

tion. "He has been here, Ida; and he—he has offered me his hand, but I have rejected him. The trial, the temptation, has been a fearful one, but still I have not yielded."

"You love Pemberton, then?" asked Ida in tones whose overwhelming astonishment Lucy mistook for the energy of indignation.

"Yes, forgive me," she passionately returned, burying her head in the folds of her companion's dress. "I have deceived you all along; knowing as I did your affection for the Marquis, I still dared to let his image engross my thoughts, my heart, even from the moment of our first meeting: but believe me, I have struggled unceasingly, unyieldingly, against it. How often have I longed to throw myself on your pity and avow all. But no! I feared your just anger or contempt, and I resolved to bury it in my own bosom. But for the event of to-day it would never have been known. But, Ida, I have atoned for it indeed. I have banished him forever! For ever! Oh! if my error has been great, my expiation has been still greater. Have you forgiven me?"

"Lucy, my poor child, are you mad? What wild mistake are you labouring under? What has ever induced you to think that I regarded Pemberton with preference."

"What! you do not love him, then?" returned Lucy, springing up, and regarding her with a glance whose thrilling earnestness was more startling than her first statue-like immobility.

"No, Lucy, I solemnly assure you I do not, nor ever did."

Overpowered with joy and emotion. Lucy sank back on her seat, covering her face with her hands, but after a few seconds, she suddenly raised her head.

"But of what avail is it? He leaves England tomorrow and all is lost."

Though somewhat disheartened by this unexpected stroke, Ida disguised her real uneasiness, and quietly rejoined;

"Calm yourself, Lucy. He cannot leave as soon as he said, were he ever so anxious. Two or three days must elapse before he can possibly get out of the country, and something can be done ere then. I shall write to Lady Stanhope. He will return, and all will yet be well."

With the eager credulity of a child, Lucy listened to the words for hope, and yielded at length to Ida's entreaty of retiring at once to rest. Kindly, tenderly, did the proud, the cold Ida, smoothe and adjust the pillows for her young companion. She had suffered herself and the bitter lesson had taught her sympathy. Her task concluded, and Lucy buried in a profound sleep, the natural result of her utter exhaustion

of mind and body, she threw on her dressing gown and seating herself at the table, drew her writing desk towards her. Light as she had made of Lucy's fears, she knew there was really no time to lose. Pemberton, acting on the impulse of the moment, might indeed, as he had done on a former occasion, set out immediately; and once out of England, all hope would be at an end. A few minutes reflection showed her that writing to Lady Stanhope, as she had intended, would be worse than useless. Her Ladyship would never consent to sacrifice any of her projects to what she would term the romantic attachment of a silly school girl, whilst Ida herself would incur her severest anger for her interference. There was no alternative, but to write to Pemberton herself. Without further deliberation she seized her pen and wrote a few lines, in which, with her usual frankness she stated everything; concluding by enjoining him to return, adding, "'Tis unnecessary to tell you, my Lord, that this letter must be seen by none. Your own delicacy would prompt it, without my suggesting it to you."

"And now," she thoughtfully exclaimed as she sealed the epistle. "How shall I send it! It should go early tomorrow. Every moment is priceless. By the time the servants are awake and ready to start, it will be perhaps too late, and even then, how can I entrust them with such a commission, accompanied, as it must be, with an injunction to secrecy; for Lucy's sake, none must know of it. What am I then to do?" Suddenly a thought struck her, but burying her crimsoning face in her hands, she murmured, "Oh! not that! not that! 'Tis more than I can do! And yet, poor Lucy! I cannot sink much lower in his estimation than I have already done. She would have made the sacrifice for me,—shall I not do the same for her? Is it not her generous self devotion that has brought upon her all this suffering?—and I can waver, can pause! Away with such unworthy hesitation!" She rose, took up the letter, and gently stole from the room. With a light step she descended the stairs, and passing through the corridor, and intervening apartments, found herself at length before the door of Claude's study. The light streaming through the crevice of the key-hole, and the rapid grating of a pen upon paper, which in the still silence of the night was perfectly audible, told her that its occupant was up and engaged. Twice she stretched forth her hand, and twice she turned away, exclaiming "I cannot, I cannot;" but subduing her hesitation by a violent effort, she grasped the lock, and in another moment stood before Claude. His head, supported by his hand, he was writing at a table, covered with books and