

that this little spark of life was allowed to remain. You see she is perfectly insensible to all external things; she is evidently unconscious—her moments may be very few.

*Mother.* O Father, I will hope against hope! If our Lord has granted to a mother's prayer this little breath of life, how much more will he not bestow an answer to that sacrament which pleads for life in the very presence of death, and to which he has given a promise that it shall bring health to the sick, as well as forgiveness to the sinner. [*She kneels beside Agnes and whispers in her ear.*] My child, Father Dominic is here, to give you the last sacrament of the Church. If you have any consciousness, say a little prayer.

*Angel whispers to Agnes:* Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

SCENE VII.

The same room, darkened. HELEN sits watching beside the bed, and from time to time peeps between the curtains.

*Helen.* She still sleeps; and now she looks like herself again. How little did I think we should ever see again that pink bloom on her cheek, and those hands, which were so rigid but a few hours since, relaxed by sleep, and meekly crossed upon her bosom as usual. Oh, how delightful to sit here, if it were only to hear her breathe! even for that I could never be weary of thanking God. The last five hours seem only like so many minutes; and yet I have done nothing but sit here, and listen to the same breathing that I might have heard at any time for the last seven years. How little we think of the mercies every day bestowed upon us, just because we are never without them! The very reason that we should never be without gratitude to God! Let me offer up every breath of my life now, once for all, in grateful adoration. But see! she moves, she wakes; with her eyes still closed she makes the sign of the cross, and offers up her first thoughts to God.

*Agnes.* Is Oswald there?

*Helen.* No, sweetest, it is I. You shall not see Oswald until you wish it yourself. But he is not going to tease you any more.