

She stood still, with clasped hands till he had done. Then covering her face to hide her blinding tears, she said, "Thank God! Thank God!"

He did not echo the thanksgiving, for his heart was hard; but he was strangely moved.

"I see no cause for gratitude," he said; "why should you so devoutly say, 'Thank God'?"

"Because I know not how it shall profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul. Neither do I know what a man can give in exchange for his soul!"

"And you believe that if I had succeeded as I wished, I should have lost this valuable possession of which you think so much?"

Catherine raised her head. "We can have but one God," she said with peculiar emphasis.

"I know it. I have but one."

"And that one is—?"

Effingham paused. He would have said "your own!" but the lie died away upon his lips. "I believe I must confess my heresy," he cried at length, with a forced laugh that made the listener shrink; "My God is, has been, ever will be, FAME."

"Not so!" she cried, as, throwing her trembling arms around his neck, she looked up in his face with mingled reproach and love. "Not so. You will abandon this false worship—since the Supreme has taught you that it is worse than folly. You will devote your future to the service of the only Being who can satisfy the cravings of your soul. You will seek peace through the great Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. You will aspire after all purity because your Lord is pure. Is it not so? Will you not from this hour rejoice my heart by bowing with me at a nobler shrine?"

He sighed, and put her from him. "Nay, Catherine," he said, "I cannot love the Being who, by your own confession, has blighted all my hope of the world's applause. Had this book been successful—as, indeed it deserves to be—I had then listened with a thankful heart, and realised the kindness of your God. But now, when all is gloomy—and by His arrangement, I cannot, *will* not, must not, bow before Him."

The last words were spoken almost angrily, and the wife held her peace; but not the less did she, in her retirement, pray for him.

Time sped, and summer came again, "to walk the world and bless it;" but Effingham lay on the bed of death. So long had an incurable disease given warning of the end, that he had lost faith in its threatenings. So many times had he been told by his physicians that he must abandon hope, that he had at last resolved to despise their prophecy. But Catherine saw now that he was dying, and gently told him that they must part ere long.

"I do not think so," he said, quietly taking her hand and drawing her towards him; "I pray God that you may be wrong; I wish so much to live!"

"And why?" she asked, whilst her face brightened at his reverent mention of the name of God. "Would you devote yourself anew to your old ambition?"

"Not so. Last night as I lay here I saw how wisely God had dealt with me; how dangerous, how mad, was last year's thirst for fame. I have been taught in the still hours of darkness, to seek for joy in the salvation of which you have so often told me; and I am anxious to live still, that I may prove my love to Him who died for me."

Kate held her breath and listened. Was this he who had refused to bow before his Maker? Was he who had been possessed with the destroying demon of Ambition restored to his right mind? Oh, wondrous power of God! Oh, faithful answer to an almost faithless prayer!

He could not talk much then, but he lay still and heard her read the Bible; and that day tears of penitence ran down the proud man's cheek at the sublime and wondrous story of the Cross. When evening came, he gave up hope of life; and, mourning that the past had been so wasted, left all the future in the hands of God, and cried, "Not my will, Lord, but thine be done!"

At midnight he beckoned Catherine to his side, and said, "Sweet wife, I go to join our children yonder. It may rejoice you when you are left alone (yet *not* alone) to know that all the aspirations of my poet heart are realised in this triumphant hour; that never, in my dream of fame and power, did I anticipate a joy so pure as this that fills my soul; that I stand now, and consciously, upon the threshold of a perfection and a purity for which I have sought in vain through all the regions of philosophy and song. Be happy, Kate; my soul has found its rest:—here, in the arms of Deity—here on the breast of God!"

He ceased; and with that name upon his lips, journeyed from earth to heaven.