

lution to part with the cherished object that linked her so fondly to the past—that spoke to her heart of the dead, and with its living bloom and beauty brightened and cheered their lone and humble home. She was kneeling beside Harry's low couch, for he had fallen asleep with his head pillowed on her arm, and she feared to awaken him by withdrawing it. The position was painful, but she submitted to it rather than disturb him, while as she laid her face close to his upon the pillow, sleep settled on her wearied eyes, and the sad hue of her waking thoughts became tinged with the golden light that illumines the mysterious world of dreams.

In the mean time, Madame Legrande found that the ill she meditated against Fanny rebounded with accumulated force upon herself. Complaints from all quarters, of orders tardily obeyed, or imperfectly executed, were poured into her ears, till she was fain to acknowledge to herself that Fanny's taste, and skill, and punctuality, were all-important to the success and celebrity of her establishment. How to regain them, without giving her own pride a deadly wound, was now a subject of frequent and anxious thought; especially since one of her best customers had intimated, that unless the young woman who had formerly been Madame's chief assistant, was again employed in the dress-making department, she for one, should give her patronage to Miss Panton, who, as rumour said, was *au fait* in all the exquisite mysteries of London and Parisian millinery. Alarmed by this threat, and by seeing Mrs. Harwood at church with a French cardinal which she knew had been purchased, at the show-room of Miss Panton, Madame Legrande one day set forth for the humble abode of Fanny, trusting to be spared the humiliation of offering to take her again into her service, by receiving from herself a petition to be allowed to return to it. Through one of her subordinate workwomen, she had heard of Harry's increased illness, and that the apothecary had said the musk-rose would be the death of him, if not removed, and availing herself of the hint, she purposed to work upon the fears of Fanny, to obtain the rose for Mrs. Harwood, and thus secure both that lady's gratitude, and her patronage. So, after traversing the gayer thoroughfares of the city, madame turned aside and threaded her way through various intricate windings, to the dark and narrow alley in which Fanny dwelt; drawing her fine dress closely around her, she climbed with weary foot the broken staircase that ascended to her wretched attic.

She knocked gently at the door, but no one answered; after waiting a minute she lifted the latch and entered, but paused a moment on the

threshold, before advancing towards the centre of the chamber. The scene which it presented might have melted a tenderer heart to pity, but her's was a coarse and callous nature, and she saw but one object of interest, within the room—the lovely musk-rose, crowned with odorous blossoms, which loaded the air of that sordid apartment with fragrance more delicious than the richest perfumes of the East. It stood upon a small deal table, overshadowing the low bed on which lay little Hal, wrapped in a deep sleep, emaciated to the last degree,—and so ghastly pale and sunk was every feature, that his face more nearly resembled that of a corpse, than of a living child.

Fanny was kneeling on the bare floor beside him, her arm supporting his head, while her own, as if overcome by weariness, had sunk down on the pillow, and her face lay close to his, as wan, as sad, and if not marked with traces of as acute physical suffering, it told of that deeper and more intense agony of the spirit, which withers the early bloom of life, and writes on the rounded lineaments of youth the dark characters of untimely care and age. A few half empty vials with a cup of water-gruel, stood upon the table, and on a chair beside the window, as if thrown there in haste, lay an unfinished garment of coarse and gaudy chintz. The whole aspect of the chamber, was that of extreme destitution, yet in all was apparent that attention to neatness, which is a sure indication of innate deficiency and refinement of mind.

As Madame Legrande, after her long and admiring survey of the rosebush, glanced around the mean apartment and then upon the wan, unconscious forms of the sleepers, her conscience for a moment raised its accusing voice in tones that would be heard, but was quickly silenced by the louder call of that habitual selfishness, which suggested that she had come at a fortunate moment for securing her long coveted prize. Impatient for Fanny's awaking, she moved about the chamber with no gentle step, and finally let her parasol drop heavily upon the floor, when the poor girl raised her head with a sudden start, and looked wonderingly upon her unexpected visitor. But even then, not forgetful of her helpless charge, she drew her arm gently from beneath his head before she arose, and with calm self-possession stood awaiting the address of madame. For an instant the bold undaunted eye of the milliner sank abashed beneath the mild inquiring glance of the humble girl she had so wantonly wronged; but then her native confidence revived, and she said in a tone of unusual suavity:

"I heard through Kitty Lausling, Fanny, that