

that others than Miss Porter believed her dead.

The clock struck five! and echoing from the Granby hills the engine whistle came. Then a slight tremor ran through her frame, and Mrs. Peters whispered joyfully 'There's life—there's hope.'

Along the highway the returning traveller came with rapid tread, but 'neath the sycamore no Rosamond was waiting.

'She is hiding from me,' he said, but his search for her was in vain, and he rapidly hastened on.

All about the house was still. There was no Rosamond at the door—nor in the hall—nor in the parlor—nor on the stairs; but from her chamber came the buzz of voices, and he entered unannounced, recoiling backwards when he saw the face upon the pillow, and knew that it was Rosamond's. Every particle of colour had left it; there were dark circles beneath the eyes, and a look about the mouth as if the concentrated agony of years had fallen suddenly upon her.

'What is it?' he asked, and at the sound of his voice, the brown eyes he had been wont to call so beautiful unclosed, but their sunny brightness was all gone, and he shuddered at their dim, meaningless expression.

She seemed to know him, and stretching her arm toward him as a child does towards its mother when danger threatens, she laid her head upon his bosom with a piteous wail—the only really audible sound she had yet uttered.

'Rosamond, darling—what has come upon you?' he said, 'and why are you in your bridal dress?'

At that word she started, and moving away from him, moaned sadly, 'It was cruel—oh, so cruel to deceive me, when I loved and trusted him so much.'

'Won't somebody tell me what this means?' he demanded, and Mrs. Peters replied, 'We do not know. There's been a strange woman here, and she was with Rosamond when it happened.'

'Woman? What woman? And where is she now?' he asked, and Mrs. Peters replied, 'She was faint—dying, she said, and Maria took her into another chamber.'

Mechanically he started for the chamber—hearing nothing—seeing nothing—thinking of the nameless terror that had fallen upon him. He did not suspect the real truth. He merely had a vague presentiment that some one who knew nothing of the drowning had come there to save his Rosamond from what they supposed to be an unlawful marriage, and when at last he stood face to face with his living wife, when he knew the grave had given up its dead, he dropped to the floor as

drops the giant oak when felled by the lightning's power!

Marie Porter, even had she been cruelly wronged, was avenged—fully, amply avenged, and covering her face with her hands, she moaned, 'I have killed them both, and there's nothing left for me now but to die!'

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE END.

Over the horrid awakening which came to the wretched man, we need not linger; neither is it necessary to dwell upon the first few days of mystery and dread, when death seemed brooding over Riverside, and rumour was busy with surmises and suspicion concerning the stranger, and the relation, if any, which she bore to Rosamond Leyton. We will rather hasten on to the morning when to Mr. Browning the joyful tidings came that Rosamond was better—so much better, indeed, that he could see and talk with her if he chose.

Only once since the fearful night when he found her moaning in her bridal dress, had he stood by her bedside—for, though he longed to be there, he could not endure to see her turn away from him, whispering as she did so, 'It was cruel—oh, so cruel to deceive me so.' Neither had he been near Marie Porter, consequently he knew nothing of the means by which she had imposed upon him the story of her death. But Rosamond knew—Rosamond could tell him, and from no other lips would he hear it. So, when he learned that she was better, he asked to see her alone, and Mrs. Peters, to whom he had necessarily confided the story of his marriage, carried his message to Rosamond.

For a moment Rosamond did not seem to hear, but when the message was repeated, the great tears forced themselves from beneath her long eyelashes, and rolling down her cheeks, dropped upon the pillow.

'He might have spared me this,' she said, 'but if it is his wish, I can see him.'

With a mighty effort she stilled the violent throbbings of her heart, forced an unnatural calm upon her face and whispered—'Let him come now; I am ready.'

He was standing without the door, so near that he heard the words, and in a moment he was at her side. Falling upon his knees before her, he clasped her hands in his, imploring her forgiveness for the great wrong he had done her in not telling her the truth at first. 'But I am innocent of the last,' he said; 'believe me, Rosamond, I thought her dead, or I had never asked you to be my