

regard. He began at once to talk of matters of common interest to both, while Isabel hovered about, busy in making wreaths.

As John Vorst talked, his gaze wandered often to the portrait of Martha Spooner Vorst,—for so in his own mind she was always designated. This portrait, now brought to the light of day, was the very same which had been shown to Phileas by the original herself. It represented her as she had been when the bride of the handsome young man whose portrait now hung beside hers, and when she had been flitting about the old house and dominating it with her energetic character. It seemed as if she were once more amongst them, erring and fiercely proud no longer, but clothed as with a garment in her best attributes. Oh, how sweet to think that blessed Christmas Eve that all was forgotten and forgiven, and that, in the mercy of God, full compensation had been made ere that weary soul appeared before the tribunal of Divine Justice!

Isabel held up a completed wreath of freshest evergreens, entwined with holly, whose berries, vividly scarlet, gleamed in contrast. "This is for the portraits, Phileas," she said.

And, standing upon a chair, he at once