

the wife (and he winced) of some good, noble man—but of that mean-spirited, tormenting coward—never. I would rather—yes, I would rather see her disowned by her father, reduced to live in this cottage, doing the work of the house with her own delicate hands! Shall I enter the list with him? No. She is not worth it. She left me; she let him take her to the carriage, and never even glanced me a second farewell. I—I who have done so much for her—was left for that. She may go.” And herewith he went into the house, and closed the door behind him with no gentle touch.

CHAPTER VII.

On the following morning Maud was sitting alone in her room, reading a letter from Frank to Mr. Carlton, which that gentleman had forwarded to her for her perusal. He had sent it without one word of explanation from himself, and she felt puzzled and somewhat mortified by the omission. It was the first intimation she had had of her brother's safety since he parted from her near her mother's grave. And Mr. Carlton knew this. Why, then, had he not showed her in some way that he sympathized with her? Was it possible that she had offended him in any way? She tried to recollect exactly what she had said and done on the preceding evening, but her memory would bring back nothing by which she could have offended him—unless—could it be possible that he thought her capable of loving, or at any rate could he degrade her so far as to think she had flirted with Sir William? Surely her every look and word might have proved to any one knowing her as well as Mr. Carlton did, that Sir William's attentions were odious to her—that it was only the laws of society which had compelled her to speak to him at all. Her brother's letter dropped from her hand on to the floor. The rustle of the paper as it fell struck upon her ear, and as she picked up the fallen sheet, she reproached herself bitterly for her coldness towards Frank. She had forgotten him in his lowliness, and remembered only her own little cares. She was selfish, she told herself, to dream on in this fashion—she who had every luxury her heart could desire—she whose father was ready to forestall her slightest wish, while he was alone, poor and dispirited. Then, collecting her thoughts, she began to read the letter.

Frank was temporarily settled in comfortable quarters in Canada, but wished to keep his address secret, for a time at least, fearing lest he might involve friends at home. One person, he said, knew where he was, and he had undertaken to let him know from time to time how affairs at

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