

was no honor in them : he would rifle society of its prizes, its golden ashy-fruited prizes, wring plaudits from the lips, though there were curses and sneers in the hearts; he would *go on*—on restlessly—hating and hated—again like a small Baal—dreaded idol; hated god—on to wide-reaching devastation of the recusants, to loud-sounding cymbals of the prone-hearted herd, to revenge on all his world, if not to victory. He had the courage of Happiness, wanting the simple goodness without which the thing named Happiness is fire-material without fire.

How those busy ambitions tortured him! How would one glimpse of that tempestuous furnace of a heart of his have made Tade Ryan's undilated poverty look bright in contrast; how would it have reconciled him to the empty stomach hard by the clean heart!—and strangled the murderous thoughts that were entering there, and hailed and embraced and thrice welcomed the holy crowds of sorrows which were gathering at every avenue of his thoughts and hopes!

But now that his projects of revenge were nearly all accomplished—now that all the old people were gone out in sorrow, dead or crushed hopelessly—now that every trace of original meanness was effaced, save the Balshazzar characters writ in his own heart, which nothing could efface—now that he had created for himself a little world in which he was worshipped as a God, and all remembrance save of his greatness blotted out—Sir Albin Artslade had leisure for other thoughts, chief of which was this—that all fruit of his life's labours must die with him. He had no son who would be Sir Albin Artslade when he had passed away : the name, the triumph, all would be covered up in the grave, if he had no son to transmit their fame.

If! And this "If!" led him into a train of thought which had several times before flashed across his mind, but only vaguely : now in somewhat distinct and settled shape—thought which carried him back to distant dreams and passions—distorted visions of love—which he could barely remember, so pitchy dark a period covered the years ever since with their tangled uncouth ambitions. Not that a ray of softness reached him now; but misty speculations of interest and necessity which pleased him.

In this frame of mind Sir Albin Artslade had ridden on, and half unconsciously allowed his horse to stray through the avenue of old Kilsheelan Park (now a purposely neglected sheep-

walk, with grass-grown drive and unkempt underwood to remind the victor eternally of his victory); when, as the baronet and his henchmen approached the old Castle, two female figures emerged from the ruins; the one older, more richly-dressed and bedizened than the other, but each in her way a pleasant picture.

What freak of fate was it, chiming in with his thoughts, that thus threw in Sir Albin Artslade's way his amiable guest, the Marchioness of Babblington? For he immediately recognized her in one of the figures; and to his mind she had never looked so lovely and amiable before. Tricked out in a gauzy summer costume, with the shapeliness of her bust well displayed, her languishing dark eyes radiantly bright, and the ravages of time concealed under many a beautifying touch, the Marchioness wanted no single grace or beauty that a man considerably above middle age would look for.

And above all she was so natural! So natural, that she started quite girlishly at sight of the approaching horsemen, and gave a bewitching little cry of surprise and delight on finding one of them to be Sir Albin.

"Oh! Sir Albin, this is, indeed, a pleasant surprise," she cried, with the same girlish impulsiveness, as she advanced to meet the baronet. "I hope you won't be shocked to find me wandering alone so far from home—you see I have already domesticated myself," she added, in pretty confusion. "I am for ever thinking myself at home here."

"I thought you were unwell, Lady Babblington," said the baronet, gallantly dismounting, and pressing the snowy-white little hand delicately entrusted to his.

"I was just a little fatigued—you know we played whist to an unconscionably late hour last night, Sir Albin—we're such an admirable match? But I wore it off," she went on hurriedly, as if in her innocence she had made her last remark rather too pointed. "The morning was so fresh and lovely, it quite cheated me into a long walk, and Miss Artslade and Adolphus were away amusing one another, as children will, I thought, for the adventure of the thing—I'm unpardonably fond of adventure!—I would explore those old ruins for myself, and surprise you all at dinner with my discoveries. Wasn't it romantic?"

"It must have been dull, I think," observed the baronet, dryly.

"By no means, Sir Albin. This dear child"—turning to her young companion, who had modestly retired a few yards off—"has been a