

Bella just now, when I know you love her more than ever."

Lucia's head lay upon her mother's knee. Mrs. Costello's touch on the soft hair, her tone of gentle reproof, and the thoughts her words called up, brought tears, fast and thick, to her child's eyes. Lucia had shed few tears in her life. Until lately she had known no cause for them; and lately they had not come. With dry eyes and throbbing temples she had gone through the most sorrowful hours; but now the spell seemed broken, and a sense of calm and relief came with the change. Mrs. Costello went on,—

"There is another reason why we must appear as we have always done. Suspicion is not proof. Margery's story, and more, may be true, and yet it may be that, three months hence, all, as regards ourselves, will be just as it has been. We must not, through a blind fear of one calamity, put ourselves in the way of another. Neither of us can look much at the future to-night; but we must not forget that there is a future. So it is still the old task which is before us, to keep our secret."

The voice had been very steady until the last