

"And Mrs. Rutherford," Estella said, abruptly; "is *she* quite forgotten?"

"Quite—long and many a year ago. When I lost you, I ceased to care for her."

"And this other—her cousin—you *do* love her?"

She could feel the strong shudder that shook him from head to foot.

"For pity's sake, Estella, don't let us speak of *that*! Take me for what I am; but not even to you, least of all to you, can I speak of *her*. Let me forget if I can—she is dead to me from this day. If I had only known you lived before I met her!"

The strong passion of that suppressed cry thrilled her to the heart.

"I am sorry—I am sorry! Oh, Alwyn, perhaps it might have been better if I had never written that letter!"

"No!" he said, steadily, "a thousand times no! Right is right—you did what you should have done, Estella. Don't fear for me—I will forget her, *if I can*—my wife, I trust, will have my whole heart. I will see her once again to say farewell—then, Estella, I will cease to remember there is another woman on earth but yourself. You will leave this wretched place at once—you will come with me now, will you not?"

"You are very good; but, Alwyn, you will repent."

"Never! Trust me, my wife, all unworthy as I am. Trust me, as you have forgiven me—you shall never regret it again. You will come with me immediately, then? I can not talk to you—I can not endure to see you—in this wretched place."

"Not to-night," Estella answered. "I can not go at once. Give me till to-morrow—you shall know why later. Come for me, if you will, the day after. And now I will send you away. I am not very strong, as you see, and this interview has worn me out."

He kissed the pale forehead and arose at once.

"You have not even let me see you, Essie, and after ten—nay, eleven long years of parting."

"Ah, *that* will come all too soon. Think what sad changes ten years of loneliness, and poverty, and labor, must work, and don't come back—don't ever ask to see me. The contrast between me and—*her* will be too cruel."