

lemnly. "If you had been here only two hours ago, you would have seen her—saved her, perhaps." And Maud resumed the seat she had left.

Frank made no reply, but his hand gradually slid from off her shoulder, and Maud, unheeding the sign, continued: "How she has prayed to see you. Throughout her illness she has talked of you, and during the last few days she has seemed to think of you almost incessantly. It was in prayer for you that she passed away." Then she added, "If you had been here, who knows, she might not have died."

Then the poor girl's courage failed, and she hid her face in her hands, and wept bitterly. For a few moments silence reigned throughout the room, but Maud soon recovered her self-possession. Then came the sound of a single convulsive sob. Maud started up, and saw her brother, for such he was, kneeling beside a table with his head crushed down upon his arms, his whole frame convulsed with the agitation which he was vainly trying to repress. She sprang to his side, and, throwing her arms round him, endeavoured to soothe his grief with gentle words and caresses. He endured her endearments for a while, and even grew calmer, as he listened to the soft tones of her voice as she tried to comfort him.

Then she said, "Frank, should you like to see her?"

He looked up into her face, and she saw that he was pale, and his delicately cut features were almost statue-like in their clear-cut definiteness. "No," he said, "she will curse me. I have made her life miserable. You even say I killed her."

Maud winced at the cruel words, but did not answer, and he continued, "I dare not see her. Her dead face will reproach me, and yet I swear I was innocent."

"She will not reproach you, Frank. She looks peaceful and beautiful, more beautiful than she did in life. I told you her last words were a prayer for you. Look at her, and you will never say such dreadful things again. Come."

And Maud took her brother's hand between her own two, and tried to drag him with her towards the door.

He half rose, and then, drawing back again, he said hoarsely, "My father, Maud, where is my father?"

"He is out. He has been out since morning," she replied. "He cannot be back yet."

"Then he does not know she is gone?"

Maud shook her head, and her brother continued: "Tell me what I am to do. Does my father ever speak of me now? Shall I go away without seeing him, or—" Then, interrupting himself, he exclaimed,