

"But never mind him now. Come, we will go. She never spoke hardly to me. I cannot believe she thought me guilty. Come, I will go and see her. Her face will tell me all I want to know."

She opened the door, and the brother and sister moved across the hall and up the staircase.

"She is in her own room?" he asked, laying his hand on the latch, and turning to Maud.

"Yes, Frank. But remember what you are going to see," she returned, astonished at the calmness of her impetuous brother.

"I know," he said, "leave me alone;" and without another word he turned the handle of the door, entered, and closed it behind him, leaving his sister on the other side. Then, turning the key to prevent any surprise, he walked quickly to the bed, and drew aside the covering from the face of the dead.

For some moments he stood motionless, with his eyes riveted upon her whom he had tenderly loved, esteemed, and silently pitied, and who he knew well fully returned his affection. Then with a groan he sank upon his knees, and drew one cold hand within his own, and kissed those lips which had so often spoken loving words to him. "Oh, mother, mother! speak to me once again, only once; tell me you believe in my innocence. Oh, mother, mother!"

He was roused by a gentle knock at the door, and rose hastily from his knees. "Frank, you must come at once, please. I hear the sound of the carriage wheels coming down the avenue. My father will be here presently." One more kiss upon the cold forehead, and Frank drew the covering again over the beautiful, pale face, and joined his sister, looking almost as pale as the lifeless form he had just left.

"Go into my room, Frank. You must make your escape from the house when you know papa is safely shut into the library. I shall take him there while I tell him about her. Lock yourself into my room, or Sophy may come in and find you there," said Maud, as she took hold of his hand, and pointed to an open door. "Go quickly, and do be careful not to let any one see you," urged Maud, as the carriage stopped before the house door.

Frank lingered long enough to hear his father's heavy step enter the vestibule, and his loud voice asking for Miss Brereton.

"Frank, dear Frank, what are you going to do? I must see you again," whispered Maud.

"I do not know, nor care. Let me go!" he answered hoarsely.

"Maud, Maud!" cried Mr. Brereton from below.

"Promise to meet me to-morrow," she said. "Don't go quite away."

"Much you care about that," was the sneering reply.