

THE BLIND MAN'S WRATH.

"My boy, my poor blind boy." This sorrowful exclamation broke from the lips of Mrs. Owen...

Her son, the only child of her widowed mother, the only child of her father...

He had been blind since he was three years old, stricken by lightning, he had totally lost his sight...

Independently of the natural kindness which very rarely fails to be shown to wards any person who is blind, there was that about both the widow and her son...

When they walked out together his mother took him arm; he was proud of that, as if it were a mark of distinction...

But gradually the mother's form grew bent, her step dragged, and her face the expression of her face indicated increasing weakness...

As she grew up, there was no change in the frank and condoning nature of their intercourse. Mary still made him the recipient of her girlish secrets...

"No, mother, no!" exclaimed the blind man. "Dearest mother, in this you are not true to yourself! What! Would you wish to see her in all her springtime youth and beauty to be sacrificed to such a one as I!

"But Edward—if she loves you, as I am sure she does—Love me, mother! Yes, as angels love mortals, as a sister loves a brother, as you love me!

"Hush!" said Edward, recognizing the step. "Hush! Mary, she is asleep!" The color and smiles alike passed from Mary's face...

Other steps now sounded in the room, and his face gathered round the couch, and the blind man heard nothing...

"Edward, my dearest, take comfort. I have hope. God is indeed merciful." "Oh Edward, do not grieve so sadly! It breaks my heart to see you cry...

Early after dinner, the large old-fashioned drawing-room at Woodlands was deserted. The momentous business of the toilet had passed through, and then a drive of five miles accomplished...

"Alone, alone! How the silence of this room strikes upon my heart—how long this evening will be, without her voice, without her footsteps!

"Dear Mary, say rather, ended; for you know this cannot allow go on so. I must return to my own house next week; I have trespassed on your father's hospitality, indulgence, and forbearance too long."

"Leave us, Edward!" and the color deepened in her cheeks, and her hand trembled in his. "Not yet!"

"Do you remember when you were a child, Mary, you anxiously romantic used to be, and how you were determined to become a duchess at least?"

"In that way?" "In that direction do your wish to see her?"

"Ah, Edward, it is better you cannot see me as I am! You would not think of me—so much!" "If I could but see you for a moment as you will look at the ball to-night, I fancy I should never regret again."

Edward enquiringly, turning in the direction on which she stood. "No, she replied sorrowfully, 'it is the ball that I do not like, nor your thinking about decking us out for it. As if I cared to look at these lovely roses, said the eldest sister, as they were selecting each each should wear; 'would not Mary look well with a wreath of these roses in her hair?'"

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Edward cheerily, "and let me weave it for her! You know, Mary, it is one of my accomplishments;—you would not be so generous when you were a little girl? Will you trust my fingers for the task?"

"If you really wish it, if it does not seem too trifling yet," said Mary gently, with a sweet expression upon her brow usually so serene, as she moved reluctantly away. "But it must appear such mockery to you, poor Edward!"

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