

infinite pains to brace up her mind for a much-dreaded communication, had no wish that it should be deferred, while the latter, whose whole soul was wrapped up in the expected recital, could scarcely conceal her chagrin and disappointment. She still had Campbell's letter in her hand, and desirous to gain time for overcoming her emotion, she made it a pretext for retiring to the further end of the room, leaving Mary to receive the visitor. The name announced was that of a stranger—it was *Mrs. Kenrick*; and the woman, as she entered, cast a timid look from one to the other, as though she dreaded the reception she should meet. She was evidently a person in the lower classes of life, yet neat and tidy in her appearance, while her good natured countenance carried its own recommendation. She made a low curtsy to each lady, and then paused, as though waiting to be addressed.

"Pray be seated," said Miss Newburk, who appeared somewhat surprised.

"I see you think this a great liberty, madam," observed the visitor, as she took a seat near the door—"and well you may, for you never set eyes on me before. And you'll be more surprised still, when I tell you that I have come all the way from Dublin to spake to you—that is, if so be that you are Miss Mary Newburk."

"Indeed?" inquired Mary; "and may I ask, as I am the person you have named, what motive can have induced Mrs. Kenrick to take so long a journey, to visit one whom she acknowledges she has never before seen?"

"I'll tell you that, ma'am, in a few words," replied the woman, respectfully; "but first I'll deliver my letter, an' then you'll have a guess of my business here this day."

So saying, she drew forth a letter which had been carefully covered with sundry envelopes of brown paper, in order to preserve its original purity of hue, and having handed it to Miss Newburk, she calmly awaited the result.

"Ha!" thought Eleanor, "more letters!—can this have any relation to the subject which this good woman interrupted?"

A moment and her attention was called to Mary, for the latter had no sooner glanced at the address of the letter than she fell back in her chair, pale and trembling, while the letter fell from her powerless hands. Eleanor hastened to her assistance.

"Dear sister! what is the matter?—How pale you look!—shall I go and seek some strengthening cordial?"

"No, no, Eleanor! kind Eleanor! it is unnecessary to do so, as I do not feel at all faint—I am only surprised—astonished! But will you

have the kindness to ring for some one to take this person, and give her some refreshments?"

Eleanor obeyed, and when the servant appeared, Mrs. Kenrick, with many thanks for Miss Newburk's kindness, was conducted from the room. When she was gone, Mary sat upright in her chair and turned to Eleanor, with a faint attempt at a smile.

"Now that we are alone, my dear! I have only to tell you (in order to account for its effect on me,) that this epistle, yet unopened, comes from Margaret Morton. Oh, Eleanor! could you but know how I loved that false girl,—how much anguish I have suffered during the few hours that her perfidy has been known to me,—you would not wonder at my being so affected. Yesterday morning that letter would have been pressed to my lips, as the dear and cherished proof of her continued affection; now I can scarcely bear to look upon it—do break the seal, dear Eleanor, for my hand trembles so that I cannot."

"Have you remarked that the seal is black, Mary?"

"No, really!" exclaimed Mary, "I had overlooked that circumstance in my agitation. Whose death has she to announce to me?—Oh! surely not Horatio's?" and, overcome by the latter idea, she covered her face with her hands, as though to shut out a vision so horrid.

"Shall I read the letter?" asked Eleanor.

A faint "Yes" from Mary encouraged her to proceed, and though her own voice was broken and tremulous, she went on; there was neither date nor place mentioned.

"Though I am quite certain that this letter will be treated with contempt, and that the writer is unworthy even of pity, yet I will write. I ask for nothing—hope for nothing—but I must let Mary Newburk know that Margaret Morton has reached the lowest depths of misery. You may laugh out at this—I expect that you will, too—for have I not been to you as the snake in the fable, who, when half dead from cold, was restored to life and warmth by the pitying care of the good man, and, in requital thereof, stung his children to death—such has been my conduct to you. So you may well laugh at my utter ruin. Neither do I seek to excite your compassion by acquainting you with my unhappy condition, but methinks it will give me a sort of relief to communicate my soul-harrowing remorse and bitter grief to one who knew and loved me when I was young and comparatively innocent. Strange relief!" you may well exclaim, 'for you, who have never departed from the narrow path of virtue—who have ever acted according to the dictates of con-