

you, and protecting you, you would not thus pitilessly reject me, for I have so long ceased to think of happiness except with you, and so recklessly abandoned myself to that passion which consumes me, that I fear 'tis now too late to retrace my steps, and if at last disappointment shall come upon my hopes and—laugh at me—Charlotte, it may be a triumph to you, but misery in this life must be the future portion of Reginald De Courçi.

“Talk not thus wildly, Reginald,” said Miss De Courçi, mildly addressing him, “your extravagance alarms me. If it will quiet you to know, be assured, you do not lament more than I, our unfortunate relationship. Since *this*, however, cannot be removed.

“It *shall* be removed” he exclaimed impetuously, “I’ll disown you.” She smiled doubtingly upon him, and shook her head. He bent his face within his hands, and seemed, for some minutes sunk in a deep mental abstraction.—“Cousins have been man and wife before,” he muttered disjointly to himself, “and instances thicken crowdingly around us—but they were rich, and I——” a sudden jealous suspicion took possession of him—he arose—an ashy paleness had overspread his features—his eyes and his nostrils had become gradually dilated and set—his lips moved, but no sound was audible, save a faint low gurgling in his throat—the expression of his countenance was vacuity, like one waking from a dream into sudden stunning, unintelligible reality, and then he shook through every limb, until from very weakness, he was forced to lean against the wall—he was sick at heart. Alarmed, Miss De Courçi approached him, placed her hand tenderly on his shoulder, and with compassionating expression in her countenance, she looked in his face, for she pitied him. The paroxysm passed away—he took her hand coldly in his—his features retained still their paleness, and his lips were white, and the large globules on his forehead, told how intense had been his suffering. “Charlotte !” said he, and his voice was steady, like the tones which reverberate hollow from a sepulchre, “Charlotte, I love you, and Heaven above knows how disinterested is that love—I would take you to my bosom, and whatever of honor and happiness, fate has in store for me, I