

our hardest task is before us. How will you bear, Lucia, to meet them all again ? ”

“ Mother, I cannot ! Surely you do not think of it. How can *we* ”—she shuddered as she spoke—“ how can we go again among any innocent people ? ”

“ My child, we *must*. More than that, we must keep our secret, if we can, still.”

“ But Bella ? Mother, how can I look at her—a widow—and know who I am, and who has done it ? ”

“ Listen to me, Lucia. My poor child, your burden has been heavy lately ; do not make it heavier than it need be. The crime and the horror are bad enough, but we have no share in them. No ; think of it reasonably. The wife and child of a criminal, even where there has been daily association between them, are not condemned, but rather pitied. No mind, but one cruelly prejudiced, would brand them with his guilt. Do not punish yourself, then, where others would acquit you. But, indeed, I need not tell you how our very separation is a safeguard to us—to you especially. Think of these things ; and do not suffer yourself to imagine that there is a bar between you and