

house, by the light of the oil lamp opposite, Some of the windows were broken; the sutters were dingy and weather-beaten, and the dust lay thickly on the sills and against the door.

I put the key in the lock; but it would not move till I had taken it out again, and raked and blowed the dust out of the key-hole. Then I turned it slowly, with all my strength, in the rusty wards, and descended into the shop, shutting the door. I hastened to light the lamp which I had brought with me; for the strangeness of my situation, in darkness, after three years' absence, in the old house where my father died, impressed me; I heard noises about the place, probably of rats. When I had lighted my lamp, I saw that everything was as we had left it: excepting that the dust lay thickly everywhere. In the oak parlour at the back of the shop, my aunt's work-box stood upon the table; and on a stand against the window were several flower-pots, the mould in them as hard as stone, and the plants dead and shrivelled. The grate remained as we left it—full of cinders; and the old wooden arm chair in which my aunt had been sitting was beside the fire-place. I walked, I know not why, on tip-toe along the passage, and mounted the stairs. My bed-room also was unchanged. I searched in a dusty closet and found the drawing that I sought, and looked upon it by the lamp, until I could not see it for my tears. I walked through every room, and lingered in the kitchen where I had carved the angel; and, after a while, returned through the shop, and bade farewell once more to my old home.

I put out my lamp, and opened the door and listened, thinking I heard some one passing. The footstep ceased, and when I issued and looked down the street, I thought I saw a figure, standing still, at a little distance from me. As I was anxious not to be recognized, I turned quickly and walked away. I heard the footstep again, as if the person was following me, and I quickened my pace; but it seemed to gain upon me, and I heard a voice that struck me motionless. It was Alice, and she came and caught me by the arm. I could feel how she was trembling, and I turned and held her firmly.

"I never thought to see you any more," she said; "my God, how I have prayed to

see you, and repented of that dreadful night when I spoke foolishly against my heart, and sent you from me angry! I thought that you were dead; and that the feeling of what I had done, weighed upon me like a sin that never could be pardoned or washed out.—Three years of bitter sorrow I have passed since then; night after night I have lain awake and cried, until my heart is almost broken. It was known that you had left by the coach, but no one knew whither you had gone. I have watched about the cathedral and in front of the old house many an evening, in the hope that you might be tempted to revisit them if you were still alive, till, when you did not come for months and years, I could not doubt that you were dead. Yet to-night I came again. It is three years to-night since you left me. I heard with terror some one opening the door from within, and retired and saw that it was you.—And you were hurrying away, and in another moment would have been gone again forever! Oh, do not leave me again—never, never again!"

I was stunned, bewildered; but I spoke: "Oh, Alice, Alice! do not sue to me, I cannot bear to hear you. I only am to blame for my blind pride and obstinacy. I never will forgive myself the sorrow I have caused you; though I have also suffered very much. I have ceased to love you for a moment.—This very night I came to seek your likeness that I drew, little thinking I should see you here again, and hear you talk like this."

We stood near a lamp, and I saw how changed she was—how thin and pale her face; but she was still my Alice, whom I loved so much. I put both arms about her neck and kissed her wet cheeks, took her hands and kissed them many times, and told her not to think about the past, and that I would never leave her while I lived. We turned and walked down the street together, and round the cathedral yard; but her talk was still about the past, and all that she had suffered. She asked me a hundred questions, of where I had been, and what I had done since that time, and cried afresh when I told her how I had grieved for her sake. She made me tell her how I had broken the statue, and I showed her the side window where I entered, and told her everything—for I remembered well that night.

Alice and I walked to and fro till it was