

lost coin, was lost. Never, until that moment, did I experience how terrible was the torture of self-reproach, or how fathomless the abyss of human wretchedness. I could have raised my hand against my own father, but, vile and contemptible as I was, I was not enough of the coward within me to accomplish the act. I thought of my mother. She had long disowned me, partly from my attachment to Hanover. But, though I had renounced the estates which my father had bequeathed me, I knew that she was still rich, and she intended to bestow her wealth upon me; for there were but two of us. Yet I remembered how fondly she had loved me, and I did not think that there was a feeling in my mother's breast that could spurn from me a penitent son—for nature, at the slightest spark, bursteth into flame. I resolved, therefore, to go as the prodigal in the Scripture, and to throw myself at her feet, and confess that I had sinned against Heaven, and against her sight.

I wrote a note to my injured Catherine, and then that I was suddenly called away, so that I would not see her again perhaps some weeks. Almost without a coin in my pocket, I took my journey from London to Cumberland, where my mother dwelt.

Light was gathering around me when I reached London, on the road leading to St. Anne's. But I will not go through the details of my tedious journey; it is sufficient to say, that I allowed myself but little time for sleep or rest, and, on the eighth day after leaving London, I found myself, after an absence of eighteen years, again upon the shores of my ancestors. Foot-sore, fatigued, broken down, my appearance bespoke a long and worn dejection. I rather halted than walked along, turning my face aside from my father's passenger, and blushing at the thought of recognition. It was mid-day when I reached an eminence, covered with elm trees, and skirted by a hedge of hawthorn. It commanded a view of what was called the Priory, the house in which I was born, and which was situated within a mile from where I stood. The village church, surrounded by a ramp of dreary yew, lay immediately at the foot of the hill to my right, and the road leading from thence to the Priory crossed my path. It was a raw and dismal day, and the birds sat shivering on the leafless

branches, and the cold, black clouds, seemed wedged together in a solid mass, ready to fall upon the earth and crush it, and the wind moaned over the bare fields. Yet disconsolate as the scene appeared, it was the soil of childhood on which I trode. The fields, the woods, the river, the mountains, the home of infancy were before me, and I felt their remembered sunshine rekindling in my bosom the feelings that make a patriot. A thousand recollections flashed before me.—Already did fancy hear the congratulations of my mother's voice, welcoming her prodigal—feel the warm pressure of her hand, and her joyous tears falling on my cheek. But again I hesitated, and feared that I might be received as an outcast. The wind howled around me—I felt impatient and benumbed—and, as I stood irresolute, with a moaning chime the church bell knelled upon my ear. A trembling and foreboding fell upon my heart, and before the first echo of the dull sound died in the distance, a muffled peal from the tower of the Priory answered back the invitation of the house of death, announcing that the earth would receive its sacrifice. A veil came over my eyes, the ground swam beneath my feet—and again and again did the church bell issue forth its slow, funeral tone, and again was it answered from the Priory.

Emerging from the thick elms that spread around the Priory and stretched to the gate, appeared a long and melancholy cavalcade. My eyes became dim with a presentiment of dread, and they were strained to torture.—The waving plumes of the hearse became visible. Every joint in my body trembled with agony, as though agony had become a thing of life.—I turned aside to watch it as it passed, and concealed myself behind the hedge.—The measured and grating sound of the carriages, the cautious trampling of the horses' feet, and the solemn pace of the poorer followers, became more and more audible on my ear.—The air of heaven felt substantial in my throat, and the breathing I endeavoured to suppress became audible, while the cold sweat dropped as icicles from my brow.—Sadly, with faces of grief, unlike the expression of hired sorrow, passed the solitary mutes; and in the countenance of each I recognised one of our tenantry. Onward moved the hearse and its dismal pageantry:—My heart fell, as with a blow, within my bosom.—For a moment I would have fancied