

knew not that I was an inmate of his ancestral hall; nor had he mentioned to his daughter the rumour of her loved brother's untimely end.

Here, were memory my slave, it should linger forever; but even as the hours fled, so does their remembrance, and I must follow where I cannot lead. My health soon regained its wonted tone, tended as I was by the hands of Clara or Loridae, and hour after hour saw us by each other's side. The lover chosen by her father was forgotten, or remembered only to be hated. She knew not yet of her brother's death, and I could not check the current of her happiness by avowing my share in his unhappy end. Nay, in her presence, even I forgot it. Love it was that gave the spring to all our thoughts, and the thrilling ecstasy in which my soul was bathed, was a reward too rich for centuries of misery.

The cup of happiness, it is true, was not unmixed. Every moment was fraught with danger. Should the Baron return, I could not hope to escape the vengeance he would claim for the death of his son. But even life was deemed a light stake, when waged for the heaven in which I moved. In my breast passion was ever master, and love was then the master-passion.

Letters came. The Baron was about to leave the continent for his ancestral home; but yet he mentioned not the sad bereavement under which he suffered. Perhaps he feared to trust the tale to any lip less cautious than his own. He spoke, however, of his daughter's marriage as necessary to his happiness, and begged that she would no longer oppose his will. I saw the letter, and read in it that those days of joy must cease—that I must soon be loathed as the murderer of that brother whose death rendered it imperative that she should wed with one she could never look upon with even a friendly eye. Struggling with feelings under which my frame shook, I could resist no more. It was fate, and I obeyed the mandate.

"Clara," I cried, falling at her feet, "I cannot look on thee, and feel that the light must pass forever from mine eyes, and live. Thou lovest me—thy lip hath spoken it, and my soul hath been steeped in the blissful knowledge: thou hast no sympathy with the gilded trappings of heartless grandeur—the treasure of thy heart is love. Wilt thou be mine? Mad as thou mayest deem me, again I say it, wilt thou be mine? Well I know that I have nought to offer that may compensate for what thou wouldst forego; but, oh, Clara! may we not be happy far away from a cold world with which thou hast no fellowship? Can we not form to ourselves a world, peopled with images of unfading joy—where, blessing and blessed, sorrow shall not even mingle with the dreams that play around our pillows. Say, dearest, that it shall be thus, and I will worship thee forever."

Her only answer was a gush of passionate tears. "Oh, do not torture me," I continued, "with these bitter tears. If I have offended, spurn me from thy presence—bid me begone forever—though my heart break, its last effort will be to obey thy will. But think how doubly miserable must be my lonely fate, now that I have learned to dream of heaven—dreams only the echo of my waking thoughts of thee."

"Urge me no more," she answered; "wait till my father's coming—he may, perhaps, sacrifice something to obtain his daughter's peace."

"Nay, Clara, I cannot, I must not wait thy sire's return. Be mine! or I must go forth a homeless wanderer; for what, without thee, is the world but a dungeon which my soul loathes—with thee, what is there that will not bend to my unyielding will? Be mine! and we shall be rich—for in each other's love will be our treasure? We shall be blest—for such true affection cannot be the harbinger of less than happiest hours."

My arm was now around her, and she did not chide, and I exclaimed, with a heart aching from very rapture,

"I feel thy pulses throb against mine own, and thou dost not shrink from my embrace—then am I blest indeed!"

I must hurry on; for memory dwelling on these brighter spots, renders the gloom of a yet darker hue. Were it not so, it were vain to speak again the words that soothed away the maiden's scruples. Her consent was won. An absent wooer—chosen by a sire who never sought his child's affection, never yet was more than a feather, weighed in the balance against one breathing passion at a maiden's feet, although her choice might win that father's frown. 'Twas so with Clara. Passion triumphed—and SHE WAS MINE..

We were wed at my nurse's cottage, and a smile, as of fierce revenge played over the features of the wretched hag, when she saw me—miserable as I had ever been—indissolubly bound to the Baron's daughter. I questioned nothing. I was too happy in the possession of the beautiful Clara. It seemed however as if the aim of the old crone's life was o'er; she became daily more weak, and her withered features were the pallid impress of death, although she yet breathed, and in a state of speechless insensibility, lingered on until I had left my native land for ever.

I will drop a veil over the few short days in which my bride and I were all in all to each other. I knew that every hour was big with danger to the happiness of the gentle being whose fate was linked with mine, and I was busy with preparations for our departure, that we might go far from the Baron's ken, that she might never feel the searing blight which would have withered up the spring of every joy, had she but dreamed of her brother's death—slain, though