

do or say upon the occasion ; whether to give way to my feelings or restrain them still. Misconstruing this hesitation into indifference—or reluctance even—to accept her gift, Helen suddenly snatched it from my hand, threw it out on to the snow, shut down the window with an emphasis, and withdrew to the fire.

"Helen ! what means this ?" I cried, electrified at this startling change in her demeanour.

"You did not understand my gift," said she—"or, what is worse, you despised it : I'm sorry I gave it to you ; but since I did make such a mistake, the only remedy I could think of, was to take it away."

"You misunderstood me, cruelly," I replied, and in a minute I had opened the window again, leaped out, picked up the flower, brought it in, and presented it to her, imploring her to give it me again, and I would keep it for ever for her sake, and prize it more highly than anything in the world I possessed.

"And will this content you ?" said she, as she took it in her hand.

"It shall," I answered.

"There, then ; take it."

I pressed it earnestly to my lips, and put it in my bosom, Mrs Huntingdon looking on with a half-sarcastic smile.

"Now, are you going ?" said she.

"I will if—if I must."

"You are changed," persisted she—"you are grown either very proud or very indifferent."

"I am neither, Helen—Mrs Huntingdon. If you could see my heart——"

"You must be one,—if not both. And why Mrs Huntingdon !—Why not Helen, as before ?"

"Helen, then—dear Helen !" I murmured. I was in an agony of mingled love, hope, delight, uncertainty, and suspense.

"The rose I gave you was an emblem of my heart," said she : "would you take it away and leave me here ?"

"Would you give me your hand too, if I asked it ?"