

"Richard, Richard," she replied, as she rose and threw her arms about him; "where you are is my country, and the only home I ask is in your heart."

"Ugh!" cried the husband, and started to his feet as though an adder had stung him. His eye had glanced upon the window as a human face had pressed against the glass; and they were features indelibly stamped upon his memory. Quick as thought he put his wife from him and darted across the room, flung open the case-ment and gazed out into the night. But the quiet stars looked down upon him; and as the cool autumn air gently fanned his forehead, the strong clear moonlight streamed past him into the chamber, and played upon the marble mantelpiece. He passed his hand across his brow as he fastened the window and drew the curtains more closely together.

"What is the matter?" asked his wife anxiously.

"Why I thought—oh, nothing—an idle fancy—no more;" and he stood awhile gazing abstractedly upon the fire: then stepping to the door and opening it, he called mildly, "Philip! Philip!"

A domestic appeared in answer to the summons.

"Are the outer gates closed?"

"I secured them myself, sir, at nightfall."

"It is well; see that the doors are barred, and—good night."

An hour elapsed, and the servants had retired to rest; Marie had sought her chamber—it was within that where they had played at chess—and Richard was alone.

Above the staircase on the second story of the house a powerful alarm-bell had been erected, and from it diverged wires that passed down the walls, and were skillfully and secretly attached to the principal chamber doors, leaving it in the power of the occupant of the room to set or loose at will the springs connected with the wire above the door; but should the door be accidentally moved or an entry attempted by a strange hand, the entire machinery was instantly set in motion, and the alarm effectually spread.

Richard went to the door to set the spring; but before doing so he opened it, and looked for a moment through the staircase window at the dark cathedral, whose gigantic bulk stood clearly out against the cold blue sky.

And there he leanned against the doorway, and mused till the cold air reminded him of bed, and sighing, he scarce knew why, he softly closed the door, set firmly the spring of the alarm-wire, and went towards the hearth.

It was no fancy of Richard's when, an hour before, he had sprung towards the window; but when he looked forth he saw nothing—for the intruder had suddenly dropped from the window-sill among the shrubbery of the garden, and the dark dress had blended with the leaves, while the deepened shade that hung around the spot had aided the deception. Nor could Richard know, as he gazed afterwards through the staircase window, that the same being had crept round to that side of the house, and was seeking the means of climbing to that very window—that, indeed, he was accomplishing his object as Richard fastened the door and set the spring.

The lamp upon the table was faintly glimmering, and nearly extinct; the fire was low in the grate, and what remained was powerless and dulled; yet still the master of the house gazed upon the coal, for his thoughts were busy, and his mind was far away, and he saw not the dying lamp nor the perishing fire, for in imagination he stood again in the streets of Paris—when a light sharp crack startled him from his reverie, and he listened: but the only sound that broke upon his ear was the great cathedral bell, as it slowly gave out its ponderous tones, and announced, by the twelve beats of its mighty pulse, the hour of midnight in London.

Hark! he could not be mistaken!—there was a stealthy footstep on the landing! No: again all was still. But his suspicions were aroused; he thought of the face at the window, and he shuddered. He drew a poniard from his breast—a weapon that never left him—and waited, and listened, with his glance fixed upon the handle of the door,—and, as he looked, he distinctly saw it move.

"Who's there?" he demanded, in a loud commanding tone, and grasped the poniard firmly.

The sound of his voice was like a spell upon the intruder, who, finding the door locked and resisting his hand, threw his whole weight heavily against it, and burst violently into the room. The alarm-wire was broken by the shock, but the bell rung