

the being denied admittance to her mother and sister. Mrs. Fortescue and her ball were of course unregarded, and it was only late in the evening that Belinda remembered it was due to acquaint Captain Blanchard with the unhappy cause of their absence. In what trifles are our destinies weaved—had her note been sent but a few hours earlier, what heart-rending misery would have been averted.

At an early hour on the following morning, Blanchard, wrapped in his military cloak, unexpectedly entered Lindsay's study at the parsonage—his face was pale and haggard, his eyes glared and dull, as if sleep had not closed them through the night.

"Merciful Father," exclaimed Lindsay, starting from his seat; "what direful calamity have you come to tell me. Alas, Beljuda!"

"Lindsay," said Blanchard, in a hoarse voice; if you can say aught to comfort a desperate man, you behold him before you—guiltless, yet with the brand of guilt upon him."

"Guiltless, and yet desperate—unravel this mystery, suspense is intolerable—sit down Blanchard, you look miserably worn."

Blanchard did so, and threw off his cloak; his disordered dress unchanged since the ill-fated ball, clearly showed that he had never been in bed.

"Lindsay," he asked, after a silence of some minutes; "have any idle reports reached so far as this, in which my name has been mentioned?"

"None whatever, Blanchard."

"Then there are some abroad, which calumniate me, on account of the unmeaning attentions which I have paid to that heartless woman, Mrs. Fortescue," and he ground his teeth in bitterness of spirit; "I have frequently, when prevented going so far as St. Margerets, been induced to ride with her, walk with her, or visit at her house. Her conversation amused me, and beguiled many an idle hour—I admired, and I pitied her, for she confided to me her unhappiness with her husband—beyond this I never went even in thought—do you credit me?"

"From my heart, Blanchard, else you would not have come hither."

"It had been well if others thought the same," continued Blanchard; "but these were quite sufficient to rouse the demon scandal, and false tales were spread and exaggerated in the neighbourhood, which at length reached the ears of Mr. Fortescue; this she revealed to me a few mornings ago, while shedding torrents of tears. I was annoyed on every account, but I hoped they would be entirely contradicted at the ball last night, by the appearance of Mrs. Harrington's party, and I went to it in gay spirits. Hour after hour fled away, I lingered at the door waiting, and watching for a considerable time, but in vain—none from St. Margerets were announced, which I could only account for in one way, that the evil stories must have reached them also. Good God, what harrowing reflections did this idea pro-

duce, feeling as I certainly did, undeserving of severe censure. I became angry and irritable, I swallowed large glasses of champagne to drown thought; I waltzed, I danced, until my brain reeled. At a late hour I was standing with Mrs. Fortescue, apart from the crowd, many of the guests were already gone—she had looked unhappy all the evening—tears were in her eyes, as she placed flowers in my hands, round which appeared a folded paper—I received them, scarcely conscious that I did so. What I said to her, I have not the slightest recollection—madness no doubt it was in such a moment. Suddenly her countenance assumed an expression of alarm, I turned round, and beheld Mr. Fortescue, who had been standing near us unperceived, his eyes intently fixed upon us. He came forward and demanded an interview with me, when a scene of violence, accusation and bitter recrimination ensued, which it is needless to recapitulate—he attempted to wrest the paper from my hold, but I thrust it into my bosom. He would then have collared me, as the term 'villain' burst from his lips—I raised him in my arms and hurled him furiously to the ground. The rest may easily be imagined, and I am to meet him an hour hence at the Heron's point."

"Great and eternal God," exclaimed Lindsay, clasping his hands, and gazing upwards with an agonised countenance; "this then is the return which thy creatures make for all thy rich mercies, for the sacrifice thou hast made to redeem them, for the blessings thou hast strewed in their path—they break thy commands, they trample on thy laws, and in their blind headlong passion, rush unprepared and charged with every sin into thy awful presence. Blanchard," he continued, rising in a state of extreme agitation; "you dare not meet death thus."

"Lindsay, if my mind had not been unalterably fixed, I should not have ventured here," returned Blanchard, also rising; "you may as well seek to quell the raging of the sea by your weak voice, as to change me from my purpose—it is imperative, my honour demands it."

"Imperative to commit sin, to commit murder, and to break the high commands of your Creator, who, according to your creed, has issued a fiat, which it would be improper and dishonourable to obey. Can such be the case?—you know it cannot. For what did Christ suffer?—to save us. For what did he leave the happiness of Heaven to become a wanderer, a man of sorrow?—to redeem us. For what did he bear and forbear, who when he was reviled, reviled not again—who, when he was treated with scorn, with every indignity which his enemies could inflict, murmured not. For what was all this, but an example for us to follow. You behold in His character perfection, and yet you say that your honour demands another line of conduct—demands vengeance, that the aggressor must be laid