

of our lost child, that, had it lived, would have united its parents, I implore you to be mine!"

"Too generous!" said Alice, almost sinking beneath the emotions that shook that gentle spirit and fragile form. "How can I suffer your *compassion* — for it is but compassion — to deceive yourself? You are of another station than I believed you. How can you raise the child of destitution and guilt to your own rank? And shall I — I, who, Heaven knows! would save you from all regret — bring to you now, when years have so changed and broken the little charm I could ever have possessed, this blighted heart and weary spirit? Oh, no, no!" and Alice paused abruptly, and the tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Be it as you will," said Maltravers, mournfully; "but, at least, ground your refusal upon better motives. Say that now, independent in fortune, and attached to the habits you have formed, you would not hazard your happiness in my keeping; perhaps you are right. To *my* happiness you would indeed contribute: your sweet voice might charm away many a memory and many a thought of the baffled years that have intervened since we parted; your image might dissipate the solitude which is closing round the future of a disappointed and anxious life. With you, and with you alone, I might yet find a home, a comforter, a charitable and soothing friend. This you could give to me, and with a heart and a form alike faithful to a love that deserved not so enduring a devotion. But I, — what can I bestow on you? Your station is equal to my own; your fortune satisfies your simple wants. 'Tis true the exchange is not equal, Alice. Adieu!"

"Cruel!" said Alice, approaching him with timid