

to obtain for me the hand of Miss Hope, without any farther delay."

"What aid of mine would you have," asked Mabel in a sullen tone, "you have no faith in my art, neither has the girl ever sought me to ask what the future has in store for her, though I have read that on her fair brow, which she would not suffer the lines of her tiny palm to reveal to my gaze."

"It is because she fears you, Mabel, that she has ever shunned you. I think your predictions would inspire her with such awe, that she would feel impelled to be guided by them. Therefore I would have you haunt her with your presence, cross her path perpetually, and when she least dreams of you, appear suddenly before her. Mutter in mysterious tones of Delancy's fate, and foretell her approaching union with another, whom by your darkly uttered hints, she may readily recognize. This course cannot fail in producing the desired effect, for however she may affect to despise your predictions, her mind is far too sensitive not to be deeply affected by them, though their influence may not be perceptible, or at least not avowed to herself."

"I can do all this," said Mabel,—"nay I have already done it in more instances than one, and changed the hue of a whole life by my arts—but then I won a rich guerdon for my pains—what am I to expect from your hands by yielding compliance to your request?"

"This is but an earnest of what shall be yours if success attend your stratagem," said Mowbray, casting a purse into her lap, through whose net work glittered the shining ore she loved,—“and on the day in which I receive the fortune of my bride, I will place a sum in your hands far exceeding in value, what even your avarice might presume to crave.”

"She has riches beyond count," said the aged crone, as her bony fingers greedily clutched the silken purse,—“promise me but one poor hundred of her many thousands, and she shall be yours before this maple changes its green mantle for the crimson robe of autumn.”

"Say you so?" exclaimed Mowbray, a smile of triumph for a moment lighting up his dark and sinister features,—“let those words be verified, and the sum you ask is yours. None are witness to my truth, but I swear it, and will faithfully abide by my promise.”

"And on those terms, so will I by mine," said the woman; "but deceive me, and though you wed her, wo and misery shall be the portion of your married life."

"Nay, no threats woman,—but remember the bond, and be speedy—there is no time to be lost."

And with these words Mowbray turned from her, and rapidly retraced his way from the glen. The last tinge of twilight had faded from the west, when he regained the lane, but the moon had risen higher

in the heavens, and was shedding her pearly light down upon the still earth, investing the landscape with that soft and shadowy beauty, in which both sense and soul so dearly love to luxuriate. It is the pure only, who are exquisitely alive to the witchery of nature, and it is therefore no wonder that Mowbray again passed on, unheeding and unobserving of that, which was designed by a benevolent Creator, to inspire the heart with intense emotion and delight.

He felt that he was playing a base and dishonourable part, and he strove in rapid motion to still the reproachful voice of his awakened conscience. He had nearly reached home, when in passing a little summer-house near the centre of the garden, a slight sound from within caught his ear. He paused for an instant irresolute, then softly advancing to the building, found himself standing unobserved in the presence of Annabelle. She was sitting with her head leaning upon the table, and her face buried in her hands, and one or two deep drawn sighs evinced the painful emotions to which she was giving indulgence—there in that silent spot,—alone, as she thought, and unnoted by any eye, save His, who knew how to pity the sorrows He had permitted her to endure.

Mowbray felt that he ought not to intrude upon her privacy, but he could not forbear pausing to observe the beautiful effect of the moonlight, as streaming through the open door, it fell with softened radiance on her lovely figure,—and then, the moment seemed so favourable for pressing his suit, that he had not manliness enough to depart and leave it unimproved. It was, perhaps, he thought, the very crisis of his fate,—the rumour, that some of the crew of the Fearless were yet alive and held in captivity by the pirates, had been communicated to him by a friend in Cuba, but it had not yet obtained general circulation—he doubted even if it was known to any individual beside himself; he did not believe that Mabel had ever heard it whispered, till he had imprudently mentioned it to her, and now he knew not how soon she might make use of it, utterly to frustrate his hopes; he therefore deemed it wisest to seize upon every opportunity for the accomplishment of his purpose, and make sure of his prize before any untoward chance should occur to wrest it from him.

Yielding to these suggestions, he entered the summer-house, and at the sound of his step, gentle as he strove to make it, Annabelle started, and raised her head, shewing a face inexpressibly beautiful and engaging, yet still wet with the traces of recent tears.

"Mr. Mowbray," she exclaimed, in a reproachful tone; "I thought you had been absent, and that here, for one hour at least, I might remain unmolested."

"Pardon me," he said, in a subdued voice; "I