

almost prophetic; at least, the state of mind which induced it naturally predisposes her to succumb to illness; and when, a few days after, she is seized with a low fever that is decimating the city, her weakness greatly aggravates the danger.

A foreign doctor is called in; he immediately proposes to bleed the patient; Irene flies in her distress to Colonel Mordaunt.

"He will kill my mother; what can I do to prevent it? Pray help me."

She is so lovely in her distress, with all thought of self vanished, and the tears standing in her great gray eyes, that it is as much as he can do to answer her appeal rationally.

"Be calm; I will not allow this Belgian rascal to touch her. I have already telegraphed to London. Mr. Pettingall will be here to-morrow."

"How can I ever thank you sufficiently?"

Mr. Pettingall arrives at time, and remains as long as his professional duties will permit, but he can do nothing. Mrs. St. John becomes unconscious, and sinks rapidly. It takes but a few days to accomplish that in her which a robust body would have been fighting against for weeks. In a very short time Irene is awakened to a sense of her mother's danger, and in a very short time after that the danger is past—the illness is past—every thing is past; indeed, except the cold, still figure lying on the bed where she had watched life fade out of it, and which will be the last thing of all (save the memory of a most indulgent mother) to pass away forever.

Mr. Pettingall has returned to London by this time, and Irene and Colonel Mordaunt are alone. What would she have done without him.

Mrs. St. John had left no near relatives who would care to incur the expense of attending her funeral or personally consoling her orphaned daughter; two or three of them receive letters with an intimation of the event, to which they reply (after having made more than one copy of their answer) in stereotyped terms, interlarded with texts of Scripture and the places where they may be found and "made a note of." But not one pair of arms is held out across the British Channel (metaphorically speaking) to enfold Irene; not one pair of eyes weep with her; pens go and tongues wag, yet the girl remains, save for the knowledge of Colonel Mordaunt's help and presence, alone in her sorrow.

During the remainder of that sad week she sits almost entirely in her mother's room; confident, though he has not told her so, that every

thing that should be done is being done by the man who has expressed himself so kindly toward her; and when, on the day of the funeral, she meets him again, she feels as though he were her only friend.

When the interment is over and they have returned to the hotel, Colonel Mordaunt remarks how pale and worn the girl has become, and ventures to ask what care she has been taking of her own health.

"My health! oh, what does that signify?" says Irene, as the tears well up freshly to her swollen eyelids. "There is nothing left for me to live for now."

She has borne up bravely until to-day, for she is no weak creature to render herself sodden by tears that cannot undo the past; she is a woman made for action rather than regret; but the hardest moment in life for self-control is that in which we return to an emptied home, having left all that remains of what we loved beneath the ground. The voice that made our hearts rejoice was silent; the loving eyes beamed on us no longer; the warm, firm hand was cold and claspleless; yet, we could see and touch them. God only knows what joy and strength there comes from contact—and how hard faith is without sight. We look on what we love, and though we have had evidence of its estrangement, still delude ourselves with the sweet falsehood that it is as it ever was: we lose sight of it, and, though it be strong as death and faithful as the grave, cold doubts will rise between it and ourselves to torture us until we meet again.

It is well the dead are buried out of sight; else would they never be forgotten. Human love cannot live forever, unless it sees and touches. So Irene feels for the first time that she has really lost her mother.

But Colonel Mordaunt has lived longer in this world than she has, and his "all" still stands before him, more engaging than ever, in her deep mourning and distress.

"You must not say so," he answers, gently. "You must let me take care of you now; it was a promise made to your poor mother."

"Ah! Mother, mother!"

"My dear girl, I feel for you more than I can express, but I entreat you not to give way. Think how distressed she would be to see you neglecting the health she was always so anxious to preserve. I hear that you have made no regular meals for a week past. This must continue no longer; you must permit me to alter it."

"I will permit you to do any thing that you