

to speak to me as she did! But I am glad I came."

And she congratulated herself on the success of her errand and the skill with which she had performed it; she thought she had been most considerate and kind in manner and speech both to mother and daughter; with her mind or her motives they had nothing whatever to do. But as it happened, they knew more of both than she at all expected. She was in happy ignorance that half an hour before she entered the mason's house Allan had quitted it, leaving behind him happiness on Elsie's part, delight and gratified pride on her mother's, and on both resentment against her. What reception she and her news might have met with three hours before, cannot now be known; but assuredly, as regarded the impression she wished to make on Mrs. Ford, she was those three hours too late.

When she was gone Mrs. Ford went to look for Elsie. "There is no fear, my child; clever as she thinks herself, and proud as she is, she is deceived, and her pride shall have a fall some day."

"Oh, mother, do not speak so. Remember who she is and what we are."

The mother smoothed the bright dark hair, and putting her hand under the round chin, lifted up the blushing face and looked admiringly. 'Remember what we are.' Ay, child, I do remember what we are,—one of us at least. Don't be afraid, my child, I was quite respectful; but upon my word I had hardly patience to stand and listen to her, knowing what I know."

CHAPTER IV.

Very different from the humble dwelling of the Fords, was the house to which Miss Challoner, her business in the town concluded, took her way. Old and venerable brick-work, trailing ivy and clinging creepers, moss and lichen, rows of small latticed windows, a lawn like velvet, on which a splendid cedar cast broad shade. Any one would have said, "What a noble old house!" Alas! the beautiful lawn was enclosed with high brick walls, which, lofty as they were, could not yet shut out the tall chimneys and the rows of windows and roofs of the

mill buildings that rose above them; for Mr. Lawrence lived in the mill. He might not have chosen to do so; but years before, his father, who had amassed the fortune requisite to purchase the fine old house and erect the spacious factory, had not been a man of sufficient refinement and cultivation to be ashamed of the means by which he had acquired his wealth. The stream which ran swiftly through the park would be extremely useful in the mill works; so the lawn and fine old trees were surrounded by a wall of defence, and the long range of unsightly wooden buildings, and brick chimneys all day vomiting clouds of coal smoke, were built upon the space outside.

Bitter had been Charlotte Challoner's mortification when, five years before, her beautiful sister, the youngest and the pet of the family, had set her heart on marrying a manufacturer. Not even a pretence to family, his father had been a self-made man, who had actually worked in the mill. To be sure nothing could be said against the son; he was in every respect a gentleman, by education, by association, by refined tastes and feelings. But—he was the son of John Lawrence, who had begun life in the rag-room of a paper mill, and as such, whatever he might be now, no fit match for Anne Challoner, who, with beauty enough to aspire to a duke's eldest son, and no despicable dower (the Challoners, though not of boundless wealth, had plenty and to spare), might have had her choice among the first of three counties. But with the contrariety of girls' nature, the beautiful Anne had, at eighteen, given her heart to John Lawrence, and turned a deaf ear to other suitors. Great was the opposition made. Many were the lectures poor Anne received; her father at first entirely refused his consent to the marriage, and Anne dismissed her lover. Neither changed—both lived in hope. Mr. Challoner was relentless for a long time; but Anne was his darling, his pet. He saw her bearing her grief in silence, declining day by day. "After all, Charlotte," he said to his other daughter, "it is not as if she were a son, or even my eldest girl. Better to have her marry somewhat beneath her than to fill a grave." So he gave way,