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myself and Gwen drew near the bedside. Maitland was now awake and following her every motion.

"I have something I want to say to you," she said, bending over him. "Do you feel strong enough to listen?" He nodded his head and she continued. "You have already done a great deal for me, yet I come to you now to ask a further favour,—I will not say a sacrifice—greater than all the rest. Will you try to grant it?"

The rich, deep tones of her voice, vibrant with tender earnestness, seemed to me irresistible.

"I will do anything in my power," the invalid replied, never once moving his eyes from hers.

"Then Heaven grant it be within your power!" she murmured, scarcely above a whisper. "Try not to despise me for what I am about to say. Be lenient in your judgment. My happiness, perhaps my very life, depends upon this issue. I love you more than life; try to love me, if only a little!"

I watched the effect of this declaration with a good deal of anxiety. For fully half a minute Maitland seemed to doubt the evidence of his senses. I saw him pinch himself to see if he were awake, and being thus reassured, he said slowly: "Try—to—love—you! In vain have I tried *not* to love you from the mo-