

Her hands were raised to the deliverer of her father: her gentle eyes streamed with tears, and a broken prayer hovered upon her lips: but her appearance had no other effect upon Gerald Stanley than to suggest a deeper plan for the furtherance of his design.

"My sweet girl!" he exclaimed, in a tone of affected compassion, "do not distress me with your thanks: your tears have saved your father, and preserved you; a comfortable situation is just now vacant in my farm; it is yours. Go—go my good child, I cannot bear a reply."

Honor returned to her father, who, accepting with gratitude this unexpected boon, almost flattered himself with hopes of future prosperity and happiness.

"You were not marked for sorrow, my child!" he cried, "the good people* will never burn the sod upon you, cushla, nor throw stones into the well at your head. And I swear never to break the laws again, since my poor Honor will not want either bread or blessing."

The sequel of Honor's story is common-place and of every day occurrence: but it is not on that account the less affecting. She became an inmate of Stanley Grove, and discovered, when too late, the designs of Gerald Stanley. She had no power to retreat, because she was already sacrificed: and she was afraid to reveal her shame and her suffering to her father. Months of anguish and increasing apprehension passed away, yet she endured her bitter portion with more than female patience. A vague hope of redress one day or another always presented itself to her mind; and that clinging attachment which a woman feels to the object of her first affections would not yet permit her to denounce her seducer. But the misfortunes which she had for months labored to conceal from her father soon reached him by another medium. A domestic at the farm, who had reason to suspect the truth, informed Fletcher of the particulars, exaggerated perhaps, by a peccant sense of personal injustice.

It was a stormy and starless night when the evil tidings reached the old man. The way to Stanley Grove lay through a rugged passage of rock and heath; and poverty and depression had wrung the elasticity of nerve and limb. He was not well fitted to journey alone on such a night; but he rushed forth without a guide, almost without reason. His long white hair hung wildly over his shoulders; his lip shook in agony; and, whatever was his intent, he looked more like madness than revenge. It was late when he reached the mansion: and after some parley he obtained admittance. Gerald Stanley had little expectation

of such a visitor, and was already retiring to his apartment, when Fletcher entered the room.

"Villain! what is it you have done?"

"Villain!" reiterated Stanley, "what do you mean, fellow?"

"Ay, ay—villain to your heart's core!" groaned the old man, and every muscle of his frame quivered.—"Villain and coward too! Eat it—drink it—sleep on it! Where's my daughter—my child? What have you done with her?"

"If you do not quit my apartment this instant," replied Stanley, "I shall have you taken into custody: I'll not stand here to be menaced by you."

"I suppose you'll swear that I shot you, and have me hanged for murder. But I am naked: I'm not worth a barrel of brass or iron, or a pinch of gunpowder, or a grain of shot. If I was, Stanley,—I might—for you have broken my heart!—I might—curses, curses upon you!"

"Stand out my way, madman!" again exclaimed Stanley. "or I will alarm the house."

"No—I'll neither burn your house, nor your stacks, nor maim your cattle. Nothing of yours will I touch. But I swear, as there's a God to judge between us, that if you do not give me back Honor Fletcher, one of us will die for your crime."

"What should I know of your daughter?"

"Another moment, Stanley!" cried Fletcher, and he fixed his eyes wildly upon him:—"another moment I give you!—If I am to die of disgrace, and shame, and sorrow, I'll be buried in the cross roads for your sake."

"'Pon my honour!" stammered out Stanley, who now became seriously agitated, "I shall endeavour to discover where your daughter is: but you mistake—I—I—"

"Look at your white lips and the damnable lie upon them! What do you shake for?—Are you afraid of an old man of threescore?" Fletcher had by this time drawn over closer to Stanley who was endeavouring to get near the door, and, intercepting him, looked full in his face. "If you had a million of false oaths against me, and the sheriff, with the rope in his hands at your side, I'll have revenge!"

He gazed at him for a second, as if collecting and concentrating his energies; then, with a spring like a tiger, he flung himself upon his throat, and dragged him down.

Stanley roared from excess of pain and fright and, in a convulsive and terrible voice, cried "Murder!" Still Fletcher lay upon him, and pressing his thumb upon his throat, stifled his heaving efforts at respiration. Stanley had scarcely a minute longer to live: his face became swollen and black; his hands writhed and twisted; and his whole body coiled beneath the gi-

* The Fairies.