

"Did he go alone?" he inquired.

"No, sir; a lady accompanied him."

Sir Claude started, and turned very pale.

"A lady," he replied. Did you see her? was she young?"

"Certainly, Sir Claude," answered the servant, with a smile, for which Sir Claude could have knocked him down. He turned away with a muttered malediction on his lip, and hastened back to his own house. On entering, he was painfully struck by its silence and desolate appearance; and, with feelings insufferably oppressed, he sought his wife's dressing room, where he locked himself in. Here he reviewed all the occurrences of the last twenty-four hours—the asseverations of innocence made by Beatrice—her grief—her tears—then her proud indignant scorn, ending so fearfully in that agonized cry as she fell. This continued to ring in his ears like a knell of death. He gazed around him, shuddering while his eyes rested on the various things that recalled her image to his view. The broken-heart still lay on the ground—her casket of jewels on the dressing table—where he saw also a small book of prayer, marked in many places by herself.

"And she is gone!" he said, in a voice choked by emotion; "gone for ever! driven from my heart and home by the insinuations of an artful woman, whose word till now I have always doubted. Good God! should I have been made her dupe! But no! Beatrice owned that she had deceived me—that she had withheld from me her confidence. Is not that enough for revenge as dark as ——" He paused, grinding his teeth in the bitterness of his feelings. "May evil follow hard upon the villain!" he continued. "She who I have always looked upon as an angel for purity—who I have loved with a depth unfathomable—she to hold converse with my enemy—to listen to his praises of her beauty—to suffer him to touch, to kiss her hand! Death! I could stab her to the heart!"

None dared approach him while thus he raved, until he pealed his bell for Antonio, to whom he gave orders to be in readiness to attend him in a few hours. The traces of tears were still visible on the boy's face, and fain would Sir Claude have questioned him concerning Beatrice, whether he saw her depart from the house, and how she appeared; but pride, imperturbable pride, chained his tongue. He wrote a hurried note to his friend Major Boileau to come to him, with whom he remained closeted a considerable time, giving him instructions how to act should the result of his present intentions prove fatal.

Major Boileau, who was a sensible and a kind-hearted man, strove to reason with him, and to entreat his patience. He had heard the reports of Lady Brereton's sudden removal bruited about, and he had read the paragraph in the papers; but more

than this he knew not, though he hoped, even against hope, that the fair fame of one who he had so much admired and esteemed might yet be cleared from all the cruel aspersions that had been cast upon it. He was well acquainted with the peculiar character and disposition of Sir Claude, and felt how trying to his proud and haughty spirit such foul suspicions must prove, and he offered to bear him company in his journey, uneasy that he should go alone in his present excited state; but this Sir Claude declined, and in the course of the same afternoon the unhappy husband was far on the road to Dover, attended by Antonio alone.

On his arrival at Calais, he found that Lord Stepney had passed through the preceding day on his way to Paris, and still accompanied by a lady, young and beautiful. He waited but to write to Lady Brereton, and then proceeded in quest of his enemy, tortured by a thousand vague conjectures respecting the companion of his flight. Once the maddening idea that she was his wife flashed across his mind; but fortunately he repulsed it with indignation as a thing impossible: had he indulged it he never could have reached Paris alive. After some provoking, yet unavoidable delays upon the road, he drove into the city late at night, ill, and exhausted with mental sufferings; but no rest would he allow himself. He desired to be driven to *Meurice's* Hotel, where, on glancing over the books, he met the name of Lord Stepney. He inquired, with a quivering lip, whether his lordship was within. The garçon to whom he addressed himself answered him vaguely, assuming a most peculiar expression of countenance as he did so. This roused the anger of Sir Claude, who demanded that he might instantly be conducted into his presence.

"Eh bien, monseigneur, je vous montrerais le chemin," replied the obsequious garçon, bowing to the ground.

With what feelings Sir Claude followed his conductor up a long flight of stairs, and down an extensive gallery, may be imagined. The garçon paused before a door, and applied a key to the lock.

"This cannot be the right room, *sirrah!*!" said Sir Claude; "Lord Stepney would never suffer himself to be locked in."

"Ah, pauvre homme! il ne peut pas le prévenir," responded the garçon, mysteriously.

He cautiously opened the door as he spoke: wax tapers were burning within. Sir Claude rushed forward; but, as he advanced, he started. He gazed—his sight became dim before the horrible object presented to his view. He clasped his hands, uttering a deep groan. On a bier, covered by a white pall, lay the ghastly remains of the ill-fated nobleman, a deep wound in the temple denoting the manner of his death. His countenance was frightfully distorted—the eyes glaring open—the mouth fallen, and his hair clotted with blood. The tapers