

and rigid like a statue thrown from its base.—For three days she remained in that fearful state; her limbs bound in the rigidity of catalepsy—her eyes open but sightless—her features petrified in their horror-stricken expression, and nothing of life remaining, save a slight warmth of the skin and a feeble flutter of the pulse. All efforts to arouse her seemed futile, and her medical attendants watched, with almost breathless anxiety, for the moment when this ‘*Life-in-Death*,’ should give place to the actual presence of the King of Terrors. But she awoke from this frightful trance—with senses bewildered and chaotic she awoke to physical consciousness, and the very alienation of mind, which prevented her from realizing the full extent of her misery, enabled her physicians to restore her to bodily health.

“The return of reason to Margaret’s darkened mind, seemed like the slow upraising of a heavy curtain which had hidden all the past from her view. Gradually the truth broke upon her, and, at length, *tears*, the first she had shed, though Carrington had lain more than a year in his bloody grave, gave promise of a milder and more manageable sorrow.—But I think she never quite recovered her vigor of mind. Her fine taste, her delicate sensibility, her firmness of character, seemed extinct; and, from the time when she was stricken down to the earth by the lightning-stroke of sorrow, she became merely a passive and unresisting instrument in the hands of others.—She considered the awful death of her husband as a judgment for her former wilfulness; and this idea—a proof of her weakened state of mind—she brooded over, until it became like the skeleton at the Egyptian feast, the daily guest in the chambers of her heart. A system of penance, like that which condemns the nun to the cold austerities of the cloister, became the guide of Margaret’s conduct; and, while she steeled her heart against all cheerful impulses, she determined that the will of her parents should henceforth be the sole guide of her future life.

“It was about four years after the terrible death of Carrington, that I was again summoned to perform the marriage ceremony in the stately mansion of the Danvilles. Margaret was a second time a bride! You start, but she was only affixing the seal of martyrdom to her self-inflicted penance—it was the will of her parents. They had dragged her from one fashionable watering-place to another. They had compelled her to throw aside her weeds of widowhood—they had forced her

into the giddy dance and the midnight revel, and to all this she had submitted without a murmur. ‘It is a part of my punishment,’ she would whisper, when she saw herself decked in ball-room attire; and she went into the midst of gayety even as a martyr might have gone to the stake. But no earthly power could change the cold, stony expression of her once lovely countenance. Its tender sweetness was gone for ever, and those who marked her frozen look, or the mechanical movements of her delicate form, might almost have believed that they looked upon the realization of the fable of antiquity, and actually beheld

‘The marble stiffening o’er the mortal form.’

“During their stay at Newport, the preceding summer, the Danville family had become acquainted with a young Englishman, who, to great apparent modesty of deportment, united the advantages of fortune and high birth, being the second son of the Marquis of Thistledown, and bearing the title of Sir William Thornton. Mrs. Danville was enraptured. A real English nobleman was something better than a foreign Count, for, though titles might be purchased in England, yet they were more costly affairs there than on the continent, and of course more aristocratic, according to her notions. The cold hearted mother saw with delight the possible success of her long cherished scheme, and actually congratulated herself on the chance which had thus left Margaret unfettered. Indeed, after the first natural feelings of horror had subsided, the Danvilles did not pretend to feel any regret at the death of Carrington Wilson. They had never loved him, and they determined that as Margaret had followed her own will in that alliance, they would assert the same privilege on some future occasion, for, it is certain, that the unhappy widow had scarcely recovered from her alienation of mind, when they began to form new projects for a future matrimonial connection. Mrs. Danville left no means untired to secure the attentions of the noble Sir William. She excited his sympathy for Margaret by details of her early widowhood, sedulously concealing however the manner of her bereavement, lest a knowledge of her past insanity should deter him from seeking her hand; and she took care to make him understand that Margaret was now perfectly free to bestow her hand and fortune on a second husband.

“Sir William seemed quite charmed with Margaret, although it must be confessed that, to a stranger, there were few attractions in the