

withstand the fearful temptation. Oh, God! how earnestly I wish the deed undone. And does *she* know it, Alice?" he said, pointing to his mother.

"She does."

"How did she bear it?"

"A horrible consciousness of the dreadful reality struggles with her mental malady. She is mad—but in her delirium still raves of you."

He shuddered. "Poor thing! It is better that it should be so. Her brain will not bear it long. Oblivion will soon cover all her woes."

"And you, Marsham—what will you do?" You risk your life by remaining here," said Alice.

"My life," he said with a bitter smile, "is no longer worth a thought. I have hoarded it for one hour, to look once more at my poor mother. I have been doubly blest—I have seen you, and now I go hence for ever."

"Where shall we hear of you again?" asked Alice. "Give us some clue to discover your retreat, for your poor mother's sake."

"You perhaps may hear of me too soon," he replied, in the same mournful voice. "Think of me kindly Alice, when I am gone. Think how madly, how passionately I loved you. Could you have returned that love I should have been a different creature. But let me depart with the blessed assurance that you forgive me."

Alice placed both her hands in the red grasp of the unhappy man. "May God pity and forgive you, Roland Marsham, as freely as I do, and efface from your soul the foul stain of blood."

"Amen!" ejaculated her broken hearted companion; and pressing her hands to his lips and brow, he once more bent over his mother, and burying his face in the pillow, wept passionately for a few moments, then left the apartment with the same noiseless steps he had entered.

"Is it all a dream?" said Alice, when an hour after, she still found herself kneeling on the same spot. Have I really seen him? It cannot be. I have been sleeping. He never dare seek this spot."

She rose up softly, and stole along the passage to the old man's apartment, and rapped gently at the door. It was instantly opened by Stephen Norton, who enquired if Mrs. Marsham needed assistance.

"She is still sleeping?" said Alice. "But did you see Roland Marsham, he has been here?"

"Impossible. Dear Alice, you have been dreaming. I do not believe that he is in life."

"Then I have seen his apparition," said Alice, turning very pale. "For he has been here and I have both seen and spoken with him." Sitting down in the old man's easy chair, she faithfully related all that had passed, as well as the choking tears and sobs would permit her.

Stephen listened to her in silent astonishment, until the painful pause was broken by the old Captain, who had been awoke out of his sleep by the

entrance of Alice, and who remarked in a hollow voice, that the child *had* seen him—whether living or dead, he knew not. But that either he or his spirit was surely hovering about the house, for at the moment Alice entered the room, he dreamed Roland came up to his bed, and knelt down at his feet, and implored his blessing. "Poor lad," continued the veteran, "it does affect me greatly now, that I ever was harsh and unkind to him. 'Twas a fine boy too—a very fine boy—and but for that dreadful calamity would have made a fine man. Poor Roland! I loved him better than I thought I did. It is not until we lose a despised blessing, Mr. Norton, we know the real value of it. I would now give all I possess in the world to hear the sound of his voice again."

The night waned slowly into day, and Alice returned to her post by the bed of the sleeper. As she re-entered the apartment, she was struck by the deathlike stillness that reigned around. That solemn consciousness which strikes upon the heart, and reveals without the aid of language that the shadow of the destroyer had been there. She approached the bed with faltering steps. The light of the early day rested sadly upon the ashen face of the dead.

"Poor mourner!" said Alice. "God has laid his hand upon thy broken heart, and hushed all its griefs to rest. I almost envy you this blessed release from earth, and all its cares." As she left the room to apprise the household of what had happened, the sound of many feet approaching the house attracted her attention—she stepped to the window, and beheld, borne upon a rude kind of bier, the body of Roland Marsham. After leaving her, he had thrown himself into the river at the bottom of the garden, where his body had just been discovered by some labourers going to their work. Heart-sick with sorrow and anxiety—tired out with mental agitation, and the fatigue of night watching,—the nerves of Alice Linhope could bear no more, and she sunk senseless to the ground.

Weeks passed away. The grave had closed over the Marshams. Grandsire—mother—son—all were gone. The village had settled into its former tranquillity. The gay and thoughtless had resumed their usual spirits, and were as gay and thoughtless as before. Harriet Watson had put on deep mourning for the Count, and was beginning to weary of her sables, before Alice arose from the sick bed to which these startling events had long confined her. With a memory only too acutely alive to the past, the present almost appeared a blank, and she turned from the world and its vanities, with the deep conviction that sorrow alone could be obtained in its crooked paths. Even the love she had cherished for her cousin Arthur lay dormant in her breast. She dared not indulge in a single passion or feeling