

"Incredible! I must see her. I will rise immediately." And the sick man made an effort to struggle up in bed.

"Oh, father! you are very ill; too ill, I fear, to risk rising:" said his son, anxiously.

"Well, well! perhaps I am," returned he, wearily sinking back. "But if there be such another face on earth, I cannot rest till I see it. Ask her, Would she mind coming to see a weak, disabled old man? But first, call my valet."

Calvert sounded the bell; communicated his father's orders, and went off to deliver the message with which he had been entrusted.

First tapping at the brother's chamber, in a few words he explained to him the circumstances; and together they went to summon Madeline.

She was not alone. It was Marie's face met them at the door,—a face dark, inscrutable in its expression, that told of far more behind than she cared to reveal.

She made no reply to the brother's question, but as she swept by Calvert in the dim corridor, the gleam of the eyes, and the serpent hiss in his ear—

"So! you have found a new face, traitor!"—long dwelt in his memory.

When the brother and sister reappeared, the latter, wondering, and even dismayed, suffered herself to be led unresistingly by the youth's guiding hand.

Standing in bright relief against the tenebrous back-ground of the open doorway, with the blaze of the chandelier full upon her,—that was an adorable vision, a dream of beauty that burst on the eye of the expectant Colonel! The fresh, blonde tints, varying from the alabaster of the brow to the delicate rose that excitement had lent the cheeks, here burning on the lips that parted like threads of vermilion, and there softly toned off into the creamy whites and pearly greys of the swelling throat! This was the delicious bit of clay, tempered by heavenly fingers, and framed in a glorious setting of sunny hair which floated round her like an *aureole*, and relieved by a diaphanous drapery of batiste and lawn, bringing out the subtle undulations of her lithe, girlish form,—this was the figure that now stood forth to the eyes of the entranced onlooker, as the incarnation of his rapt visionings on his long-widowed couch.

Had he beheld the fair girl thus,—the lip humid, the violet eyes