

cally speaking with his own heart of its load of misery. Suddenly he paused.

"Mother! dear mother!" he said, and his voice was calm, "Our burden is greater than we can bear. Let us kneel to Him who can bring comfort and consolation, even to such as we are."

"My darling—my noble boy! I had forgotten; but the lesson you teach me is sweeter because it is spoken from your lips. We will kneel together."

And they did kneel, though no sound was heard from the lips of either. But the prayer was not the less sincere, or the less fervent, because they wanted words to speak it. Calmness by degrees was restored to the minds of mother and son, and when they rose, neither was so utterly woe-stricken as they at first appeared. There was a Comforter within.

Suddenly the sound of wheels was heard. Both started up, and made a movement as if to open the door. It was opened without their aid, however, and Craighton, supported by his accomplice, staggered into the room.

He was a melancholy spectacle, and had the son wanted a confirmation of his worst fears, it was now afforded him. His head was swollen—his eyes were bloodshot,—his arm supported by a handkerchief fastened around his neck,—his clothes were torn, and covered with blood. In his eye, however, there was a sternness which showed too truly that though stricken he was not subdued, and that no thought of repentance for what had passed had entered the darkened "palace of his soul."

His wife seemed as if it were only what she anticipated. She expressed no surprise. When he gasped out "Water!" she brought it to him and held it mechanically to his lips. It had long appeared as if nothing could quench in her spirit the love which she had once felt for him. But now she appeared to be actuated only by a sense of habit. She tenderly washed his wounds and bruises, and even assisted Whitley to bind up his shattered arm—fortunately the principal bone had not been broken. She then assisted in placing him on the bed, where, having drunk a composing draught, he requested that he might be left alone.

The son sat aghast. He had not been seen by his father, and he could not conquer the repugnance he felt so far as to approach him. His eye was at length arrested by the appearance of Whitley, whom he had seen before, and known as of rather indifferent character. The wretch quailed beneath the glance of the excited young man; but, determined to bear it out bravely, he asked for some spirits, and requested that he might be furnished with a bed in which to take

a sleep, pleading fatigue, caused by his exertions in bringing home the wounded man.

"Rest nor refreshment here you cannot—you shall not have," said Richard. "You have brought us misery enough. I know you, Sir. Begone!"

"Softly, my man," replied Whitley, with his cunning, yet sneering smile. "What you know of me you dare not tell. What will only cage me will hang your father."

The young man started and turned ghastly pale, and the mother held on to the table for support. She must else have fallen. The ruffian saw his advantage, and pursued it.

"You'd better let me have what I want. I have no wish to harm your father. But you are fools to quarrel with me. I know that of *him* which gives me the command of his cravat. Let us be friends." He threw himself back in his chair, and crossed his legs as if he felt perfectly at home.

Richard had recovered his self-possession. He saw that he had a ruffian and a coward to deal with, and that every inch yielded would be stretched to its utmost limit. He therefore answered only with a word, but into that the whole bitterness of his spirit was concentrated:

"Begone!"

"I won't begone," said the ruffian, turning himself in his chair. "This house I'll make my own while I like to stay in it—no thanks to anybody. Fetch me some spirits—I'm thirsty as well as tired, and I want to sleep."

The passions of Richard Craighton were fiery, but he had put a curb upon them, and had done much to subdue their violence, and keep them under control. He found them rising, however, and struggle manfully though he did to crush them, they would not yield. At length, as he saw Whitley look familiarly towards his mother, with a nod, and a leer of his eye, as though she knew his power, and would respect it, the pent-up storm gave way. He rose from his seat, walked calmly but firmly towards his tormentor, who shrank in terror as he advanced, and seizing him by the collar, dragged him towards the door, and in spite of his maniac struggles, and muttered threats of vengeance, cast him forth into the fields. Having done this, he closed the door, walked back to his seat, and sat down with his head on the table, where worn out with excitement, toil, and watching, he fell into a profound and dreamless sleep.

"My poor boy!" said the weeping mother, "Yours is indeed a hapless fate. And Mary, too. What is to become of her? For her sake Richard must not be suffered to give way. In him, is her only hope."