

could not stay in Ireland; he hated the place: perhaps he would be shot himself next.

He was his own master, and when Lady Elmsdale found that gentle exostulation was useless, she held her peace—the wisest proceeding under the circumstances. But she had persuaded him to remain, at least, a few weeks and he consented, though with diffculty.

That morning at breakfast he had told her, in no very gentle language, that he would leave Elmsdale this day week, and he supposed she would prefer leaving also, as it would be necessary to shut up the greater part of the Castle. He had already made his arrangements.

"When do you wish me to leave, Edward?"

The young man had not said, in so many words, that his mother must go elsewhere; but she quite understood him, and he intended she should.

"Well, mother, of course I do not wish to turn you out," he replied, with some attempt at ordinary courtesy, at least; "but I have everything arranged. Burns will stay here in charge of this place, and I suppose you and Mary can pack up in a few days—that is, if you wish to go elsewhere."

Wish to go! He knew perfectly his mother wished nothing of the kind; but, like many another self-deceiver, he tried to persuade himself that her expatriation was not all his doing.

"The truth is," he continued, perceiving that his mother was grave and silent, "the Assizes come on immediately, and I must clear out of the country, for I would rather shoot myself than give evidence in the case again."

Lady Elmsdale had no particular fear of his carrying out his threat; but she saw at once that it would be desirable, for all the family, to be away at such a time, and she said so.

"Certainly, Edward, I think you are right. I can be prepared in a few days; and I suppose you would like a few days to yourself here, after we have left."

He said a day would do. Everything was arranged, and he seemed much relieved that his mother took his proposal so quietly.

She asked if he intended to take a

servant with him? He replied, No. Those Irish fellows were such confounded talkers. He wanted to get away from every one who knew anything about the past. He would engage a servant when he arrived in Paris. A foreigner would suit him. But—And then Lady Elmsdale rose, and went to her daughter, seeking unconsciously for sympathy and support, and not finding it.

Mary Elmsdale was a fair object for any mother's eye. A delicate maiden—delicate almost to paleness—and yet, as is sometimes the case, when appearances are such, not in such very bad health as might have been supposed from her frail look.

The poor girl had received a fearful shock at her father's death, and for several weeks had been in a precarious state. But Dr. Kelly was kind and skilful, the mother was an excellent nurse, her own maid, *Rose*, a good attendant, and she had youth on her side, and that buoyancy of spirit which is rarely, indeed, crushed down in early life.

She was lying now, more from habitual indolence than from necessity, on a sofa in her mother's dressing-room; and, as I have said, she was as fair an object as you could see. The rich crimson velvet of the cushions on which she lay reclined, the long white cashmere dressing-robe in which she was wrapped—a broad blue ribbon had fastened it round the waist, and a narrow blue ribbon had fastened it at the throat, in the days not long ago, when the girl took pleasure in bright colors, and with rare taste knew how to select and harmonize them. The ribbons had not been changed for black ones. The maid thought they became Miss Elmsdale so well, she was determined not to alter them without a special order: the mother, perhaps, agreed with the maid—at least she said nothing—and Mary had not thought of the matter at all. She was one of those who like to be tastefully arrayed, who take pains to array themselves tastefully, and yet who do not give overmuch consideration to the vanities of dress: it was an instinct of her refined nature, rather than an effort of a frivolous mind.

Freddy was in the room. The twins seemed to avoid their mother by mutual consent; and this could scarcely be