

Presently there came other thoughts ; they were these—" David," said I, " if you don't accept it, what then? You have a wife and two children, unable to support themselves : for you it matters little how you end your days, but for them," and then my thoughts became confused again. Suddenly came the sense that by refusing this I should be resisting the will of Him who had reserved his best gift for the last ; that by scorning the hand that was held out to save me and mine from the brink of poverty, I should be guilty of robbery to them, and disobedience to God, and what for? merely to satisfy a feeling which, however natur<sup>e</sup>, was still false ; yes, at last I determined, pride, false pride ; I could scarcely realize at first how, I, poor humble being that I was, could be actually *prov'd*.

A little time soon convinced me that singing was harder work than I imagin<sup>ed</sup>, less a pleasure. Yes, now I seldom sing except when I am obliged, and even then, when in the mid-st of the sublimest of airs, and expecting applause from a gay audience, and how often do I think with regret of my humble cottage and the evening hymn.

For it is not with me as it is with others : the poorest audience would suit me as well as the proudest ; the open air better than the unknown brilliance of the concert room ; the finest clothes produce no effect upon me, except one of discomfort ; but still my blindness is a blessing even in this. I have nothing to distract my attention ; I cannot see, but I can feel, feel as I never did before, the beauty of music ; and it is scarcely too much to say, that my blindness has contributed, as much as my voice, to my success as a singer.

" But it will be soon over now," he said, sighing, after a pause.

" Over ! what ?" I said, with a dimly sad impression of his meaning.

" All my troubles, my earthly joys, my blindness, and my life ! One month and the blind singer will be no more."

I looked at his wife and children, to whom this sad intelligence was evidently too well known to call up aught but a sad smile. My long absence from them, much as I felt for, nay, wept for them, made me feel that I could not touch this tender wound with fingers gentle enough not to produce pain, and so with a heavy heart I took my leave.

#### CHAPTER V.—DEATH IN SONG.

It was nearly a month after this that I was told he was dying, and wished to see me. As I entered the house, already consecrated to death, I was sensible of a feeling of unutterable stillness pervading. The muffled knocker, the whispering of the cautious-footed maid, and lastly the tall, silent figure of Mary, with finger on her lips, all spoke one word in a noiseless voice, and it was—hush !

He was sleeping when I came in, and his hand was clasping that of his eldest child, who was kneeling by the bedside. Presently he awoke, and faintly thanked me for coming. He was so exhausted that he could scarcely speak ; he motioned me to his side ; and spoke to me in a low voice. I cannot repeat what he said—gratitude to me, love to his wife and children, and all, were the burden of the low voice, and he dozed awhile. Suddenly he rose up apparently without effort, in his bed, and with a voice betraying no symptom of weakness he called us to draw around him.

" My dear friends," he said, turning from one to another with calm eyes and loving smile ; " a little strength is mine now, to speak to you for the last time, and to bid you adieu for a little while. I have but little to say, and little time