

After that, though I made a last effort to dissuade her, there was nothing more to be said. Obedient to her behest, I made my preparations, and at the appointed hour next evening rose softly from the miserable pallet on



which I had just laid down; and dressing myself with shaking fingers and in the dark—that my bed-fellows might know as little as possible of my movements—stole down the stairs and into the garden.

Here I found myself first at the rendezvous. The night was dark, but an unusual light

hung over the town, and the wind that stirred the poplars brought scraps and sounds of music to the ear. I had some time to wait, and time too to think what I was about to do; to weigh the chances of detection and dismissal, and even to taste the qualms that rawness and timidity mingled

STOLE DOWN THE STAIRS AND
INTO THE GARDEN

with my anticipations of pleasure. But, though I had my fears, no vision of the real future obtruded itself on my mind as I stood there listening: nor any forewarning of the plunge I was about to take. And before I had come to the end of my patience Dorinda stood beside me.