

blind fanatical zeal; I pity your wretched infatuation; and trust that my blood, and the blood of your other unhappy victim, may not be visited upon your head. One request, however, I would make to you, before we part for ever." She paused and tears filled her eyes. "When this poor form is dust, be kind to my orphan boy; and protect him from injury."

She could not utter another word. The thoughts of her child, had opened up all the floodgates of her heart and the spirit so long braced up to bear against an unexpected calamity, now gave way in torrents of tears. The exhortations of Master Hubert fell unheeded upon her ear; her thoughts, her feelings, wishes and hopes, at that moment were all concentrated in her child. Crawling on her knees to his feet, she exclaimed in accents of soul thrilling earnestness:

"Procure me a sight of my child—of Brandon's child—and I will forgive you with my last breath!"

Unable to control his emotion, and overwhelmed with remorse, Master Vincent promised to do his best to obtain her request, and rushed from the cell.

It was late in the evening of that sad day that a traveller entered a small inn, upon the road side, some twenty miles from Leicester. He was evidently much fatigued with a long journey; and, to judge by his haggard and care-worn countenance, seemed ill at ease. He enquired of the landlord if he could procure a fresh horse to prosecute his journey, as he wished to reach Leicester before the assizes terminated.

"The assizes are over already," returned the master of the inn. "I am but just returned from the town. The judge had left the place before I quitted. There were only three criminal cases this term; and odd enough they were all women."

The stranger put down the untasted bumper of wine, and turning very pale, enquired the nature of their crime.

"Witchcraft, doubtless. 'Tis a damnable sin—but had I been in the jury box, I never could have joined in the verdict of guilty against one of the most beautiful women I ever saw. My heart bled for her, Sir; I am sure she was innocent of the crime for which they have condemned her to die."

"To die!" shrieked the man, dropping the goblet from his hand. "To be burnt at the stake. It cannot be—you must be mistaken!"

"No mistake; 'tis a melancholy truth, Sir. A woman whom all the world respected. The daughter of one of the proudest old families in the country; the widow of a most worthy gen-

tleman; a young mother too. Oh! Lord, if they have condemned her without just cause, which I am sure they have, it is a dreadful thing."

"Oh Lord!" murmured Walter Fenwick, for it was he. "It is too dreadful. She is as pure as an angel of heaven. They cannot, they dare not touch one hair of her precious head. And she—how did she bear this awful sentence?"

"As gently as a lamb. She called upon God to attest her innocence, and prayed him to forgive her murderers. Ah! Sir, you may well weep if you knew aught of the poor lady. It drew tears from more eyes than mine. It was a piteous sight."

The person to whom he spoke, heard him not. He had fallen down on the ground in a deep swoon.

On being restored to his senses, instead of instantly following the judge, and getting him to revoke his sentence, by proving his share in the conspiracy against Monica, he remained two days at the inn in such a state of agony and mental distraction, that he was unable to resolve upon any thing. How gladly would he have given his own body to be burned instead of hers. How beautiful, how glorious she appeared to him now—what a monster of depravity and wickedness must he see in her eyes. Then he thought of her little son, who would be rendered an orphan by his treachery.

He pictured the agony that rent the fond and tender heart of the young mother when forced to part from him; and he bitterly cursed himself as the cause of all her sufferings. Had his miserable accomplice Dorothy at that moment stood before him he would have killed her on the spot.

Still he could not force himself to believe that she would die—that God would permit her to fall a sacrifice to his disappointed lust, and her malignant rival's treachery.

And thus pondering and doubting, he let hope deceive him, and lost the precious time which if well employed could have saved her. The third morning he resumed his journey to London; and having obtained an interview with the judge, he begged him, in the most pathetic manner to revoke his sentence. This he would by no means do, until Fenwick revealed to him the whole tale of his damning guilt. But here new difficulties occurred. The time was so short, and many legal forms had to be attended to, before the desired pardon could be procured. The impatient man at length sought the Earl of Leicester, who, struck with horror at the account which his favorite gave him, obtained from the Queen, an order to the Sheriff of the County, to