

"What! forsake friends, home, wealth, and honor! Neville, could you repay a sacrifice so costly?"

"Perhaps not," was the reply made, a little proudly; "better return to your duties, as you advised me just now, and bestow on Sir James that love, which you have no right to give to me."

"Love him! the repulsive, horrid creature! he an antidote to love. No, if I may not love you, will bear my heart against the approaches of a passion so full of misery; never shall another have power to cause me the pain which you seem delighted to inflict;" and Lady Marley wept.

"Charlotte, you do me injustice; I have no wish to inflict pain," replied her lover, tenderly embracing her; "command me as you will, and only tell me how I can contribute to your happiness!"

"Happiness has fled me forever," returned the lady; "I behold myself in bondage to one I detest; I see you the husband of another woman; such ties as these are not easily broken!"

"Certainly not, when interest interposes with affection. You prefer your handsome establishment, your carriages, your wealth, to the man you profess to love; and doubtless you are right in so doing."

"Neville, do not drive me mad! if I consented to give up all—what then?"

"I would clasp you to my bosom and call you mine, mine forever!" was the passionate reply as she sank upon his bosom.

"Yours then I am," she murmured, while burning blushes suffused her cheek; "now you know the strength of my love!"

"Never shall it be abused. Look up, my Charlotte; tell me when and where we shall meet to arrange our plans, for we must not linger too long together now, or we shall be missed."

Lady Marley trembled violently; the die was cast; she had promised, and she must perform; but her guilty heart quailed at the consequences.

"Shall we meet here? I know not a safer spot," she hoarsely whispered.

"Yes, here, and to-morrow morning," he replied aloud. "Then, then my beloved one shall own that her Neville is not unworthy of the sacrifice she makes for him. But, see, the sun again is shining, the rain is over; let us return to your guests."

"I had forgotten them all," murmured Lady Marley; "Oh, how can I meet sir James!"

A slight rustling in the bushes behind the summer-house alarmed her just as they were quitting it; she looked round in terror; but seeing no one she felt reassured, and linking her arm within Captain Warburton's, they hastened from

the spot, reached the house, and joined the party in the picture gallery, congratulating themselves that they had never been missed.

And now what can we say for Lady Marley, since we have raised the veil, and discovered to our readers the extent of her guilt? One of a numerous family, remarkable for her beauty, and in consequence completely spoiled, her disposition was capricious, selfish, and most supremely vain. Persuaded by her friends to accept the proposal of the decrepit Sir James Marley, (decrepit from the dissipated life he had led, rather than from age) raised to affluence and a high station, at first she was amused and pleased as a child, with her new possessions—her house, her furniture, her dress, her jewels, her servants, above all her admirers, uniting to turn her young head. She had never been really in love with any one till she beheld Captain Warburton, who came with others to her house one evening, when his fine and handsome person attracted her attention. She knew not then that he was a married man, and she listened to his winning conversation, and received his flatteries with a delight she had never before experienced. It was not till they had met several times, that she learnt to her sorrow that he belonged to another. Had one spark of right principle shone within her breast, she would from that moment have shunned him. But not reckless of all consequences, she yielded herself up to a guilty attachment, which was apparently returned with fervour by the faithless young man.

Woman is not bad at once; she must be led on step by step, but if the first be taken swift is her downward career. Thus it was with Lady Marley; could she have foreseen that she would prove so ungrateful to her husband, who had acted so generously towards her, and that too for the sake of a married man, doubtless she would have shrunk from the horrid imputation. Hitherto she had been preserved from the last guilty step, but alas! even this she had pledged her word to take, and to breter her soul for the deceitful pleasures of sin. As for Captain Warburton, he knew himself to be a ruined man, that he could not extricate himself from his difficulties without selling his commission, a measure he had resolved upon taking unknown to Katherine. He tried to view her as the first cause of his misfortunes to reconcile himself to his base conduct towards her; but conscience often severely stung him and made him writh in agony, particularly since his illness. To stifle this and gratify his wild desires, he plunged yet deeper into sin, encouraged his passion for Lady Marley, and endeavored to drag her down with him into the gulf of perdi-