

had loved her father with engrossing affection, and would have cared little for any distress or poverty could she still have been by his side.

She sat in deep thought for some time, apparently occupied in gazing into the street, though the prospect was not such as was likely to engage her attention. At that early hour there were but few passengers, and a housemaid, deep in a flirtation with the milkman, and the grocer's boy, lazily taking down the shutters of the shop opposite, were the only people at present to be seen. To leave England! She could not at a moment's notice decide on such a step. She had hoped that before Philip's letter came, she should have had no need to do so. To Philip it seemed simply the most natural course for her to take; but then he was ignorant of the one hope, the one tie, that bound her to her native land. She had never told him of her assurance that she was dear to Arthur Kendal, and should be asked to be his wife. Philip knew that she had rejected other suitors. Agnes had never hesitated to tell him of those who had wooed in vain; but of him who had not wooed openly, but who had in every other way given her to understand that he loved her, she had never spoken. Did he care for her still? He had been away, she knew, since the misfortune that had come upon her; but he must have heard the tidings, and why had he not been the first to seek her and offer the comfort he knew it was in his power to bestow? She could not think he could be unworthy; she could not believe that her loss of wealth could so change one whom she had imagined all that was high and noble. Had he been poor, she would have been the first to offer to release him from a tie which might have been a burden; but he possessed wealth which made her fortune, large as it was to have been, a matter of slight consequence. No. She must wait, for a time at least, before she accepted Philip's invitation. *He* would yet be true.

She was roused from her reverie by a sound in the room above. She folded up the letter, and taking in her hand a cup of tea which had been standing by the fire,

went upstairs. The room she entered was as comfortless as the one below, but possessed an ornament in its inhabitant, a most lovely woman, who, in her delicate beauty and rich dress, seemed strangely out of place amid the sordid surroundings. She lay tossing restlessly on the pillows, over which streamed a mass of fair, bright hair, only partially confined by a silver comb. Her eyes were bright and her cheek flushed, and the picture was rendered still more brilliant by the gay colors of the silk dressing-gown she wore. Two or three letters lay scattered on the counterpane before her, and she was looking impatiently towards the door when Agnes entered.

"I thought you were never coming," she said, as Agnes set the cup down by her side, "and I am dying with thirst."

"How do you feel this morning?" asked Agnes.

"Much as usual. I don't suppose I shall ever be better. My heart beats as if I should choke, and Tantalus never suffered the torments of thirst that I do."

Agnes did not reply. Perhaps she was used to these or similar complainings. She only re-arranged the pillows, and held the cup to the lips of the invalid.

"What abominable tea!" said the latter, as she finished it. "But it is no matter what I have now, I suppose."

There was a pause.

"I want to talk to you this morning, if you feel well enough," said Agnes at last, "and to ask if you have thought of what we are to do. I have very little money left, and we ought to decide."

"What can I do? How can I help myself? Do you think I can go back to Miss Maitland's and be governess again, after seven years of comfort and happiness? I would rather die. I am dying."

"I hope not. I hope you take too dark a view of your illness, and that you will soon be well and strong again."

"If you had lost a husband as good and kind as mine, you would know how to sympathize with me. And to be left without a farthing in the world too! It is very hard. He should have made some settlement on me that could not be touched, whatever happened."