

pale cold face of the young widow. But the feeling was not returned by Margaret. She walked with him, rode with him, listened to him, sang to him, only because her mother bade her do so—but not a ray of feeling ever lighted up her countenance or enlivened the tones of her monotonous voice. Sir William, however, was not to be turned aside by trifles. He visited the Danvilles at their own house, and delighted them by the assurance that they lived in precisely the same style as his father, the Marquis; excepting that the noble possessed several fine seats and broad parks, while the tradesman, alas! could only boast of one villa. He succeeded admirably in his designs upon Mrs. Danville; she was perfectly happy, and when, at length he made proposals in due form for the hand of her daughter, she was ready to drop him a courtesy and thank him for his condescension. Margaret was not consulted on the subject. She was told of his offer and commanded to accept it; and with shuddering horror, like that which convulses the poor Sutte when she binds herself to the funeral pyre, she submitted to her fate.

"I conceived a great dislike to Sir William Thornton from the first moment I beheld him. He was a strong-built, muscular man, between thirty and forty years of age, thick-necked, coarse-lipped, and heavy browed, with an expression in his light grey eye which I could not endure. He never looked full in the face of any one, and his shifting restless eye seemed full of suspicion. He rather avoided me during the short time I had an opportunity of seeing him, and I began to doubt whether he was actually what he pretended to be. However, Mrs. Danville was pleased and Margaret submissive, so that the preparations for the marriage were carried on with a great degree of splendour.

"The day before that fixed upon for the marriage, I could not resist the impulse which led me to see Margaret in private, and learn her true sentiments. The familiar terms on which I now visited the family, enabled me to accomplish this with great ease, and our interview was prolonged for several hours.

"I know you think I am doing wrong, my dear sir," said Margaret in conclusion, "but you cannot feel as I do. I am offering myself in expiation of the sin of my youth; a sin which cost my husband his precious life. God saw fit to punish my wilfulness by the most severe of all trials—for he well knew that while my idol lived, all other sorrows were as dust when weighed in the balance against my happiness. Carrington was taken from me, and I was left

to make atonement. But I feel as if my punishment will not be made harder than I can bear; I shall not live long to wear the chains I now assume."

"And Sir William—what are your feelings towards him?" I asked.

"Excessive repugnance," was the shuddering reply. "It has cost me many a bitter struggle to overcome the almost instinctive loathing with which I recoil from him. But waste not your sympathy upon him, my dear friend, nor think that I treat him with injustice; he wants only my father's wealth, and he shall be satisfied with money, while my mother will rejoice at seeing me ennobled, and I shall be made happy by a speedy release from a thralldom which must soon destroy either life or reason.

"It was useless to argue with one who erred so widely both in her feelings and her judgment. Indeed I fancied there was incipient insanity lurking beneath her calm demeanor, and I could not but tremble for the result.

"The evening of the wedding came. The large rooms were filled with company, and the hour approached when I was to pronounce the nuptial benediction. I was already seated in the drawing-room, awaiting the entrance of the bridal party, when suddenly there rang through the house a long loud shriek, such as never yet issued from mortal lips save as the requiem of a broken heart. A look of consternation sat upon every face; with the swiftness of thought all flew to the apartment whence the sound had issued. Mr. Danville and myself were the first to enter the room, and the sight which I beheld will never leave my memory. Seized with the same mysterious and frightful malady which had once before reduced her to the brink of the grave, the victim of catalepsy stood fixed as a statue—her arm extended—her long thin finger pointing towards some unseen object—the features of her face petrified in their awful expression of horror, and looking like some terrific spectre. Sir William cowered in a remote corner, his pallid cheek and lurid lip bearing witness to his alarm. But a frowning brow was bent upon him, and a strong arm was ready to grasp him when he arose from his abject position.

"Of course a scene of great confusion ensued. Rumors of all kinds were whispered among the company; the stranger guests dispersed quietly, and the few friends who remained learned the full horror of the tale.

"Margaret had suffered herself to be attired as passively as a child, and gave little evidence of heeding the efforts of her dressing-maid