

THE BARONET'S BRIDE.

yards yawn and graves give up their dead," and an army of rooks, disturbed in their "beauty sleep" by the discordant noise, cawed harshly in reply. A little toy time-piece of buhl on the stone mantel chimed musically its story of the hour, and Sir Jasper Kingsland lifted his gloomy eyes for a moment at the sound. He was leaning against the old, quaintly carved chimney-piece, looking at the smoldering fire, his dark face full of unutterable trouble and pain. A tall, spare, middle-aged man, handsome once—handsome still, some people said—with iron-gray hair and a proud, patrician face.

"Twelve," his dry lips whispered to themselves—"midnight, and for three hours I have endured this maddening agony of suspense! Another day is given to the world, and before its close all I love best may be cold and stark in death! Oh, my God! have mercy, and spare her!"

He lifted his clasped hands in passionate appeal. There was a picture opposite—a gem of Raphael's—the Man of Sorrows fainting under the weight of the cross, and the fire's shine playing upon it seemed to light the pallid features with a derisive smile.

"The mercy you showed to others, the same shall be shown to you. Tiger heart, you were merciless in the days gone by. Let your black, bad heart break, as you have broken others!"

No voice had sounded, yet he was answered. Conscience had spoken in trumpet-tones, and with a hollow groan the baronet turned away and began pacing up and down.

It was a large and spacious apartment, this library of Kingsland Court, dimly lighted now by the flickering wood-fire and the mellow glow of a branch of wax-lights. Huge book-cases filled to overflowing lined the four walls, and pictures precious as their weight in rubies looked duskiely down from their heavy frames. Busts and bronzes stood on brackets and surmounted doors; a thick, rich carpet of moss-green, sprinkled with oak leaves and acorns, muffled the tread; voluminous draperies of dark green shrouded the tall, narrow windows. The massive chairs and tables, fifty years old at least, were spindle-legged and rich in carving, upholstered in green velvet and quaintly embroidered by hands moldered to dust long ago. Everything was old and grand, and full of storied interest. And there, on the wall, was the crest of the house—the uplifted