

am sure that you are torturing yourself to no purpose. Frederick will be home to-morrow. He will counsel you what to do, and all will be right."

"Frederick! home to-morrow!" exclaimed Anthony, gasping for breath."

"Oh, I am so glad. It seems an age since he left us. By the bye, I have a letter for you, which I quite forgot. It came by the post;" and, going to the mantel shelf, Clary handed him a letter from her brother. Anthony trembled violently, as he broke the seal. It ran thus—

MY DEAR ANTHONY,

I know not in what manner to interpret your unkind silence. Your detention of the money has caused me great mortification and uneasiness; and will compel me to leave—to-morrow, without settling the business which took me from home.

I cannot suspect a friend whom I love of any sinister intention, but I hope you will be able to adduce some satisfactory reasons for your strange conduct. Yours truly,

FREDERICK WILDEGRAVE.

P. S.—I thought at first that you were from home, but Clary in her letters always speaks of you as still present.

This letter decided and confirmed Anthony's worst fears. As he read it, he became violently agitated. Well had it been for him if he could have overcome the repugnance he felt, at communicating what he had done, to either Clary or her brother. It was this want of confidence which involved him in ruin. Had he frankly confessed his folly, and thrown himself upon Wildegrave's generosity, he would as frankly have been forgiven; but pride and false shame kept his lips sealed. He was a very young man; a novice in the ways of the world, and even, to some degree, ignorant of the nature of the crime which made him so unhappy. Instead of a breach of trust, he looked upon it as a felonious offence, which rendered him amenable to the utmost severity of the law. The jail and the gallows were ever in his thoughts; and, worse than either, the infamy which would for ever attach itself to his name. He determined to see his father for the last time, and if he failed in moving his compassion, he had formed the desperate resolution of putting an end to his existence in his presence—a far greater crime than that for which he dreaded to receive a capital punishment.

"Clary," he said hastily, thrusting the letter into his pocket, "business of importance calls me away tonight. Do not be alarmed if I should be detained until the morning."

"You cannot go tonight," said Clary; "it has rained all the afternoon. The ground is wet. The air raw and damp. You are not well. If you leave the house you will take cold."

"Do not attempt to detain me, Clary; I must go. I shall leave a letter for your brother upon the table, which you will be kind enough to give him, in case I should not return."

"Something is wrong! Tell me—oh, tell me what it is?"

"You will know all, time enough," said Anthony, in a hollow voice. "Should we never meet again, Clary, will you promise me to think kindly of me, and, in spite of the contempt of the world, to cherish my memory?"

"Though all the world should forsake you, yet will I never desert you," said Clary, as, sinking into his extended arms, she swooned upon his breast.

"This will kill the poor innocent. May God bless and keep you from a knowledge of my guilt." Then gently placing her upon the sofa, he imprinted a kiss upon her pale lips, and sought his own chamber. Here, he sat down and wrote a long letter to Frederick, explaining the unfortunate transactions which had occurred during his absence. This letter he left upon the study table; and, putting a brace of loaded pistols into his pocket, he sallied out upon his hopeless expedition.

It had been a very wet afternoon. The clouds parted towards nightfall; and the moon rose with unusual splendour, rendering every object in his path, as distinctly visible as at noon day. The beauty of the night only served to increase the gloom of Anthony Hurdlestone's spirit. He strode on at a rapid pace, as if to outspeed the quick succession of melancholy thoughts that hurried him on to commit a deed of desperation. He entered the great avenue that led past the Hall to the Miser's miserable domicile; and had traversed about half the extent of the darkly shaded path, when his attention was arrested by a tall figure, leaning against the trunk of a huge elm tree. A blasted oak, bare of foliage, on the opposite side of the road, let in a flood of light through its leafless branches, and Anthony, with a shudder, recognized William Mathews.

"A fine evening for your expedition, Mr. Hurdlestone; I wish you may be successful." As he spoke, he lowered a fowling-piece he held in his hand, from his shoulder to the ground. "Do you hear that raven, as he sits croaking upon the rotten branch of the old oak, opposite? Does not his confounded noise make you nervous? It sounds like a bad omen. I was just going to pull down at him, but I fancy that he's too far above us for a shot."

"I am in no humour for trifling tonight," said Anthony, looking up to the branch in question. "If you are afraid of such sounds, you can soon silence that forever."

"It would require a good eye, Master Hurdlestone, and an excellent fowling piece, to bring down the black gentleman from his lofty perch. I have