

quiet of the sick room, the old man laid his hand on her shoulder—"Rest now, my pet. Put out the lamp."

She did so, and then resumed her place. He leaned back in his chair, with closed eyes, meditating many new and strange things. The fire-light flickering on his face—on the silver hair—the pale, closed eyelids—the thin lips, that ever and anon moved restlessly, as in some mute utterance of the thoughts that possessed him.

The flame-light flashed, too, on the figure of Caroline, who leaned her head between her two hands, and looked fixedly into the red heart of the fire. Her face also was very pale—the lines of the mouth were more rigid than was natural to them, and the eyes—Carry's clear, steadfast, fearless eyes!—were clouded with a kind of intent searchingness.

It might have been a long or a short time that had elapsed while the old man and the young girl each sat still and silent. But at length Mr. Hesketh spoke in a tone that startled her, it was at once so distinct and so tremulous—"Caroline! teach me—teach me a prayer."

She looked up at him almost wildly; then she drooped her head, hid her face, clasping her hands tightly before it. The cry of her newly-stirred heart arose—a yearning, entreating cry—from the very depths of the agony of a vague remorse, remorse she hardly knew for what, but none the less rending and terrible. Was it only now, that for the first time in all her life, the desire, the longing to pray came upon her, to be thus strangely echoed? The set words of many a prayer familiar to her lips rose to them, but her heart rejected them all. The sense of her ignorance, her impotence, her unworthiness, overwhelmed her—ay, and saved her.

"Caroline!" entreated the tremulous voice again.

It could not—must not be denied. But faint, low, so that the listener bent his head to catch the accents, came the first utterances.

"Our Father—Our Father, O help us!"

And with a great cry Caroline fell upon the old man's neck.