

several days, had rendered repose indispensable, and she was reluctantly obliged to refuse his request. He left the apartment with an expression of annoyance; and your mother, full of tender conciliation, directly followed, wishing to shew him some rare exotics which had just been sent her, blooming in great perfection. As she passed out, a servant announced the Count de —, who had been inadvertently admitted, and contrary to her express commands. She stopped, and with graceful frankness explained the mistake, which called for an apology from him; and as they thus stood, innocent of all evil thought, De Courcy, returning to the room, unexpectedly stood before them. The demon of jealousy, already raging in his heart, suggested the suspicion, that his wife, who, on plea of illness refused to gratify his wishes, had remained at home only to receive the visit of his supposed rival. Pale with emotion, he remained a moment as if rooted to the spot, his eye flashing with scorn and anger; he then left the house in silence. The Count met his gaze unmoved, but with an expression of calm contempt; and your mother, though strong in conscious innocence, read too truly the expression of his excited countenance, and trembled for the coming storm. A few hours after they met again, at dinner; she had striven for cheerfulness and composure, and his feelings were so completely hid under a mask of cold politeness, that she believed his better reason had prevailed, and the storm of passion subsided.

"De Courcy left his house by day-light on the following morning, attended by a servant, but we received no message, and could form no conjecture whither he had gone. A few hours of anxious suspense passed away, and your mother had just risen from her sleepless pillow, when he abruptly entered her dressing room. I was with her, and never shall I forget the impression his appearance made. His dress was disordered, his countenance pale and haggard, and every feature marked with the deepest anguish. Your mother rose with a faint exclamation! and again sunk trembling on her couch. He approached, and took her hands gently between his own, though every limb trembled with agitation.

"Lucie," he said with calmness, and fixing his troubled eye on her face, 'I would bid you a long,—long farewell.'

"What mean you, De Courcy?" she asked in quick alarm; 'speak I conjure you, and relieve this cruel suspense!'

"My honor has been avenged," he replied, with hoarse and rapid utterance, 'and from this moment we part forever!'

"Part! De Courcy,—my husband!" she exclaimed in a voice of agony; 'tell me, what —'

"The concluding words died on her pallid lips; the sudden conflict of strong emotions could not be endured, and she sunk insensible in my arms, as I hastened to support her. Frantic with alarm, I clasped her to my heart, and still retaining some presence of mind, speedily administered such restoratives as were within my reach. De Courcy looked at her an instant, like one bewildered, then fiercely exclaimed:

"She loves him! See you, how she loves him!"

"Wretched man," I said indignantly, 'you have murdered her; go, and leave us to our misery.'

"My words seemed to penetrate his heart; a change came over his face, the tide of tenderness rushed back upon his soul, and every soft and generous feeling transiently revived. He took your mother from my arms, and laid her gently on the couch, and stood over her inanimate form, gazing with melancholy fondness, while the tears gushed freely from his eyes, and fell on her pale features; as if revived by his returning affection, she slowly unclosed her eyes, and a faint glow gave signs of returning life. De Courcy kissed her lips fervently, and murmuring a few words which did not reach my ear, he gave one long, last look, and turned precipitately to leave the room.

"I had retired from the couch, inexpressibly affected, by a scene which I fondly hoped was the dawn of returning happiness. He stopped as he passed me, and wringing my hand with strong emotion, pointed to your mother, and in a voice scarce audible, said,

"You love her, Justine; comfort her,—cherish her, as I would have done,—God knows how fervently, had she permitted me. Farewell, my sister, forever!"

"You must suffer me to pass rapidly over the remainder of this sad tale; my dear Lucie," continued Madame la Tour, after a brief interval. "It was long before your mother revived to perfect consciousness, and the shock she had received was only a prelude to still deeper misery. The conduct of De Courcy was too soon explained. Yielding to the fatal error, that she had given her affections to the Count de —, in the excitement of his passion, he sent him a challenge, which was instantly accepted. They met, early on that morning, and the Count was carried, as his attendants supposed, mortally wounded from the field of contest. Your father, however, was spared the commission of that crime, for though the Count's life was long despaired of, he did at length recover.