

of all that had passed come over him, till his heart burned and his brain maddened! How often did he vow that if Caroline were but spared, a life of devotion should prove the sincerity of his repentance, the devotedness of his again doating heart! But vain were his vows, vain his repentance!

He reached Clair Park on a beautiful autumn afternoon; the setting sunbeams fell redly on the oaks and elms which clothed the richly wooded park, already clad in all the varied hues of October; and glittered on the Gothic windows of the old hall in waving masses of burnished gold.

All looked so like what he had often seen it before, that Charles tried to persuade himself his fears were exaggerated; but as the post-boy slowly walked his horses up a steep part of the approach, the low moaning of the wind sounded mournfully in his ears, and a shower of dead leaves which it wafted into the carriage window checked his rising hopes.

A beam of pleasure passed over Sir John St. Clair's countenance as his young friend entered his room, but a melancholy shake of the head was his only reply to Charles' inquiries after Caroline; he expressed his wish to see her; but Sir John seemed to doubt if she had sufficient strength left to bear the agitation of the interview; he said, however, she was aware he was coming, and that he would send to inform her of his arrival.

Gently and with many fears did Lady St. Clair communicate this piece of intelligence to her dying daughter, for during the anxious watchings of many a long night and day something like a suspicion of the truth had dawned upon her. But, contrary to her expectation, Caroline seemed quite pleased to hear that Charles was in the house. "He will comfort you, mother, when I am gone," she said; "thank God, I can now die tranquilly!"

"He is anxious to see you, Caroline; may I tell him to come?" asked Lady St. Clair. The hectic flush, which a moment before had burned on Caroline's cheek, died suddenly away when she heard her mother's question, and a deadly paleness overspread her countenance as her head sank back on the sofa on which she was reclining; at last she slowly raised it again, and pressing her forehead against her mother's hand, who was leaning alarmedly over her, she said faintly—

"See him! Oh no!—I have loved him too much, mother,—he would again estrange my thoughts from that heaven where I hope so soon to be. I am glad he has come, but indeed, indeed I cannot see him now."

"You shall not, then, my beloved child," replied Lady St. Clair soothingly; "I will tell him you do not feel strong enough to-day; and to-morrow, perhaps——" "Yes, mother," interrupted Caroline with a faint smile, "tell him that to-morrow *he may see me*," and Lady St. Clair left the room. "Yes, to-morrow," continued Caroline, "he *may* indeed see me, for I shall not be able to see him then—to-morrow, I feel, I shall be beyond the reach of temptation."

The room in which Caroline was, had always been her favourite sitting-room; it opened into a conservatory, which again opened into some beautifully-kept pleasure grounds; and in consequence of an occasional difficulty of breathing with which Caroline was annoyed, both these doors were now open. A rustling sound amongst the leaves caused her to look up; one glance told her the figure she saw in the conservatory was Charles, and before she had time or strength to forbid his approach, he was beside her.

"Caroline," he exclaimed, as he took her wan hand in his; "can you forgive me? can you pardon me, angel as you are, the wretch who has sacrificed your happiness and his own to a vanity as weak as it was heartless?"

It was some moments before Caroline was able to reply. A bright flush flitted over her face, then settled into one deep red hectic spot on one cheek, whilst all the rest of her countenance was of a marble whiteness—at last she spoke, and it was with a calmness which seemed to herself almost unaccountable, and with which Heaven alone could have inspired her.

"Charles," she said, "I have long since forgiven you; it would ill have become one, standing so much in need of forgiveness from Heaven, to withhold it from you on earth; but oh! for the sake of that peace of mind without which this life is but a living death, never yield again to the unrestrained influence of those passions which have destroyed us both. In me, Charles, behold an example of their desolating effects; and if ever again you feel yourself in danger of yielding to these temptations, oh! let let this my dying warning, sound to you like a voice from the tomb, and awaken you in time to save you! Too blest are my sufferings, if they can save from a single pang one still too dear!"

"Bless you, Caroline! a thousand times," faltered the repentant Charles; "but you must live, and must not die, my Caroline! you must live to comfort your father and mother: to cheer me on my difficult course;" and he gazed intently on her face.

"Heaven will do both, Charles," she replied; "that heaven which enables me to feel my hand