

broken woman to tell me her family name, that I might write to her friends in America on her behalf.

"Friends," said she, "I have none. My mother was my only friend, and she is gone!"

"But you have a father?" said I.

"I know not," she continued; "I have not known for years. Most likely he is gone too!"

"At any rate I will write—"

"Not to America," she replied; "for when my poor mother died he left it, I know, never to return."

"And his name?" said I, leading her to the point upon which I wished information. "His name was—"

"Jackson," said the mourner.

Why did I start at this single word? Why did my words hurry rapidly on one another as I questioned her as to the Christian name? and why, when I learnt it was Adam—Adam Jackson—did my frame tremble, my countenance change its hue, my heart beat audibly? "Oh, God!" said I, inwardly, "if it should be so!"—

I sent for a coach; and, handing in my still weeping companion, and the little fellow whom I had first seen, desired the man to drive to Mortimer-street. It was the residence of my dying friend. Showing the mother and her child into a room below, I hurried up stairs to his bed-chamber. I had already been absent several hours longer than I had intended. When I drew aside the curtain, the old man turned his eyes towards me; they were deep, sunken, and glassy; his features, angular and emaciated as they had long been, were now perfectly ghastly. I was painfully struck with the advances which death had made towards his victim.

My friend looked steadfastly at me for some minutes without any token or sign of recognition. I spoke, and my voice aiding perhaps his fast-fading memory, called me to his recollection. He grasped my hand with a convulsive force, so great that his bony fingers actually gave me pain.

"I thought," said he, striving, but ineffectually, to raise himself in bed, "that you had neglected—left me, left me in my last trial. Sit down, and come close to me. I have had a sleep—a long, long sleep, and a dream so horrible, so real, that waking, though it be to die, is happiness! Come closer," he continued, "and I will tell you all. I thought that I saw my long-departed wife; she came to me in sorrow, for our lost, discarded daughter was on her arm. She strove to speak, but could not: again and again she strove, but bitter grief choked her utterance. She took our child by the hand, and led her towards me; but I turned from them. The paritont fell at my feet, I spurned her away. I steeled my heart; but could not close my ears to her supplications. They were the outpourings of a contrite heart; but they touched me not. She spoke in anguish of her little ones—her helpless little ones! and I laughed—laughed at her misery. Still she prayed on; she bathed my feet with tears; she lifted her hands, and would have touched me, but I shrunk from her advances, and heartlessly commanded her to be gone! Her voice was suddenly stilled: I heard no sob, no sigh! I listened; but could not even detect the heavy breathings of sorrow. For an instant I remained wrapped in gloomy and unrelenting anger. I turned to gratify once more the devil that was in me; but she was gone! I sought for and called aloud upon my wife; but she too had departed!"

Here the old man paused; then placing his hand upon my shoulder, so as to bring my half-averted face towards him. "You tremble!" said he, "you tremble, and turn pale!"

It was so; in spite of every effort to appear composed, I could not command my feelings. I was about to speak. He put his finger on his lips as enjoining silence, and continued.

"You are already affected; you will shudder when you have heard me out. I thought that immediately on being left alone I was seized with an icy chillness, which I knew was the touch of death. I looked around for help; but could find none. I prayed for some hand to assist, some voice to comfort me in my dying hour; but I prayed in vain. I heard but the echo of my own lamentations; and was left to go down to the grave unheeded and alone."

Again he paused; and so great were his excitement and agitation, that I little expected he had strength to resume; but, after some minutes he did so, and in these words:—

"I awoke; but in another world, or rather, when this world had passed away. As I rose from the tomb, but one thought, one feeling possessed me; I was going to be judged! Every thought, word, and action of my life had shared my resurrection, and stood palpably embodied before me—a living picture. My last interview with my child was the darkest spot there. I shuddered as I beheld it. I strove, but oh! how vainly, to blot it out! An all-consuming fire was already lighted up within me, in the horrible conviction that this, even in its naked self, would endanger my salvation for ever! Suddenly a sound such as mortal ear had never heard before, burst on the trembling myriads around. It was a sound that filled all creation, calling all those who had ever been to be again, and to wait the word that should bless, or sweep them into endless perdition. Millions upon millions

had passed on in judgment; and I thought that tremblingly I approached the throne of grace! Mercy smiled upon me! and I looked with straining eyes after those forgiven spirits who had gone before. I was about to follow, when a witness came against me, at whose presence, conscience-stricken, I fell prostrate in despair! My daughter! my spurned and persecuted daughter! No voice of accusation was heard! No look of reproach from her! Yet silent and motionless, dejected and wan, as when I had last beheld her, she told of the early orphanage into which she was stricken by my unnatural desertion! the destitution which my savage vengeance had entailed! I trembled under the weight of these awful charges. I tried to lift my eyes to my child to win her intercession; but I had no power to move them from myself. I tried to speak; my tongue clove to my mouth. How—how could I plead for mercy who had yielded none? Pressed on by thronging crowds yet behind, I advanced as if to enter that blessed path which the happy trod; but suddenly it was barred against me! An angel with frowning aspect waved me aside, among a countless herd as wretched as myself. A cloud passed over us; our souls sank within us: it shut us out for ever from even the glimmerings of hope. I thought that we fell, and fell deeper, and yet deeper, gathering in numbers as we fell! Groans and blasphemies were in my ear; impenetrable darkness above, and hell below! I shrieked madly! I was answered but by shrieks! A thousand times I grasped at objects to stay my fall: I clutched them, but they yielded, and helped me not! Hopeless and eternal perdition was before me! One plunge more, and a lake whose waves were of fire—fire inex-tinguishable, would engulf me for ever! Myriads beheld it too; and now one universal scream of horror, enough to rend twenty worlds, burst upon me!"

Here the old man was so excited with the recital of these imaginary horrors, that I could with difficulty hold him in my arms. His frame quivered, his eye glared with unnatural power and brightness. I spoke and soothed him.

"The sound is now in my ears!" he exclaimed wildly. Almost instantly after, he added, as calmly. "I awoke; I am awake!" and clasping his withered hands together, and raising his eyes to heaven, he said fervently, "I thank thee, God! it was a dream!"

Almost immediately afterwards he fell back on his pillow, perfectly exhausted. Anxious as I was to speak to him once more, to ask him but one question—to satisfy my more than surmises, I could not—dared not do it, as he then was. I watched, oh! how eagerly, to see his eyes open, his lips move, that I might address myself to him, but he lay in a state of complete stupor: I trembled as I gazed, lest he might never move again. After some little time passed in this state of painful suspense, and still no sign of returning consciousness, I grew more alarmed, less when he did recover, it might be but for a moment, as I knew to be a not unfrequent case, and that I might have no time to inquire into the striking coincidence, to say the least of it, that had so extraordinarily presented itself to me. With this fear upon my mind, I determined at once upon hurrying down stairs, and satisfying myself in a more direct way than I had at first intended.

When I entered the room in which I had left the widow and her child, I found the former sitting on the sofa, her face buried in her hands—the boy was at her feet. As I approached she looked up: immediately on perceiving me she exclaimed, and her voice trembled with grief and agitation, "For God's sake, sir! where am I? Whose house is this?" then seizing a book from the table, she continued, "this book—this old book was my father's; it was his own bible! Here is his name, written years past by my own hand." And turning to the first page, on which was inscribed "Adam Jackson, New York," she held it to my eyes, standing motionless as a statue.

Confirmed thus suddenly in the suspicion that had crossed my mind on first hearing her history and name, I was so bewildered that I knew not what reply to make. I feared to tell her at once that she was under her father's roof, that the same walls inclosed them, lest, in her debilitated state, it might prove too much; I could not be evasive, for her whole being seemed to hang on the explanation she waited for.

Tortured by my silence, she seized my wrist violently, and repeated in a loud and menacing tone, while her wild and haggard look betokened incipient madness. "Whose house is this?"

"It is the house," said I mildly, "of Adam Jackson."

"My father!" she shrieked hysterically, and fell senseless at my feet. After considerable difficulty I restored her to comparative calmness; I was then compelled to explain to her the situation of her parent without disguise, for, at first, she imperatively insisted on seeing him. After this she assured me she would be governed by my wishes. I led her to the sick chamber. As we entered I pointed to a chair, by the bed-side, and she tottered towards it. The slight noise we made disturbed the old man, and in a faint voice he called me by my name. I carefully placed myself between him and his child.

"My dear, dear friend!" he began, "I have been some time dying, but I feel the struggle is nearly over."

At the sound of her father's voice, the trembling creature by my side sprang from her seat,—she would have rushed into his arms,—the curtain was between them, and he was slightly turned from her, so that the movement was unseen; with one hand I forcibly restrained her.

She sank down, but a half-suppressed and choking sob, that might have broken her heart, escaped her.

"Do not grieve," said he, affectionately pressing my hand, "rather join me in thankful prayer to the Almighty that I have lived thus long—long enough to renounce as I now do, the deadly sin of unrelenting anger against a fellow creature; a sin which I madly hugged even on the brink of the grave!"

"Do you understand me?" he continued, speaking with difficulty. "My child! my daughter! God—God bless! as I forgive her!"

Had I wished to have delayed longer the meeting between father and child, I could not have done it. With the greatest difficulty I had, up to this moment, restrained the racking impatience of the latter, until I could discover whether or not the old man's dream had effected what I had failed in. Now that it was obvious that it had done so, I drew aside the curtain. On beholding the emaciated form of him from whom she had been so long parted, and who, but a few hours before, she had never thought to behold again, she stood horror-stricken, paralysed by the conflicting feelings that rushed upon her. Her eyes were tearless, all sounds of sorrow hushed; with hands clasped, her head bent forward, her features fixed, her form rigid and apparently breathless, she seemed a statue of despair rather than a thing of life. I trembled for the consequences when she should speak, or he direct his looks towards her. Never, never shall I forget the agony of that moment!

He moved! He turned as if again to address me. She, whom with his dying breath he had just blessed, and who was probably at that awful moment the sole object of his thoughts, stood in life, if such indeed it might be called, beside him! His half-closed eye rested upon her! the pupil dilated,—he gazed fixedly but wildly; he struggled to raise himself; I supported him in the attempt. Once or twice I heard a rattling in his throat, as if he strove to speak, but could not; then in a piercing voice, which seemed to have struggled with and for an instant escaped the power that was about to silence it for ever, he exclaimed, "This is no dream! it is my own Ruth!—my daughter!" and flinging open his arms, she, thus startled from her trance, sprang forward and fell upon his bosom.

Within a few minutes after this touching scene, I was called to the door of the chamber; I found it was the physician: I took him aside and hurriedly explained to him the events of the last few hours. We then approached the bed: the old man was dead! his arms were extended across his child, whose face was buried in the pillow. On raising her up, a stream of blood rushed from her mouth; a vessel had been ruptured! In less than half an hour her spirit, too, had departed.

#### THE FEATHER OF A PEACOCK.

In its embryo the feather of a peacock is little more than a bladder containing a fluid, while every one knows the general structure of those long ones which form the train. The star is painted on a great number of small feathers, associated in a regular plane; as those have found their way from the root, through this long space of three feet, without error of arrangement or pattern, in more millions of feathers than imagination can conceive, if this sufficiently wonderful, the examination of each fibre of this canvas (to adopt this phrase,) will much increase the wonder. Taking one-half of the star, the places and proportions of the several colours differ in each of those, as do their lengths and obliquities, yet a single picture is produced, including ten outlines, which form also many irregular yet unvarying curves. And, further, the opposed half corresponds in every thing; while this complicated picture is not painted after the texture is formed, but each fibre takes its place ready painted, yet never failing to produce the pattern. If this is chance, the coloured threads of a tapestry might as well unite by chance to produce a picture; while every annual renewal is equally accurate, as it has been in every such animal since the creation. And whatever the other chances may be, enormous as they are against the hypothesis, this further number cannot be evaded, because it would be to abandon the very principle of chance, to say that renewal, or perpetuation, were governed by laws. If the system is to mean what it pretends to do, every feather that ever existed must have been the result of fortunate chances. This would be enough, had this object not demanded the arithmetical calculation; for omitting all else, who would even hope to reproduce the star from the same separated materials, under any number of chances?

But the entire analysis I need not make in words; it can be done by any one on the subject itself, and with a more satisfactory effect. Let him take each fibre separately, note the number of the colours, their gradations, the very different nodes of those on the different fibres, and the very different places of those colours on them, with the still more remarkable differences in those fragments of the many outlines included in the star. The painter,