

hear from my friends," said the stranger.

"I should be happy to oblige a gentleman, I am sure," said the man, "but it is quite against our rules—perhaps, however, you have something of value you could leave as a sort of deposit—otherwise, I assure you, I durst not; be so good as to step on one side, here are two or three gentlemen waiting for their tickets."

The stranger paused till the office was again free; and then, with a flush that might have been taken for that of guilt, he continued—

"My good man, I grieve to say that I inadvertently left my watch in London—nor can I much wonder, in the agitation of mind, my hasty summons—"

"Oh! he, he," cried the man, with a laugh which he intended to be very expressive—"it won't do in our part of the country—very sorry, but the sooner you make yourself scarce, the pleasanter it will be for yourself 'I'm thinking."

There was an insolence implied in the man's tone far beyond the expression of his words; but the short pause was broken by a sweet voice, which trembled as if almost frightened at its own boldness, and the words—

"I will lend you a sovereign, Sir," fell upon the stranger's ear as the sweetest music he had ever heard.

"God bless your young unsuspecting heart!" he exclaimed, with emotion, as, taking off his hat, his eyes met those of his fellow-traveller; and certainly at that moment he wondered that he had not before observed their marvelously sweet expression. Meanwhile, the ungloved and delicate, but ringless fingers of the young girl, dived into a purse which looked strangely long because it was so nearly empty, and drew from it one of the two sovereigns it contained.

"To whom am I indebted for this timely and generous loan, and where can I have the pleasure of returning it?"

"I am going to reside, I believe, within a few miles of this place, at my aunt's, Mrs. Lawford; if you direct it to Mary—to Miss," she added, as if doubtful if she dared really assume the lady-spinsterial appellation—"to Miss Marston, it will reach me."

"But your aunt's address," said the stranger "I am so ignorant as not to know it; oblige me by writing it, that there may be no possibility of a mistake, and, drawing a card from his pocket, he asked the money-taker, in the frigid accents of contempt, "if he would furnish the lady with a pen and ink."

"Oh certainly, my dear, if you wish it," said

the insolent fellow, addressing himself to Mary. She, however, had found a pencil, and the pen and ink were unnecessary; but the red spot of suppressed anger burnt on the stranger's cheek, although he had sufficient mastery of himself to conceal the verbal expression of it. And he gave the wisest reproof to the menial's impudent familiarity, by offering his arm to Mary Marston, and conducting her to a seat, at some distance, saying, as he did so—"You must allow me the honour of remaining at your side till your servant arrives."

Mary would not have been a true woman had she not been touched by the delicacy of the stranger's attention; but though gentle and refined, and well born as many of her sex's paragons on whose fair brows gleam the jewelled coronets of rank, she was a portionless orphan, over whose opening youth hung the dark and threatening cloud of poverty; or, in a more expressive phrase, she was a *poor relation*, accustomed to slights and neglect, too trifling to be made a matter of complaint, and yet sufficiently palpable to have marvellously depressed a naturally sensitive heart. No wonder, then, that she sensibly felt his deferent manner, when she reminded him that the train by which he desired to reach — was on the point of starting.

"I can wait an hour for the next!" he exclaimed—"such a delay would be very unimportant, compared to that from which your confiding goodness has saved me."

But his politeness—or that something better of which politeness is only intended to be the outward sign—was spared the test; for at that moment a servant bustled into the office in which they were waiting, and after making some short apology to Miss Marston for his negligence, led the way to a carriage, into which the stranger handed her, remained himself uncovered until it turned a corner and was hid from his view.

The eyes of eighteen, however bright, are apt to see matters through a lens peculiar to youth; and if the truth must be owned, to them the shady side of thirty appears the very serene of life; but though the stranger had evidently passed that bright barrier which divides a glittering from a golden decade, the outline of his noble figure, and finely-mounted features, were more firmly impressed in Mary's memory than that of any other living person.

—  
Midwinter had passed away; for though snow lay on the ground, the days had lengthened, and a bright sun gleamed upon the icicle