

tears stood in the eyes, and trembled on the thick lashes of the speaker.

"A good cry, we women think, relieves the heart, and so I was just trying its efficacy," she added, with a tremulous smile, "and find myself benefited by the prescription."

Mr. Ellwood paused ere replying, for he scarcely dared to trust himself to speak, lest he should either say too little or too much.

"Dear Miss Alice," at length he murmured, "you know not how deeply I sympathise with you, for I too have passed through a similar trial." Yet "man is strong to bear with sorrow;" but you, and a glance of tender pitying affection was involuntarily bestowed on the slender form that was slowly walking by his side, "God in His mercy shield you from trial; or if that may not be, give you a double portion of strength to bear it."

There was silence for a few moments, for Sydney's heart was full.

"Oh," he thought, "were I but circumstanced as Mortimer, no wordly consideration, no ambitious desire after wealth, would have tempted me to forego the priceless privilege of protecting and comforting sweet Alice, ever dear to me, but never dearer than now. But my path is plain; she regards me now only as a brother, and as such I must remain, for I dare not wish her to think otherwise of me. I may not seek to win her affections, for other claims are paramount, and duty demands the sacrifice of inclination.