

mind of the wretched girl, and opened her eyes to the full extent of her guilt. How gladly now would she have restored the money, but it was no longer in her power.

While Alice continued to watch at a distance the almost distracted expression of her sister's countenance, her foot struck against something, and, stooping down, she took up the curious purse which Mr. Granger had proffered her in the morning. In spite of her usual calmness, she uttered an exclamation of surprise. Sophia raised her head. The colour rushed in a crimson tide to her hitherto pale face.

"Why, my dear Sophia! by what mysterious coincidence do I find this purse in your possession? I am sure I returned it to the strange gentleman in the morning."

"That purse was given to me by Captain Ogilvie," said Sophia, fiercely—"you never saw that purse before."

"If it were not this identical purse, it was one so nearly—so exactly resembling it—that curious as the workmanship of it is, I should have pronounced it in a court of justice, the same."

"Then your decision would have been false," retorted Sophy: "and where, and in whose possession, did you see a purse like this?"

Alice answered by relating the adventure of the morning. Sophia listened to the recital with expanded eyes, and when she concluded, she involuntarily exclaimed, "Oh! that you had accepted it."

"And wherefore, my dear girl?"

"I don't know—I wish you had—I think you were very foolish not to close with such a liberal offer." Then fearful that she had betrayed too much, she snatched up the purse from the table, hastily locked it up in her desk, and hurried from the room, leaving Alice bewildered and perplexed at her strange conduct. Her thoughts were soon diverted into a different channel, by the alarming illness of her grandmother.

"Do not weep, Alice, at my departure from an evil world," said the old lady, after receiving the sacrament with her daughter, and niece, from the hands of their venerable pastor. "If you knew, my child, what a blessed thing it is to die, after a weary pilgrimage of eighty years, you would rather rejoice than mourn."

Towards noon, the next day, the old lady became more feeble and almost speechless. Alice perceived that the hour of her departure was drawing nigh. "I have but one wish left ungratified," were almost the last words that escaped her lips, "I could have wished to have died in the arms of my dear son, but the Lord's will be done." After uttering these words, she fell into a calm sleep, the gentle fore-warner of an everlasting one. Alice continued to watch and pray by her bed side, while Mrs. Linhope went down stairs to have a few minutes pri-

vate conversation with Dr. Watson. It was a gloomy wet day. Sophia took her seat by the window, and continued to gaze with a mournful air on the trees in the grove opposite, as they bent to and fro beneath the wind,—several times she wiped the tears from her eyes and sighed heavily.

The old lady had slept about an hour, when Alice was roused from her mournful meditations by Sophia exclaiming in a low, but agitated voice! "Good heavens! it is him, and he is coming here." Alice followed the direction of her sister's eyes, and to her great surprise beheld Mr. Granger enter the garden, and approach the house. But how, or in what way Sophia had become acquainted with this eccentric man, she had yet to learn. A heavy step sounded upon the stair. Sophia left her seat, and seeing no possibility of a retreat, shrouded herself behind the drapery of the bed. The door opened, and her mother entered the chamber, followed by the very being she most dreaded to behold.

Without regarding the girls, Mr. Granger slowly approached the bed, and drawing back the curtains, with a trembling hand, he continued to gaze for a long time on the face of the sufferer. At length large bright drops gathered in his eyes and bathed his swarthy cheeks. "My poor mother!" he murmured in a broken voice. "Thirty years have indeed made a wreck of thee!"

"Low and indistinctly as those words were pronounced they dispelled Mrs. Fleming's slumbers. "Who called me mother?" she asked in feeble tones.

"Your son!" returned Mr. Fleming, folding her in his arms, as she raised her wasted form to meet the loved embrace. "It is your voice, my Richard! The merciful God has granted my prayers, and I depart hence in peace!"

There was a deep silence, a long and solemn pause, while the spirit released from its shattered tenement, soared upwards on angel wings to meet its God. Slowly and reverentially Mr. Fleming unclosed the stiffening hands of his insensible parent from around his neck, and resigned her inanimate form to the pillow, then turned to his sister, and said:—

"Anne, our beloved mother is at rest; her last moments were happy—and now she is happier still."

"I trust, dear soul, she is at peace," said Alice, kissing with tenderness the cold brow of the dead! "Oh that I may die the death of the righteous, that my last hour may be like hers."

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

IT would be no easy task to pourtray Sophia's feelings, on discovering that her mysterious monitor and her uncle were one and the same person. What she had suffered on the preceding evening was light when compared with the pangs she now endured. When the family retired from the cham-