

tween the other inmates of the room. The fierce Luttridge had again placed himself opposite his sick wife, and with a look of cold, fixed malignity, he exclaimed, between his teeth:

"For the last time I ask you, have you no money, gold or silver, to give me?"

"As Heaven is my witness, Luttridge, I have none."

"Liar! perjurer!" and he bent over her, till his hot breath fanned her cheek. "Where is the money your darling and champion brought back with her from her English tour?"

"'Tis spent in food and clothing for yourself and us."

"All, is it all gone?"

A short pause followed, and at length his companion rejoined in a firm, though almost inaudible tone:

"Whatever may be the result, I will not tell a falsehood on my bed of death. No, Luttridge, though more than half of the money has been sacrificed to your incessant demands, a slender pittance still remains, and that is neither yours nor mine. It belongs to the child we have already so cruelly robbed, and is her only resource against future want and poverty. Ask me then, no more, to give what is not mine, for I declare to you"—and her face lighted up with the strength of a firm will,—“I declare to you, now on the point of appearing before my Judge, that no power on earth shall make me yield it up.”

"We shall see that," he returned with a smile, devilish in its mocking cruelty. "We shall see that. Here girl," and he turned to Nina, who had been vainly endeavouring to catch the substance of the preceding conversation. "Leave the room, and do not return till you are summoned." She made no reply, but silently glanced from his dark malignant countenance, to the convulsed features of his wife, whose late look of high resolve, was fast fading away.

"Do you hear me? What are you standing for, you little fool? Do you wish me to compel you to go?"

Slowly the girl approached the door, her eyes still fixed on the sick woman, as if she strove to read her wishes, when the latter, whose countenance had been convulsively working during the few previous moments, exclaimed in an accent of agonized terror:

"Nina, in the name of mercy! do not leave us. He will kill me."

This appeal was not disregarded, for the object of it arrested her hand on the latch, and turned from the door.

"What, you dare to face me, you imp of Satan!" ejaculated the husband, with a fierce oath, as he

caught her small arm in his iron grasp, pressing it till a dark, discoloured ring formed beneath his fingers. "Leave the room, I say, or I'll kill you in spite of myself. One stroke of mine would do it, you weak, puny fool."

No exclamation of fear or pain escaped her ashy lips, though the agony of that strong grasp was intense.

"Have you had enough of it—will you go now?" he exclaimed, as he hurled her from him with fearful violence.

"Nina, fly, save yourself. But what will become of me?" gasped the terrified woman, as she strove to raise herself on her pillow. The action attracted the man's fierce rage to herself, and with a terrible imprecation he turned towards her. The sight of his dark countenance flaming with deadly anger, was too much, and, uttering a piercing cry, she fell back on her pillow, a helpless victim to his mad fury. But Nina was there, and she sprang before his victim in time to intercept the blow that fell like lead on her own slight frame.

"So, you will brave me still, you young devil," he muttered, gnashing his teeth. "She has tutored you well; but neither you, nor any one else, will go between us with impunity. Take that, for the reward of your insolent meddling," and his heavy hand again descended on the weak, shrinking girl, felling her with brutal violence to the floor. At that moment however, the door was violently opened, and ere he could turn to face his enemy, an arm, strong, willing as his own, had sent him reeling into the outer apartment.

"Secure that ruffian, Lawton," exclaimed the intruder, a tall, elegant looking man, whose accent and unshined cheek spoke of England's clime, but whose delicate features and soft dark eyes were those of Florence's whilom lover, the Earl of St. Albans. "Secure him well; he is unarmed, I will attend to the girl. What!" he exclaimed with a wild start, as he stooped towards her. "Miss Aley! But, no, 'tis impossible," and with trembling agitation he raised her lifeless form from the ground. "'Tis she! she, indeed. Nina, my poor Nina, awake, you have a friend, a protector at hand. But, merciful heavens! she is cold as ice—she may be dead. Here, help! help!" and he loudly stamped his foot. The hostess hurried in with a pale face.

"Pray, come with me, at once, your Excellency, or murder will be committed. They are fighting in the next room, and my lord's gentleman is wounded."

"Leave them, leave them, and attend to this young lady. My God! woman, but you are slow!" and with a passionate impatience the gen-