

to Lady Dunsmore about you ; she expected to meet you at the Moat House. They perhaps are sorry, and would be glad of an opportunity to atone. May I speak to them !

"Stop a minute. What would you say ? For I will have nothing said that would humiliate me."

Bernard looked tenderly at the flushed face. "My love, any man humiliates himself who for a moment allows the woman he has chosen to be lightly esteemed. Be satisfied, I shall keep up your dignity as if it were my own ; for it is my own."

"Thank you." But there was only pride—no sweetness in the words. They made him turn back at once.

"Oh, Hannah, how long is this state of things to last ? How can we bear it if it lasts very long !"

She replied nothing,

:"Sometimes I ask myself, why should we bear it ? when our consciences are satisfied, when the merest legal form stands between us and our happiness. You do not feel the suspense as I do, I see that ; but do you know it sometimes almost drives me mad that I cannot marry you ?

His agitation was so extreme that Hannah was frightened, both for his sake and lest any servant should come in and find them thus. Oh, the misery of that false life they led ! oh the humiliation of concealment !

"Why should all the world be happy but me ? Why should that foolish old Morecomb—but I forget, I never told you he is going to be married. I tell you nothing ; I never have a chance of an hour's quiet talk with you."

"Why not ? It would make me much happier."

Those pure, sad, beseeching eyes—he turned away from them ; he could not bear them.

"Don't ask me. I dare not. If I saw much of you I would not answer for myself. I might"—he laughed—"I might even horrify you by asking you to go abroad and get married, as old Mr. Melville did. But I will not ; no, I will not. And if I would, you would not consent ?

"No."

"I was sure of it. One might as well attempt to move the monument as Hannah Thelluson after she had once said No."

His manner was so rough, so reckless, that it pained her almost more than anything she had yet experienced. Was their forced unnatural kind of life injuring him ? And if so, ought it to continue ? And if it must be ended, was not she the one to do it ?

"Bernard," she said, "will you come home to-night ?"—for it was now not the rule but the rare exception, his staying up with her of evenings—"then we will have one of our old talks together, and perhaps we may settle something ; or feel, when we look them calmly in the face, that things are not as dreadful as they seem. Now go. Hark ! there is Rosie calling over the staircase for papa."

He had a real fatherly heart now ; this young man, from whom, in the full flush of youth, life's best blessing, a wife's love, was first taken, and then tantalizingly denied. He snatched at the joys still