

ed, and the few remaining minutes were passed in exchanging more "last words." The final bell rang—a parting shake of the hand was given, to each—the platform was drawn in—

the steam-whistle gave a dismal shriek—and our good friends were on their way to the "Hub," much pleased with their first visit to New Brunswick.

THE HALF SISTERS.

BY MISS M— S—, FREDERICTON.

(Concluded.)

The following evening Frank called at his Father-in-law's house, Zella was in the parlor alone. She wore a thin, black dress, through which her arms and shoulders gleamed like marble. A single rose-bud nestled amid the braids of her beautiful hair.

"Zella, you can wear flowers, but not mine," he said, "but I'll not quarrel with you; it's so seldom you allow me to see you, I would not mar the pleasure with one harsh word."

She made no answer, nor looked up.

"Is father well, Zella?"

"My father is as well as usual, sir," she replied.

He caught a little at the pronoun *my*.

"I will tell him you are here," she said, going to the bell.

"No Zella, please, I wish to speak to *you* a moment."

"I do not wish to hear you, sir," grasping the bell-pull.

He caught her hand.

"Nay, Zella, listen to me a moment, I entreat you; your conduct implies something dreadful."

"Well, sir."

"You shun me, Zella, cruelly shun me."

"Well, sir."

"Be seated, Zella. Have you nothing to say to me but '*Well, Sir?*'?"

"No," scornfully.

"I may as well go home then, to my lonely home. I foolishly hoped that by this time—"

"What has time to do with it, sir?"

"Leave off that formal '*Sir,*' do, my—" he interposed.

"It is a time for cruelty and crime to flourish, for innocent blood to flow unavenged, and do you *dare* to speak to me of love, assassin?" she cried, rising and confronting him, with the majesty of an avenger in her bearing.

"Great heaven! you accusing me of murder, Zella?"

"Yes, monster."

"What right have you to do so?"

"I assert that you caused the death of your wife! Fond husband—tender friend!"

"This is horrible," said he, in great agitation, "I can scarcely believe that you are accusing me of such a dreadful crime, Zella."

"Dreadful, indeed."

"Does your father share your sentiments? but I know he does not."

"He is ignorant of your crime; he could not survive the knowledge of it."

"Why do you speak to me, Zella? Why don't you turn me out the door?"

She made no answer.

"You hate me, you turn from me with a shudder, you think me a murderer—but you wrong me. I am innocent," and he sought to take her hand.

"Never, with that dark brand upon your soul."

"Zella, hear me."

She made a gesture of impatience.

"But a moment."

"You cannot give me back my sister—wretch, you killed her."

"My God!" he cried, throwing up his hands as if to ward off a blow; his face wore the hue of death, his knees shook.

"Let me explain, Zella, you are mistaken, I mourn your sister's death as much as you possibly can."

"You waste time in denying your guilt, it is written in your face."

"You are aware that Grace fell from her horse, Zella, so how could I have had a hand in her death?"

"I am further aware that you heard her cries for help, and you never stirred. Nay, you stood at the window and watched, until the horse had made sure work of it. Yes, *you*, her husband stood and felt a satisfaction in witnessing her death agony." As she concluded she sank into her chair, shaking like one in a fit.

"I think it very strange, Zella, that you should harbor such dreadful thoughts of me. I can easily account for what, to *you*, seems so suspicious. I heard the cries, certainly, and went to the window to ascertain the cause, not thinking it anything serious, and was horrified—yes, horrified, Zella," he said, with a frightful look on his face. "Ah heaven! I seem to see her now. Why will you harrow up my soul by continually referring to this thing? You see I can't endure it. I shall go mad if you do not cease."

"You had better have gone down stairs and saved her life. I can endure no more, leave me, sir."

"By my hopes of heaven, Zella, I am innocent; believe, sister—friend. I flew to save our lost Grace as soon as my palsied limbs permitted, but too late, too late."

"I will ring for a servant to show you out. I am exhausted."

"Forgive me, Zella, for troubling you so