *Monsieur* gave me the gold, yellow pieces and broad; a rich harvest after such a barren summer as the last has proved."

"And he doubled the sum before he went beyond sens?" asked the other.

"Aye, did he as he promised to do, if I would frighten his pretty dove into flying with him," said the sybil with a chuckling laugh. "And more than that, when the shy bird's wings are full grown, and she alights among her orange and sugar plantations in Jamaica, I am to have a token for my services which will freight the ship that brings it, richly, I warrant ye."

"If they chance not to forget it," said the other hag, tauntingly.

"That they dare not," answered Moll fiercely. "Bold as the young cooistril pretends to be, he dreads my power, for he verily believes I hold a compact with Satan; and as for his baby bride, you would laugh to see how the little one trembled at the very twinkling of my eye. Nothing but her great faith in all I told her would have driven her to the step she had taken, for the fiery boy had well nigh scared love out of her poor little heart; and if the other gallant had come in the right time, he might have had her for the asking."

"And with another sneering laugh the two passed on, leaving me paralyzed by what I had heard, because it left me no longer in doubt that this wicked woman, in conjunction with Ida's designing lover, had basely practised upon her timid and credulous mind, in order to compass those unworthy ends which else must have remained unfulfilled. From this time the school became to me a place of durance. My cheerfulness fled, my health was impaired, and I made, in consequence, so little progress in my studies, that when I returned home at the Christmas holidays, my parents, alarmed by the change they perceived in me, took me from school, and henceforth my education was conducted under their own eyes."

"Removed from the scenes where my youthful

mind had been so painfully excited, it soon recovered its healthful tone, and the careless gaiety of happy childhood once more filled it with joy. Ida was not forgotten; but the remembrance of her had ceased to be accompanied with pain. I knew she deserved happiness, and I trustingly believed she had attained it. Still I was so faithful to this ardent attachment, that I longed to hear of her and from her, and my heart beat with the hope, whenever a stranger crossed our threshold, that he came the bearer of tidings from my fondly beloved friend. But four months passed by without fulfilling my wishes, when one cold evening in January, I was surprised by a visit from Frank Randolph. He knew of my intimacy with Ida, and he came to hear all I could tell him of her intercourse with De Courey and the elopement in which it had resulted. I told him all, not indeed without emotion, and the agitation which my narrative produced in him, showed how truly and tenderly he loved her. He seemed much changed, was thinner and more sad, and appeared transformed since last I saw him, from the gay and reckless youth, into the thoughtful man. His father was dead, the news of Ida's flight reached him, when he had but just risen from a dangerous illness, and the shock had caused a sudden relapse, which, after many weeks of intense suffering, proved fatal.

"His last command to his son was that he should seek out Ida, and inform himself of her triposition; that in case it was not what it should be, he might restore her to the place she ought to occupy, or at least, furnish her with the means, if she had them not, of obtaining those comforts and luxuries to which she had been accustomed. Frank was now on the eve of sailing for Europe, that he might obey this injunction, and then gratify his own wishes by two or three years spent in travel. He promised to write to my mother, and give her all the information he could gather respecting Ida, and after receiving a letter from me to my friend, which he said he would promptly deliver, he bade us farewell and departed.

"It was many months before the expected letter arrived; for voyages across the Atlantic were not in those days; the brief pleasure sails that they are now, and when it came at last, its contents saddened my heart. Ida was married to De Courey, but the father having become a bankrupt, the prospects of the son were blighted, and Randolph found them living in a humble manner, quite retired from the world; and though Ida assured him she was happy, the paleness of her cheek and the unwonted look of care upon her brow, to his anxious eyes belied the truth of her assertion. De Courey was occupying a situation