

phrase—'as well as could be expected,' considering how dreadfully her constitution had been shattered by the long sufferings and privations she had undergone: but on the afternoon of the third day, unfavorable symptoms appeared; her strength began to decline rapidly: and when the apothecary came in to pay his usual visit, he was so struck by the sudden change, that he warned Henry to prepare himself for the worst. When he returned again at night-fall, he found all his apprehensions confirmed. Julia was sinking momentarily. She had been unable, from sheer debility, to take the remedies prescribed, and was lying with her eyes half closed, and her husband's hand pressed between her own, in the last stage of exhaustion. As the apothecary, aware that all further medical aid was unavailing, the rallying power being wholly gone, withdrew from the chamber, Raymond gently released his hand from his wife's grasp, and rose to follow him, with a view (so eagerly in moments of affliction do we catch at straws) to wring from him an acknowledgement that there was still some hope; but just as he reached the door he turned round, fancying that he heard Julia's voice, and seeing her dim eyes sadly resting upon him, he could not resist that mute, touching appeal, so resumed his station by her side, which evidently gave her pleasure, as he felt by the faint pressure of her hand. But this was almost the last symptom of consciousness she evinced. Shortly after a film came across her eyes, she sighed feebly, there was a tremulous movement of the lips, as if she would have spoken, but could not; and then all was still!—The pure spirit had returned to its native heaven!

O God! the agony of that moment of bereavement! There he sate—the widowed and childless husband—rigid and motionless, shedding no tear, breaking out into no stormy passion of grief, but looking like one suddenly frozen to marble. The clock struck midnight, and still there he sate, past, apparently, the power of thought and feeling. The

nurse, who had been in attendance on his wife, and then his landlady, did all they could to rouse him from his leaden stupor; but they soon gave up the task as hopeless, and left him alone with the dead. Alone with the dead! Alone with one who has been our best friend, and counsellor through life, the daily gladdener of our home, the sharer alike in our joys and sorrows!—alone with this loved one, yet miss her accustomed smile, see no ray of fond intelligence lighting up her features, and receive no answer when we wildly call upon her name! alone, in short, with that which *was*, but *is* no longer!—what a world of dreadful meaning is in these words!

Toward daybreak, the stunned widow began slowly to wake to a consciousness of his situation. Reflection stirred again within him; but alas! not to soothe, but to aggravate the bitterness of his grief; for every hasty word he had spoken—every impetuous feeling he had given way to in Julia's presence—came rushing, like a hot blasting lava-torrent upon his memory. "Wake, dearest!" he distractedly exclaimed, "wake, if only for one brief moment, to say that you forgive me. No, she will wake no more!" he added, gazing at the serene still-smiling features, on which the grey light of morning rested; "no more, she will wake no more!" At that instant, a cock crew from a neighbouring garden wall. Raymond started at the sound, recollecting with what painful feelings he had heard it but the morning before, fearing it might disturb his wife's repose. "My God, can all this be real?" he resumed, wringing his hands in agony, "or do I but dream that I am left alone and desolate? Julia—alas, she hears me not!—oh my brain, my brain!" and, overpowered by the intensity of his emotions, he dropped senseless on the floor.

When he recovered his senses, he found himself reclining on a sofa-bed in the adjoining room, with the nurse standing beside him, bathing his hands and temples with vinegar, and the landlady placing the breakfast things on the table.