

as though arranging her ideas in order to communicate them. At length she drew forth from her pocket a letter which she handed to Eleanor; "Read that," she said, in a low voice—"last night when I quitted you so abruptly, that letter fell in my way—strange that it should have lain so long unnoticed!—and yet I found it in a corner of my *escritoire*, where one would think I could not have so long overlooked it. How it came there I cannot imagine. Read there the first portion of my tale, for I propose, after the manner of some novel writers, to commence it in the middle."

Eleanor, before she opened the letter, looked at the superscription—it was addressed to Arthur Newburk, Esq., and had a foreign post-mark. With trembling fingers Eleanor unfolded this fateful epistle. The hand was evidently that of a gentleman, being large and bold, and a glance at the signature increased Eleanor's trepidation, for it was that of Horatio Campbell. The letter was dated from Lisbon, and its characters were fresh, though several years had elapsed since they were penned. It ran as follows:

"DEAR NEWBURK,

"Amid all the tumult and the clangor of noisy warfare, memory still makes herself heard, and ever her 'still small voice' 'recounts the deeds of the days of other years,' and in recalling the pleasant scenes of boyhood and youth brings you before my mind, for with you were passed my happiest days. Years have gone by since we met—to me they have been productive of many changes—and yet my friendship for you still retains even more than its pristine fervor. But, Arthur! I much fear that you will doubt the truth of this assertion—you will even deem me a mean dissembler, and will ask 'Is this the language of him who has so injured me—of him who has knowingly and deliberately torn from me that which I held dearest on earth—of him, in short, who has outraged one justly dear to me?—Go, vile hypocrite! you are not the Campbell I once loved!' such are the terms in which I hear you apostrophize me, and yet, Arthur, I am innocent of the crimes of which I well know you believe me guilty, and heaven is my witness that I am still in heart and soul the self-same Horatio Campbell whom your boyhood loved. Years may have made me 'a sadder and a wiser man,' but certainly not more guilty, nor less worthy of your love. You will ask how this can be, and I will meet your inquiry half way. Now that death stares me in the face, (as we are just about to open a fresh campaign,) I cannot longer permit you to believe me capable of treachery so vile, and will, therefore, acquaint you with facts which will, I am sure, harrow up

your soul even as they did mine; for what can be more painful than to find hollow deceit and grovelling selfishness where you had placed your whole affection? Oh! is it not agony to find the love of years misplaced, and to be obliged to tear from your heart the idol to which it had so long paid all its homage? Yet this, Arthur, this is your case and mine. Need I say that I allude to Margaret Morton—she whom we both loved, and whom both believed pure and innocent as her face was fair. And yet she was false, Arthur, false as hell! This is, I know, a startling assertion, but I can unhappily prove it true. You must recollect the evening when you found us conversing in the arbor—angry enough you seemed at the time, but little did you imagine the nature of our conversation. On that occasion she told me, in confidence, that your sister had long loved me in secret, but that now, when she had lost all hopes of obtaining my love, she had become furious, "and," added the fair deceiver, in a meek tone, "I have unluckily been fixed upon by her as a fit subject whereon to play off her revengeful malice; so that my life is made miserable by her mean jealousy, and I cannot longer endure it." She then proceeded to relate several instances wherein your sister had testified unkind feelings towards her, all of which I have since found utterly false. At that time, however, I would as soon have suspected an angel of attempting to mislead me, and thus I, under the influence of her wiles, learned to look upon your sister with coldness, and even treated her with marked distrust. Oh, Arthur! when I think of our last interview—when I recall to mind the tearful face of Mary, as I saw it last, and when I feel that those tears were drawn forth by my unkindness, the recollection is almost maddening. Dear, estimable Mary! friend of my youth! never may I again hear your voice speak gentle counsel as it was wont of old—I feel that we shall never meet again; then, Arthur! I would beg that you will forget my errors—of crimes I have never been guilty; and Mary, too—dear, injured Mary! you will I know forgive me when the grave shall have closed on the mortal remains of him whom you once honored with the title of friend."

Such was the letter; and when Eleanor, having come to the conclusion, raised her eyes to Mary's face, she saw that the tears were streaming from her eyes, and that she looked pale and sorrowful. At this moment a visitor was announced, and the ladies were obliged to repress all traces of emotion and smooth their discomposed features into calmness.

Neither Mary nor Eleanor felt disposed to welcome the intruder—the former having taken