

Her lips formed one or two words, but no sound issued from them.

"In you, with you, my salvation rests! I am lost if I lose you. But I shall not, cannot lose you; my guide, my companion, my sweet, pure Carry. You love—you love me, and by your love I hold you, and I claim you—mine!"

He would have put his arm round her, but there she recoiled from him. She moved aside towards Miss Kendal, and clasped both her hands close. But still she looked fixedly on the man at her feet. There was some fascination for her in that wild, haggard face—the unveiled face of her prophet.

And he, emboldened by that gaze, again said, "You love me, Carry. You *must* forgive, for you love me!"

Then spoke Caroline, in her young voice, clear and ringing as a bell—"I forgive you; but I love you no more—I love you no more."

Distinct, incontestable came the words. Then she rose, gently put aside Miss Kendal's proffered aid, and walked firmly, steadily from the room, without another word, or glance, or sign.

CHAPTER XV.

The executors of Mr. Hesketh's will, the trustees of the property, were Elizabeth Kendal and George Farquhar—"my old friend's son, in whom from my observation and experience of him, I have much confidence," ran the terms of the will. It was well for the former that her pupils left her to stay with relations about this time. Woman of business, of decision, and action, though she was, she might have found her multifarious duties too much for her. Besides, she was cruelly anxious over Caroline. She longed to get her away from the neighbourhood, to give her change of air, people, and scene. Change, that panacea for youth! It would seem as if the young, under calamity, possessed the power of shedding their past existence, as birds moult their feathers: so often do they rise from the sackcloth and ashes of a past grief into new and brilliant life. But this seemed scarcely likely to be the case with Caroline. True, she woke from the heaviness of the first dark woe, into a serene quietude; true, she soon began to interest herself in the duties of her new position, as prospective mistress of a large estate. No energy was wanting, she spared neither time nor thought, and had even the virtue to be patient over all the tiresome legal formalities which were necessary. With unwearying perseverance, she read over a vast number of papers, written over in that peculiar round text, so hateful to many an