

you meet my eye steadily and say that Sir Arthur Clifton never presumed upon the familiarity with which you treated him. No, I see you cannot—that blush of shame betrays you, and to save and not destroy you, I will carry you back to your father."

"And will you give me up, and for ever? Avon, you dare not," said Lady Barbara, with a quivering lip."

"Your own after conduct must determine that, Lady Barbara; at present I will not trust myself to say more." He threw the leather case on the table, as he said this, and turning on his heel, left the room.

Lady Barbara, stunned by the decided manner in which he had acted, so unlike his usual yielding disposition, remained for several minutes, standing with her hands clasped, her eyes gazing on vacancy—the very image of despair. Then wildly starting, she pulled at the bell for her woman, who entered trembling. "Wretch!" shrieked her lady, "why utter such a falsehood to Lord Avon?—why tell him I was unwell, making it appear that I wished to deceive him?"

"I did it for the best, my Lady, indeed I did," sobbed the terrified Burford, "I never intended to do such mischief, so help me Heaven!"

"Silence! You have done what years of repentance cannot undo; quit my presence; never appear before me again." And Lady Barbara uttered such frightful screams, stamping up and down the room as if she were mad, that the woman fled in terror to Lord Avon.

He was sitting in his library, his face concealed within his hands, as he leaned upon the table. He looked up upon hearing the exclamation for help from Burford, and betrayed the tears that were fast falling down his cheeks.

"Come, my Lord, for God's sake come to my Lady," cried Burford imploringly. "It was all my fault; she never told me to say she was unwell—oh dear! oh dear! what shall I do?"

"I will not come; leave me instantly," he replied; but the screams of Lady Barbara reaching him in the same moment, he rose, adding, "great God! to what am I doomed with this woman."

He rushed up stairs, followed by Burford. As they drew near the boudoir, the screams suddenly ceased. He burst open the door, and beheld Lady Barbara prostrate on the floor, bathed in blood. His first impression was, that she had destroyed herself; he staggered forward, and raising her in his arms, found that in the violence of her passion, she had broken a blood-vessel. Promptly was she conveyed to her bed, and medical aid summoned. Her danger was great, and her life despaired of for many days. Lord Avon, in the greatest distress, sent off an express for Lord Traverscourt, who arrived in a state of consternation not to be described; but he

was relieved from his worst fears, by hearing that the faintest hopes, for the first time, were held out this very day, of her recovery; but to such deplorable weakness was the sufferer reduced, that they dared not mention to her that her father was in the house; nor was it until the close of another week, that they considered it safe to tell her. She became fearfully agitated on hearing it, entreating to see Lord Avon, who came to her immediately, when she implored him not to breathe to her father the cause of their unhappy quarrel.

Softened by the danger her life had been in, and the tears of contrition she now shed, he very readily gave the promise she required.

"Seal it on my lips, and then I shall know you have forgiven me," murmured Lady Barbara, raising her languid head from the pillow. Lord Avon gave the pledge, with all the affection of his warm, kind heart.

"Thank God!" ejaculated Lady Barbara, "yes even for my illness, since it has restored you to me; now let me see my father, it will do me good—alas! dear man, it was his indulgence that made me what I am."

Several weeks passed, ere Lady Barbara was sufficiently recovered to leave her room; and when she did so, her drooping figure, her feeble step, and altered face, showed the care that she still required. Her physician strongly recommended change of air, and as Traverscourt was near to the sea, where could she be better than at home? Thither, accordingly, she went, accompanied by Lord Avon, who, with infinite satisfaction, quitted London—a place he never had liked, as it did not agree with him.

Had Lady Barbara possessed sufficient wisdom, now would have been the time when she might have worked upon the tenderness of her husband, and have gained his affection; for he was disposed to pay her the most kind attentions, frequently remaining at home to read aloud to her; or wheeling her himself round the grounds in a garden chair, rather than leaving that duty for a servant to perform. But instead of appearing grateful, and sparing him as much as possible, she became more and more exacting in her expectations, until she wearied out his patience and his kindness; and to release himself from the bondage of her querulous complaints, he would occasionally take long rides for hours together, returning only as the shades of evening drew near. Lady Barbara knew that Emmeline's home was at Mr. Grosvenor's, and unable to conceal the uneasiness she felt at his lengthened absences, she asked him one day, if he had not been at the parsonage.

"Yes, I very frequently visit Mr. Grosvenor," was his reply; "his society is a great solace to me."

"Good God! and Miss Milman, there—is this your religion, Avon?" exclaimed Lady Barbara.

"Miss Milman is not there,—she is at Rosedale;