

"What can ail the girl. Did you ever, neighbor, see the like?"

"I have seen many sick folk in my time, but she beats them all," returned her companion.

"I cannot think that she is really ill," said Monica, sternly. "Her skin is cool, her tongue clear, and her eye bright. Her pulse is perfectly regular, even at this moment, when she appears to be in a dead faint. I do not understand the nature of her complaint. But I will send Master Lucas, my own leech, to look to her." So saying she departed.

Directly the two women were left alone, they looked very knowingly at each other, and then at the insensible Dorothy.

"Well neighbour," said the first woman. "What do you think of this?"

"That Dolly's a cheat," said her friend, with whom the basket-maker's daughter was no favourite.

"No, no," returned the other, "she could not act that. Why she lies like one dead."

"Dead people have no colour in their cheeks," was the reply.

"That's the more surprising," said the first speaker. "I tell you, neighbour Brod, that 'tis no human sickness. The girl is bewitched."

At this moment, Dorothy opened her eyes; and raising herself with difficulty in the bed, fell a-vomiting, and several bloody pins, and pieces of straw, besides a small live frog, were ejected from her mouth. The horror of the women knew no bounds; and shortly after this exhibition, which would have done honour to an Indian juggler, Mistress Dorothy declared herself considerably better.

"Is she gone?" she cried, looking eagerly about her. "That horrible witch! This is all her doings. When I passed her the other day, in the lane, she cast her evil eye upon me, and muttered some strange words, and I have never been well since. To-morrow, I will get father to nail a horse-shoe upon the sill of the door which will prevent her from coming into the house."

Gammer Brod, who happened to be a sensible, shrewd woman, now took Dolly severely to task, for uttering such falsehoods against a dear, kind lady, who spent her whole time in going about doing good. She told her that she had better hold her tongue, lest her own evil practices should come to light, for she supposed that she could hardly accuse Dame Brandon of being the cause of them. The girl still continuing vehemently to affirm that Dame Brandon had bewitched her, and that she could prove her to be a sorceress, the woman left the house in a great passion, declaring that she would inform that lady of her

wickedness. The other woman, who happened to be weak and credulous, believed every thing that she had heard and seen, while she repented it with a thousand exaggerations, as facts, through the village. It was just at this period of my true history, that Sir Walter Fenwick was called, by the death of his mother, to this part of the country, to settle his affairs. Well pleased was he, at the tale which met him at every turn. But he pretended to deny the possibility of its truth. Monica had sent her physician to visit the sick girl, and his report had been, that nothing was the matter with her, and he believed her to be an impudent, lying impostor. Strange as it may appear, this opinion rather strengthened than diminished the belief that the unfortunate girl was bewitched. Monica had received from Mistress Brod, some hint of these foul calumnies, but confident in her innocence, she treated them with contempt. She was sitting in an arbor, in her garden, with her young son upon her knee, sadly ruminating over the past, when the gipsy, Azubah, suddenly stood before her. She had never seen her since the memorable night when she had conversed with her in the park; and the sight of her recalled many painful recollections, while the sad story which she had heard related of her by Master Vincent, had created for this strange girl an overpowering interest in her fate.

"Sorrow has touched thee since we last met," said the Oriental, in her low melodious voice. "The shadow of the world is upon thy brow; and it will darken and deepen till the blackness of death effaces it for ever."

"Ah! leave this mysterious way of speaking, Azubah," said Monica, motioning her to take a seat beside her. "If you have anything which you wish to communicate to me, speak boldly out. I am not afraid to hear the truth, if you are indeed able to reveal it to me."

"My petty arts are too superficial to deceive you," returned her companion. "Yet believe one whom necessity alone has made a deceiver, that if I did not feel interested in your welfare, I should not have again ventured into the neighbourhood of one who has made me, by his unjust suspicions, what I am."

"I have heard the tale of your wrongs, Azubah, from his own lips, and I cannot convey to you in words, how deeply I sympathize in your forlorn history."

"The world is full of such atrocious records of injustice," returned Azubah. "Ah! could we read the hearts of the beings who surround us—could we see at one glance, the great catalogue of human woe, we should be tempted to follow the advice of Job's wife, 'curse God and die!'