

the most priceless of all feminine possessions, was struck her.

The blow came in the sweet, sacred disguise of love, that conquered her womanhood, and rendered her confident nature an easy prey to ruthless lust. The sorrowing widow was rapidly approaching convalescence when the secret of her daughter's humiliation became too glaring to be longer concealed. This second grief plunged her frenzied mother into a more dangerous sickness, and it was not until upwards of a year after her first being stricken down, that she arose from her bed a bent, grey-haired, prematurely aged woman, with her reason, caused by terrible disgrace, partially dethroned.

Nothing daunted by the desolation that surrounded her, the widow prepared again to buffet, single-handed, the waves of debt, sorrow and disgrace that were threatening to deluge her.

Above all, was she solicitous of the welfare of her daughter, whom she appeared to love with the more intensity as her humiliation increased. With the jealousy and ferocity of a wild beast guarding her helpless offspring from their would-be destroyers, did she endeavor to watch over and protect her daughter from further harm. This constant espionage had the opposite effect to that intended; but, nevertheless, the natural one with a girl of Edna's spirit and disposition. But how could a prematurely old, frenzied, partially demented woman, carried away by the intensity of her passionate love, know what was best for her daughter?

Feeling the irritation and humiliation of this constant watch, which never permitted her sorrowful memories to depart, Edna rapidly sank deeper in disgrace and despair. The course of reformation, difficult enough under any circumstances, is rendered more arduous to one to whom recollections of past transgressions are constantly present. The wiser plan is to

try unobserved to divert the attention of the guilty from the past delinquencies to a higher and purer life. Brought up in a hard school herself, and unacquainted with the delicate springs of human character, her reason partially unbalanced, the poor widow found herself unable to cope with the waywardness of her child. Discouraged with the lack of success, and erroneously thinking that she had lost the respect of her neighbors, who, on the contrary, deeply commiserated her in her double affliction, the widow herself began to lose self-respect, and was rapidly losing that neat, trim appearance that so distinguished her former days. One thing, in all her degradation, the daughter would not do, and that was to divulge the name of the fiend responsible for her fall. So that with all the terrible weight of eternal responsibility, he drags along his wretched existence quite unknown to any one but the poor bleeding heart that so faithfully kept the secret of his perfidy. Speculation was, therefore, rife as to who her destroyer was. There were whisperings of a tall stranger who had visited the town and formed her acquaintance, and had paid her some attentions. Others again, mentioned the names of certain men about town: but to all such suggestions the girl's lips were mute.

Rapidly these reflections passed through the minds of the citizens on this gloomy afternoon, adding to their horror.

Many of them formed the resolution to aid the poor mother in the restoration of the girl. As time passed, however, the solemn impressions, as usual, would have worn away, and nothing would have been done, had the citizens not been constantly reminded of their resolution by the pitiful wailings of the distressed widow.

\* \* \* \* \*

Far into the winter there constantly rang out on the crisp night air that strange, shrill wail that seemed