

consummation; but still, as she has sowed, so she must reap."

"Ah! 'tis not for us, frail mortals, to judge each other," was the gentle reply. "If Carry is not perfectly irreproachable in her character of wife, are you entirely so in that of husband--were you so in that of son?"

"You are rather candid, my little sister, and yet, the harshest truths are endurable when told in your sweet way. Yes, I was most faulty as a son, ungrateful, undutiful, and crowning a life of reckless disobedience, by an act of daring, and what is worse, irreparable folly. Oh! if bitter, gnawing remorse could atone for a moment's madness, that last wild act of mine would be amply expiated now. Nay, look not so sadly reproachful, sister. Can I recall the home, the friends, the station, I have lost, and then look on the selfish, shallow minded girl for whom all these were yielded up, without cursing in the bitterness of my heart, my own madness. To give you, at once, Eva, a true insight into my real feelings, I swear to you, that I would give up title, wealth and country, to see myself free and unfettered again."

"Alas! that it has come to this!" murmured his companion, tears springing to her eyes. "How infinitely reprehensible must such sentiments appear in the sight of that God before whose altar you and your wife vowed mutual and eternal love. In marrying without the consent or knowledge of your parents--in marrying a girl too young and inexperienced to know the duties and responsibilities of her new position, and with whose characters and tastes you were but imperfectly acquainted--you committed an act of almost unpardonable folly, and yet, how light would it be when compared with the crime of violating the holy covenant you entered into then, of embittering the existence, nay, breaking the heart of the young and helpless being who has no friend, no hope in the wide world, save yourself. Surely, surely, you have not learned to hate her yet?"

"Heaven forbid! Not for worlds would I see her sick or suffering; not for worlds would I harm her even by a wish, but the fond, passionate love I once felt for her has entirely, irrevocably passed away. As to her being friendless, Eva, let me tell you 'tis her surest and most effectual shield, for had she living or wealthy friends, she might have been sent back to them in some of my moody fits and whimsies, and at all events, I would not have deemed it then, as now, a duty to bear patiently with her endless provocations and ridiculous waywardness. But you must not fancy, because I contemplate leaving her for a few weeks, that I

intend anything like an eternal or lengthened separation. Far from it, and my temporary absence will do us both good. She will be more reasonable and unselfish on my return, whilst I shall be wonderfully fortified by a few weeks gaiety for the sickening monotony and small annoyances of Honey-suckle Cottage. Do you not agree with me, sister?" but the latter's only reply was to fling her arms round his neck in a paroxysm of tears.

"My own dear brother," she at length sobbed, "I implore, I entreat you, for your own sake and poor Carry's, to abandon your thoughtless project. Is your wife not sufficiently friendless and isolated already? are your own vows of amendment and reform so firmly matured that you can risk their truth, by returning to the society and scenes that first taught you to err? Ah! Augustus, cast yourself not wilfully into the way of temptation. Remember, that you have now new duties, and responsibilities that you had not then, that you have the happiness and welfare of another being, bound to you by the holiest of ties, to provide for."

"Why, Eva, remind me so eloquently of all my troubles!" asked the young man with a faint smile.

"Troubles! call them not so, Augustus, for they may yet become to you sources of joy and happiness. Years and experience will remove the defects of Carry's character, whilst it will soften the thoughtless impetuosity of your own, and all the perfect happiness which the early dreams of your acquaintance with Miss Hamilton portrayed will yet be yours."

"You almost make a convert of me," murmured her companion, pressing her to him. "May your visions be fulfilled! but do not take it as a token of incredulity, my gentle prophetess, if I still persist in my intention of leaving to-morrow for London. 'Tis not pleasure, or even matrimonial retaliation that calls me to it, so much as business, business of pressing importance. Ah! that reproachful glance, that unbelieving shake of the head, speak too plainly of incredulity to be mistaken, but, Eva, on my word and honour! I speak the truth. I see still you do not believe me, and as I must convince you at any cost, I will conceal nothing. Well, poverty, actual downright poverty stares me in the face, and I have no resource save averting an immediate trouble, by ensuring one still more overwhelming, though more distant. I am going down to London, to see the usurious old Jew who has already done more mischief to the Huntingdon estates than years of retrenchment and economy could repair. My last remaining claim will be swallowed up by the exorbitant rate