

ruins, on sickness, and weary hearts? Is there nothing else in the wide world but loneliness?

But as she gazed, what was the bright red light that shone out of the western tower, and froze her blood with terror? Assuredly her sight did not deceive her: there it was, like a blood-red star, fixed high up among the ivy of the tower. What could it mean? When she looked again it had disappeared.

All the horrid legends of the place recurred to her mind with fearful force. But she had seen this bright red light before, and she watched anxiously, with an unaccountable half-terrified interest, for the sequel she had on those occasions noticed in connection with its appearance. She was not disappointed.

In a few minutes, the figure of a man, wrapped in a long mantle, emerged from one of the entrances to the ruins, and cautiously crossing the courtyard, took up a position in the shelter of a clump of trees directly opposite Rose Marton's chamber. She shuddered in every limb; and yet watched the movements of the strange apparition with a sort of fascination she could not control. There stood the figure, leaning movelessly against a tree, movelessly as a dead man; and though he was too far distant and too much sheltered from the moonlight to be distinctly seen, Rose Marton somehow felt that he was looking towards her—she could almost fancy his eyes fixed on herself, and, though she shuddered and shuddered again in her chilly solitude, she knew by some strange instinct that the cloaked figure was no unearthly visitant, but a man. Who could he be? What was his object? Shudder again, lovely one; thou art a woman and hast reason!

And this marvelous unspoken interview went on—in the still midnight hour, when no sound stirred, but the beating of one, perhaps of more than one anxious heart—and still the cloaked figure moved not—when—

Hark! what dull portentous sound was that? In the next chamber—where old Richard Marton bent over the fire to warm himself and support his heavy head! The dull sound, as of a heavy fall, and now a stifled moan, and a hoarse ominous rumbling on the floor! There was death in the sound.

Rose flew to the door, burst it open. The solitary candle flickered in the socket, and the fire had gone out. But in the imperfect light there was a fearful revelation. A dark form lay on the floor, huddled together in convulsions, now rigid. Heavens! old Richard Marton had fallen from his arm-chair, dead!

The sight paralyzed her—she felt her limbs yield, her brain reel, and she fell panting to the floor, with a shriek that seemed to pierce through all the ruins, making awful echo in the silence of the night.

The first object that met her eyes, as after a few moments, she recovered consciousness, was the figure of a man, assuredly the cloaked figure she had seen motionless among the trees, bending over her anxiously. Seeing her recover, he started and bowed respectfully. Was it a dream, that, as the light flickered on the stranger's face, she beheld the clear-cut features and deep spiritual eyes of the broken portrait—the face that had haunted her lonely hours more than all the Castle ghosts! Assuredly no dream; it was Gerald O'Dwyer himself!

Utterly helpless to reconcile the bewildering thoughts that crowded upon her poor brain, Rose Marton had almost fainted off again, when the stranger whispered reassuringly:

"Do not be afraid, Miss Marton. I cannot now explain all—enough that I heard you cry for help, and took the liberty of casting my poor services at your feet. Be reassured; all may yet be well."

She looked into his face: Truth itself sat there. Then the remembrance of her father's awful fate rushed back upon her.

"Oh! My father! My father!" she cried with passionate energy. "O Heaven, is he dead?"

"Do try to calm yourself," Gerald O'Dwyer urged softly. "He is not dead. He has had a heavy stroke of apoplexy, but it may not be fatal."

"Oh! thank Heaven," she exclaimed, passionately, as she flew to the arm-chair, in which the generous stranger had propped up the patient; having loosened his neckerchief, and rekindled the fire in order to promote warmth in the old man's hands and feet.

What a "ghastly affliction of life" was there! Limbs rigid as in death: the swollen arteries of the neck streaked with unnatural hues: the stiff face, livid; eyes glaring unnaturally, too, and vacantly; pulse raging furiously; life and death, battling hideously, blindly, amid gasps and moans.

The horrified daughter embraced him, called him passionately by his name, clasped his clammy hands—in vain. No intelligence came into the dull eye: no light on the blind life-battle raging there within.

"If you feel sufficiently strong to remain here alone for a while," said the stranger, in a tone of deep sympathy, "I will presently