

Merton; I identified her, although she was terribly changed. Conscience had evidently stricken her; she had beauty, even yet. Hers was too lovely a youth to be withered by the roughest storms of life.

The freshness, the brightness, had all gone for ever; but the foundation of a once lovely form and face still remained. She approached me; all the cruelty had died away from that classic mouth, all the darts of triumph which illumined those steel grey eyes were spent. Her gaze was fixed upon me now with a long, mournful, sorrow-stricken sadness.

"Miss Lindon," she murmured.

I started back: the voice was hollow, and it sent a thrill through my frame.

"Miss Lindon that was," I replied, "but now Mrs. Courtney."

"Married!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, married," I replied.

At the same time I felt my cheek color consciously; I was kneeling beside another man's grave, but only a dead idol after all.

My husband, as a sensible business man, would not be jealous of a piece of green turf beneath which the dust and ashes of a lost lover slept.

"I don't know how to address you," the wretched woman said. "Perhaps you think me presumptuous for daring to even look at you after the wrong I did you in the past—a wrong which I have bitterly suffered and repented for. Do I not look as if I had had my deserts for my wickedness?"

I shudderingly lifted my eyes to the hollow cheeks, the sunken eyes, the ashen lips, and replied:

"Yes, woman, you undoubtedly have."

"Woman!" she echoed plaintively. "Oh, don't speak so cruelly; call me Grace once more—only once more! The sands of life have nearly run out. I shall soon be sleeping as he is sleeping."

She paused for breath, and a hollow cough checked her utterance for the time. She placed her hand to her head where her hair lay like bands of snow—all the color had long left it.

Heavens! I pitied her, wretch as she was. I had been the means of getting her punished; surely I ought to be satisfied. I had suffered also, but not as she had.

After all, what is the suffering of an injured one who can lay her head down at night on her pillow and feel under Heaven that she is sinned against rather than sinning, compared to the horrible tortures of the guilty one, whose conscience never rests, and whose brain is racked by the condemning fiend who hurls torments upon his head, until he feels that the hangman's rope were an easy death?

"Grace Merton," I said, after a pause, "an-

swer me truthfully one question. Did you really love Bernard McCregor?"

From beneath the sun-ice of that leaden cheek I saw the blood gradually dye it, just as I had seen her blush years ago when she had tempted him on that summer morn.

"From my soul I did," she replied. "Mad, guilty as that love was, that crazy love attacked me at first sight. It was the love of madness born, which stops at nothing to secure its treasure. Had I not loved him I should have been saved from the crime which has rendered my life a living torture and embittered yours. I was a vain, unprincipled girl, I know; but I was really fond of him, and the thought of your being his wife nearly killed me, and it drove me to sin and crime. Forgive me—forgive me!"

She fell on her knees, and our hands met once more. Hers was cold—cold as the turf on which she knelt.

"I forgive you," I replied. "Rise. Do not kneel to me, but ask pardon of Heaven."

At that moment a voice close by said:

"Her Maker has already pardoned and called her to Him."

I started and looked up. A clergyman stood beside me.

He bent his head down on a level with the woman who knelt motionless at my feet. A dim dawning of the truth flashed upon me.

The face was cold and white, the lips were parted; I placed my hand upon the brow, it was cold also.

"Heaven has called to account another wanderer," the minister said. "She is dead."

I started up, and my lips murmured:

"The Lord give rest to her soul!"

THE *Texas Masonic Journal* has entered upon the second year of its existence. It is a fine specimen of the Masonic journals of America, and one of our best exchanges. Bro. J. K. Ashby is an able and painstaking writer and editor, and well deserves the most liberal patronage that can be given to him.

THERE are 653 Lodges of Masons in eighteen principal cities of the world, in an aggregate population of over 13,000,000, an average of one Mason to every 276 persons. Sixteen cities of the United States, with a population of 7,000,000, have 527 Lodges, with a membership of about 61,000, an average of one Mason to every 114 of the population.