

my aunt. Since coming to Edinburgh I had only written to her twice. When I was about ten days an inmate of Miss Murray's house, Katie wrote to me saying that my aunt was nearly distracted about Tom. It was more than suspected that he was concerned in the bank robbery, and since that night he had never been seen nor heard of. I took no notice of this to Katie, but I wrote to my aunt an account of my encounter with Tom on the wharf, and his obtaining the ten pounds Katie had given me. I wrote her a second letter on the subject of my marriage; she never deigned to answer either.

I now wrote, telling her of my poverty, and beseeching her to take me back on any terms; if she would allow me and my child to live in her house, I would work at any thing she set me to do; I would never grumble now, but stay in the kitchen, and eat anything she chose to give me, so that my child might have shelter. I told her I could make shirts and dresses, and after the house work was done I would sew for her until late in the night, so that we might be no burden.

I sealed both my letters, and taking Maida with me set off to put them in the post office. I had never been there; Mr. Laud had mailed all my letters for me. For a year back I had written to no one. On arriving at my destination I put Katie's letter at once into the slit; my aunt's I held suspended for a minute and then drew back my hand; I could not pay the postage; I knew this would be in her eyes a great crime. Was it likely that on receiving an unpaid letter, her temper would be such as to induce her to agree to my request; and then I pictured to myself the life I had once led under her roof, the life I was sure to lead if she agreed to shelter me; a thought struck me, if I could work for my aunt I could work for a stranger, perhaps a stranger would not be so exacting; I