

virtue, he will not permit it to avail as aught, even though it be found."

"You speak strangely, Madelaine—for surely there is no one living, whose claim to the inheritance can supercede ours."

"Our natural claim is certainly prior to that of any other person—but my grandfather is a peculiar man, and has felt the burden of our presence, I will not say support, so heavily, that I have long thought he never intended we should benefit by the wealth he might leave at his demise. Nay, he has said as much as this, more than once, though we have heeded it, only as an ebullition of ill-humour. But during his illness, I have heard him utter many incoherent sentences, which have strengthened my suspicion of his having made some disposition of his property, that will effectually bar us from its possession."

"Impossible, Madelaine! Hard-hearted as he is, he would not deliberately do us such injustice. No, you cannot think he would leave you, the child of his only son, to beggary; you, who regardless of his harshness and cruelty, have watched and nursed him with the care and tenderness of a daughter. It cannot be! he has done with this world, and his treasures are already ours, and you shall no longer hinder me from appropriating to our use, a small portion, at least, of what our necessities so peremptorily demand."

"My dear mamma, I pray you will not touch a solitary piece of that gold," said Madelaine, earnestly, while with gentle force she strove to prevent her, as she stooped to gather it from the ground. "My grandfather still lives; perhaps he may recover, therefore, we have no right to a particle of it, and till we can justly call it our own, let us not wrong our consciences even by a covetous thought."

"Madelaine," exclaimed Mrs. Dorival, almost weeping with vexation, "I must say you carry your ideas of right to a ridiculous extreme. Yes, I am in earnest—look at my wasted form and pallid cheek, and ask yourself if your mother's comfort, it may be her life, is worth sacrificing, to preserve to one who knows not how to use them, his ill-gotten, and meanly hoarded gains. You do not feel for me as you once did, or this would not be so."

"Dearest mother, try me not with words like these," said Madelaine, bursting into an agony of bitter tears. "Did I not love your virtue, and your peace of mind, more even than your life, precious as that is to me, I would not put forth a finger to hinder your possession of that gold. Not feel for you, dear mother? You do not, cannot think so—I will toil for you cheerfully, gladly, day and night, but oh! let us suffer any wrong, any privation, rather than sully by an unworthy act, that purity of conscience and of soul, without which all the riches of earth would fail to give us peace."

"It shall be as you say, Madelaine," said Mrs.

Dorival, and she let fall the money she had gathered up, and with it a copious shower of tears, either of penitence, or vain regret. "Let it lie there for the dark rust to corrode, while we pine for the want of it, and toil ceaselessly on, unpitied and alone, to preserve our joyless lives—I, who was reared in a home of luxury, and you, whose talents fit you to adorn the station occupied by those whom you humbly stoop to serve."

"God has placed us in this subordinate sphere, dear mother," answered Madelaine, with unruffled sweetness; "and humble though it be, we are not the less solemnly bound, faithfully to discharge its duties, to improve aright its discipline, and to cherish grateful hearts towards the great Giver, for the many blessings, which even we, enjoy. But look, I think grandpapa is awaking; let us not waste time in words, if it is in our power to do any thing for his comfort."

A slight sound, between a groan and a sigh, which issued from his lips, had caused Madelaine's remark, and as she advanced towards the bed and gazed upon him, a convulsive motion about the mouth, made her still think he was about to awake. Draining from a bottle, (which her own small means had procured for the man of untold wealth,) the last spoonful of wine it contained, she endeavoured to force him to swallow it,—but in vain,—and as old Phebe, who now came forth from the newly discovered closet, every corner of which she had been diligently exploring, stood beside her, watching the sunken eyes and contracted features of her master, she shook her head and muttered half to herself:

"We shall not be troubled to lift him again except to his coffin, for its my mind, the life is well nigh out of him, and a cold flame it has been, even when it burned the brightest."

Then turning away she gathered up the scattered gold, and restored it to the bag, which with careful and rigid honesty, she replaced within the closet from whence it had been taken, Mrs. Dorival looking on with sad and tearful discontent, to see what she so much coveted, conveyed from her sight.

But, as if the very sound of the coin which he loved, had power to call the dying miser back again to life, he suddenly unclosed his eyes, and fixing them upon Madelaine, incoherently ejaculated:

"My gold—it is not his—your's—your's—the bond—tear it, child. Ah! he has it—has it—has it!" and thus muttering, he relapsed again into insensibility.

A thrill of horror ran through the frame of Madelaine, as she saw the agony, depicted during this brief struggle, on the ghastly features of the old man, but she remained firm at her post, smoothing back with a gentle touch his thin grey locks, and wiping the death damps from his brow. As she thus stood beside him, she saw that the small piece of pa-