

ordained their separation." A few months afterwards, the estranged couple met casually in Hyde Park, and Lord — passed Miss Dudleigh with a strange stare of irrecognition, that showed the advances he had made in the command of manner! She had been really attached to him, for he was a young man of handsome appearance, and elegant, winning manners. The only things he wanted were a head and a heart! This circumstance, added to the perpetual harassment of domestic sorrows, had completely undermined her delicate constitution; and her brother's conduct prostrated the few remaining energies that were left her.

But Mrs. Dudleigh has latterly slipped from our observation. I have little more to say about her. Aware that her own infamous conduct had conduced to her husband's ruin, she had resigned herself to the necessary lashings of remorse, and was wasting away daily. Her excesses had long before sapped her constitution, and she was now little else than a walking skeleton. She sat moping in her bedroom for hours together, taking little or no notice of what happened about her, and manifesting no interest in life. When, however, she heard of her son's fate, the only person on earth she really loved, the intelligence smote her finally down. She never recovered from the stroke. The only words she uttered, after hearing of his departure for America, were "wretched woman! guilty mother! I have done it all!" The serious illness of her poor daughter affected her scarce at all. She would sit at her bed side, and pay her every attention in her power, but it was rather in the spirit and manner of a hired nurse than a mother.

To return, however, to "the chief mourner"—Mr. Dudleigh. The attorney, whom he had sued for his villainy in the mortgage transactions, contrived to get appointed solicitor to the commission of bankruptcy sued out against Mr. Dudleigh, and he enhanced the bitterness and agony incident to the judicial proceedings he was employed to conduct, by the cruelty and insolence of his demeanour. He would not allow the slightest indulgence to the poor bankrupt, whom he was selling out of house and home; but remorselessly seized on every atom of goods and furniture the law allowed him, and put the heart broken helpless family to all the inconvenience his malice could suggest. His conduct was, throughout, mean, tyrannical, even diabolical, in its contemptuous disregard of the best feelings of human nature. Mr. Dudleigh's energies were too much exhausted to admit of remonstrance or resistance. The only evidence he gave of smarting under the man's insolence, was, after enduring an outrageous violation of his domestic privacy—a cruel interference with the few conveniences of his dying daughter, and sick wife—when he suddenly touched the attorney's arm, and in a low broken tone of voice, said, "Mr —, I am a poor heart-broken man, and have no one to avenge me, or you would not dare to do this," and he turned away in tears! The house and furniture in — Square, with every other item of property that was available, being disposed of, on winding up the affairs, it proved that the creditors could obtain a dividend of about fifteen shillings in the pound. So convinced were they of the unimpeachable integrity of the poor bankrupt, that they not only spontaneously released him from all future claims, but entered into a subscription amounting to £2000, which they put into his hands, for the purpose of enabling him to recommence housekeeping, on a small scale—and obtain some permanent means of livelihood. Under their advice, or rather direction, for he was passive as an infant—he removed to a small house in Chelsea, and commenced business as a coal merchant, or agent for the sale of coal, in a small and poor way, it may be supposed. His new house was very small, but neat, convenient, and situated in a quiet and creditable street. Yes, in a little one-storied house, with about eight square feet of garden frontage, resided the once wealthy and celebrated Mr. Dudleigh.

The very first morning after Mrs. Dudleigh had been removed to her new quarters, she was found dead in her bed. For the fatigues of changing her residence, added to the remorse of chagrin which had so long preyed upon her mind, had extinguished the last spark of her vital energies. When I saw her, which was not till the evening of the second day after her decease, she was lying in her coffin; and I shall not soon forget the train of instructive reflections elicited by the spectacle. Poor creature, her features looked indeed haggard and grief-worn!—Mr. Dudleigh wept over her remains like a child, and kissed the cold lips and hands, with the liveliest transports of regret. At length came the day of the funeral, as plain and unpretending as one as could be. At the pressing solicitations of Mr. Dudleigh, I attended her to the grave. I was an affecting thought, that the daughter was left dying in the house from which her mother was carried out to burial! Mr. Dudleigh went through the whole of the melancholy ceremony with a calmness, and even cheerfulness, which sur-

prised me. He did not betray any emotion when leaving the ground; except turning to look into the grave, and exclaiming rather faintly—"Well—here we leave you poor wife!" On our return home, about three o'clock in the afternoon, he begged to be left alone for a few minutes, with pen, ink, and paper, as he had some important letters to write—and requested me to wait for him, in Miss Dudleigh's room, where he would join me, and accompany me part of my way up to town. I repaired, therefore, to Miss Dudleigh's chamber. She was sitting up, and dressed in mourning. The marble paleness of her even then beautiful features, was greatly enhanced by contrast with the deep black drapery she wore. She reminded me of the snowdrop she had an hour or two before laid on the pall of her mother's coffin! Her beauty was fast withering away under the blighting influence of sorrow and disease! She reclined in an easy-chair, her head leaning on her small snowy hand, the taper-fingers of which were half concealed beneath her dark clustering, uncurled tresses—

"Like a white rose, glistening 'mid evening gloom."

"How did he bear it?" she whispered with a profound sigh, as soon as I had taken my place beside her. I told her that he had gone through the whole with more calmness and fortitude than could have been expected. "Ah!—'Tis unnatural! He's grown strangely altered within these last few days, Doctor! He never seems to feel any thing! His troubles have stunned his heart, I'm afraid!—Don't you think he looks altered?"

"Yes, my love, he is thinner, certainly—"

"Ah—his hair is white!—He is old—he won't be long behind us!"

"I hope that now he is freed from the cares and distractions of business—"

"Doctor, is the grave deep enough for THREE?" enquired the poor girl, abruptly, as if she had not heard me speaking! "Our family has been strangely desolated, Doctor—has not it?—My mother gone; the daughter on her death bed; the father wretched, and ruined, the son—flown from his country—perhaps dead, or dying!—But it has all been our own fault—"

"You have nothing to accuse yourself of, Miss Dudleigh," said I. She shook her head, and burst into tears. This was the melancholy vein of conversation when Mr. Dudleigh made his appearance, in his black gloves, and crape-covered hat, holding two letters in his hand.

"Come, Doctor," said he, rather briskly, "you've a long walk before you!—I'll accompany you part of the way, as I have some letters to put into the post."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself about that, Mr. Dudleigh!—I'll put them into the post, as I go by."

"No, no—thank you—thank you—be interrupted me, with rather an embarrassed air, I thought—"I've several other matters to do—and we had better be starting." I rose, and took my leave of Miss Dudleigh. Her father put his arms round her neck, and kissed her very fondly. "Keep up your spirits, Agnes!—and see and get into bed as soon as possible—for you are quite exhausted!"—He walked towards the door. "Oh, bless your little heart, my love!" said he, suddenly returning to her, and kissing her more fondly, if possible, than before. "We shall not be apart long, I dare say!"

We set off on our walk towards town, and Mr. Dudleigh conversed with great calmness, speaking of his affairs, and even in an encouraging tone. At length we separated. "Remember me kindly to Mrs —," said he, mentioning my wife's name, and shaking me warmly by the hand.

The next morning, as I sat at breakfast, making out my daily list, my wife, who had one of the morning papers in her hand, suddenly let it fall, looking palely at me, exclaimed—"Eh, surely—surely, my dear, this can never be—Mr. Dudleigh!" I enquired what she meant, and she pointed out the following paragraph—

"ATTEMPTED SUICIDE.—Yesterday evening, an elderly gentleman, dressed in deep mourning, was observed walking for some time near the water side, a little above Chelsea Reach, and presently stepped on board one of the barges, and threw himself from the outer one into the river. Most providentially this latter movement was seen by a boatman who was rowing past, and who succeeded, after some minutes, in seizing hold of the unfortunate person, and lifting him into the boat—but not till the vital spark seemed extinct. He was immediately carried to the public house by the water side, where prompt and judicious means were made use of—and with success. He is now lying at the — public house,—but as there were no papers or cards about him, his name is at present unknown. The unfortunate gentleman is of middling stature, rather full make—of advanced age—his hair very grey,—and he wears a mourning ring on his left hand.

I rung the bell, ordered a coach, drew on my boots,

and put on my walking-dress; and in little more than three or four minutes, was hurrying on my way to the house mentioned in the newspaper. A twopenny post man had the knocker in his hand at the moment of my opening the door, and put into my hand a paid letter, which I tore open as I drove along. It was from—Mr. Dudleigh. It afforded unequivocal evidence of the meanness which had led him to attempt his life. It was written in a most extravagant and incongruous strain, and acquainted me with the writer's intention to "bid farewell to his troubles that evening." It ended with informing me, that I was left a legacy in his will for £5000—and hoping, that when his poor daughter died, "I would see her magnificently buried." By the time I had arrived at the house where he lay, I was almost fainting with agitation, and I was compelled to wait some minutes below, before I could sufficiently recover my self-possession. On entering the bedroom where he lay, I found him undressed, and fast asleep. There was no appearance whatever of discomposure in the features. His hands were clasped closely together—and in that position he had continued for several hours. The medical man, who had been summoned in over-night, sat at his bedside and informed me that his patient was getting on as well as could be expected. The treatment he had adopted had been very judicious and successful; and I had no doubt, that when next Mr. Dudleigh awoke, he would feel little if any the worse for what he had suffered. All my thoughts were now directed to Miss Dudleigh; for I felt sure that if the intelligence had found its way to her, it must have destroyed her. I ran every inch of the distance between the two houses, and knocked gently at the door with my knuckles, that I might not disturb Miss Dudleigh. The servant girl, seeing my discomposed appearance, would have created a disturbance, by shrieking, or making some other noise, had I not placed my fingers on her mouth, and in a whisper, asked how her mistress was?—"Master went home with you, sir, did not he?"—she enquired with an alarmed air.

"Yes—yes"—I replied hastily.

"Oh, I told Miss so! I told her so! replied the girl, clasping her hands and breathing freer.

"Oh, she has been uneasy about his not coming home last night—eh?—Ah—I thought so this morning, and that is what has brought me here in such a hurry," said I, as calmly as I could. After waiting down stairs to recover my breath a little, I repaired to Miss Dudleigh's room. She was awake. The moment I entered, she started up in bed, her eyes starting, and her arms stretched towards me.

"My—my—father!"—she gasped; and before I could open my lips, or even reach her side, she had fallen back in bed, and—as I thought—expired. She had swooned: and during the whole course of my experience, I never saw a swoon so long and closely resembling death. For more than an hour, the nurse, servant girl, and I, hung over her in agonising and breathless suspense, striving to detect her breath—which made no impression whatever upon the glass. I from time to time held over her mouth. Her pulse fluttered and fluttered—feebler and feebler, till I could not perceive that it beat at all. "Well!" thought I, at last removing my fingers—"you are gone, sweet Agnes Dudleigh, from a world that has but few as fair and good!"—when a slight undulation of the breast, accompanied by a faint sigh, indicated slowly returning consciousness. Her breath came again, short and faint—but she did not open her eyes for some time after.

"Well, my sweet girl," said I, presently observing her eyes fixed steadfastly on me; "why all this? What has happened? What is the matter with you?" and I clasped her cold fingers in my hand. By placing my ear so close to her lips that it touched them, I distinguished the sound—"My fa—father!"

"Well! And what of your father? He is just as usual, and sends his love to you." Her eyes, as it were, dilated on me—her breath came quicker and stronger—and her frame vibrated with emotion. "He is coming home shortly, by—by—four o'clock this afternoon—yes, four o'clock at the latest. Thinking that a change of scene might revive his spirits, I prevailed on him last night to walk on with me home—and—and he slept at my house." She did not attempt to speak, but her eye continued fixed on me with an unwavering look that searched my very soul! "my wife and Mr. Dudleigh will drive down together," I continued, firmly, though my heart sunk within me at the thought of the improbability of such being the case; "and I shall return here by the time they arrive, and meet them. Come, come, Miss Dudleigh, this is weak, absurd!" said I, observing that what I said seemed to make no impression on her. I ordered some port wine and water to be brought, and forced a few tea-spoonfuls into her mouth. They revived her, and I gave her more. In a word she rapidly recovered from a state of utmost exhaustion into which she had fallen; and before I left, she said solemnly to me, "Doctor —! If—if you have deceiv-