

with your saintly wife in Ortgeard. Do you want to hear it?"

"Out with it then! I don't know that anything can make me feel more wretched than I do now."

"Well, you did not hear from your wife for the good reason that your letters never left my house. Not knowing your new address, she could not very well write to you?"

"Do you mean that you did not post my letters to her?"

"Yes, I posted them—in the grate," she said with a heartless laugh.

"How could you do such a cruel thing as that? But that letter from your friend—did you write that yourself?"

"No, I am not quite so clever as that, and I have not yet added forgery to my list of crimes. That was a *bona fide* letter, but my friend was mistaken in thinking that the first Mrs. Pierce was such a wicked woman as to think more of any one else than of her own husband. No, she leaves such wickedness to her once most worthy husband, and is now regarded in Ortgeard as a saintly martyr, and her husband—that was—as the vilest of men."

"Good heavens! What a fool I have been ever to believe a word against poor Mary! If you are telling me the truth—" he paused.

"Well, what then? She is welcome to you, as I intend suing for a divorce from a man that can't keep himself, and has lost most of his good looks!"

"The sooner you do so the better I shall be satisfied. Would to God I had never seen your false face that lured me to destruction!"