

Chapter XXIII

Among the heirs of Art, as is the division of the promised land, each has to win his portion by hard fighting: the bestowal is after the manner of prophecy, and is a title without possession. To carry the map of an ungotten estate in your pocket is a poor sort of copyhold. And in fancy to cast his shoe over Eden is little warrant that a man shall ever set the sole of his foot on an acre of his own there.

The most obstinate beliefs that mortals entertain about themselves are such as they have no evidence for beyond a constant, spontaneous pulsing of their self-satisfaction - as it were a hidden seed of madness, a confidence that they can move the world without precise notion of standing-place or lever.

'Pray go to church, mamma,' said Gwendolen the next morning. 'I prefer seeing Herr Klesmer alone.' (He had written in reply to her note that he would be with her at eleven.)

'That is hardly correct, I think,' said Mrs. Davilow, anxiously.

'Our affairs are too serious for us to think of such nonsensical rules,' said Gwendolen, contemptuously. 'They are insulting as well as ridiculous.'

'You would not mind Isabel sitting with you? She would be reading in a corner.'

'No; she could not: she would bite her nails and stare. It would be too irritating. Trust my judgment, mamma, I must be alone, Take them all to church.'

Gwendolen had her way, of course; only that Miss Merry and two of the girls stayed at home, to give the house a look of habitation by sitting at the dining-room windows.

It was a delicious Sunday morning. The melancholy waning sunshine of autumn rested on the half-strown grass and came mildly through the windows in slanting bands of brightness over the old furniture, and the glass panel that reflected the furniture; over the tapestried chairs with their faded flower-wreaths, the dark enigmatic pictures, the superannuated organ at which Gwendolen had pleased herself with acting Saint Cecelia on her first joyous arrival, the crowd of pallid, dusty knicknacks seen through the open doors of the antechamber where she had achieved the wearing of her Greek dress as Hermione. This last memory was just now very busy in her; for had not Klesmer then been struck with admiration of her pose and expression? Whatever he had said, whatever she imagined him to have

thought, was at this moment pointed with keenest interest for her: perhaps she had never before in her life felt so inwardly dependent, so consciously in need of another person's opinion. There was a new fluttering of spirit within her, a new element of deliberation in her self-estimate which had hitherto been a blissful gift of intuition. Still it was the recurrent burden of her inward soliloquy that Klesmer had seen but little of her, and any unfavorable conclusion of his must have too narrow a foundation. She really felt clever enough for anything.

To fill up the time she collected her volumes and pieces of music, and laying them on the top of the piano, set herself to classify them. Then catching the reflection of her movements in the glass panel, she was diverted to the contemplation of the image there and walked toward it. Dressed in black, without a single ornament, and with the warm whiteness of her skin set off between her light-brown coronet of hair and her square-cut bodice, she might have tempted an artist to try again the Roman trick of a statue in black, white, and tawny marble. Seeing her image slowly advancing, she thought 'I *am* beautiful' - not exultingly, but with grave decision. Being beautiful was after all the condition on which she most needed external testimony. If any one objected to the turn of her nose or the form of her neck and chin, she had not the sense that she could presently show her power of attainment in these branches of feminine perfection.

There was not much time to fill up in this way before the sound of wheels, the loud ring, and the opening doors assured her that she was not by any accident to be disappointed. This slightly increased her inward flutter. In spite of her self-confidence, she dreaded Klesmer as part of that unmanageable world which was independent of her wishes - something vitriolic that would not cease to burn because you smiled or frowned at it. Poor thing! she was at a higher crisis of her woman's fate than in her last experience with Grandcourt. The questioning then, was whether she should take a particular man as a husband. The inmost fold of her questioning now was whether she need take a husband at all - whether she could not achieve substantially for herself and know gratified ambition without bondage.

Klesmer made his most deferential bow in the wide doorway of the antechamber - showing also the deference of the finest gray kerseymere trousers and perfect gloves (the 'masters of those who know' are happily altogether human). Gwendolen met him with unusual gravity, and holding out her hand said, 'It is most kind of you to come, Herr Klesmer. I hope you have not thought me presumptuous.'

'I took your wish as a command that did me honor,' said Klesmer, with answering gravity. He was really putting by his own affairs in order to give his utmost attention to what Gwendolen might have to

say; but his temperament was still in a state of excitation from the events of yesterday, likely enough to give his expressions a more than usually biting edge.

Gwendolen for once was under too great a strain of feeling to remember formalities. She continued standing near the piano, and Klesmer took his stand near the other end of it with his back to the light and his terribly omniscient eyes upon her. No affectation was of use, and she began without delay.

'I wish to consult you, Herr Klesmer. We have lost all our fortune; we have nothing. I must get my own bread, and I desire to provide for my mamma, so as to save her from any hardship. The only way I can think of - and I should like it better than anything - is to be an actress - to go on the stage. But, of course, I should like to take a high position, and I thought - if you thought I could' - here Gwendolen became a little more nervous - 'it would be better for me to be a singer - to study singing also.'

Klesmer put down his hat upon the piano, and folded his arms as if to concentrate himself.

'I know,' Gwendolen resumed, turning from pale to pink and back again - 'I know that my method of singing is very defective; but I have been ill taught. I could be better taught; I could study. And you will understand my wish: - to sing and act too, like Grisi, is a much higher position. Naturally, I should wish to take as high rank as I can. And I can rely on your judgment. I am sure you will tell me the truth.'

Gwendolen somehow had the conviction that now she made this serious appeal the truth would be favorable.

Still Klesmer did not speak. He drew off his gloves quickly, tossed them into his hat, rested his hands on his hips, and walked to the other end of the room. He was filled with compassion for this girl: he wanted to put a guard on his speech. When he turned again, he looked at her with a mild frown of inquiry, and said with gentle though quick utterance, 'You have never seen anything, I think, of artists and their lives? - I mean of musicians, actors, artists of that kind?'

'Oh, no,' said Gwendolen, not perturbed by a reference to this obvious fact in the history of a young lady hitherto well provided for.

'You are - pardon me,' said Klesmer, again pausing near the piano - 'in coming to a conclusion on such a matter as this, everything must be taken into consideration - you are perhaps twenty?'

'I am twenty-one,' said Gwendolen, a slight fear rising in her. 'Do you think I am too old?'

Klesmer pouted his under lip and shook his long fingers upward in a manner totally enigmatic.

'Many persons begin later than others,' said Gwendolen, betrayed by her habitual consciousness of having valuable information to bestow.

Klesmer took no notice, but said with more studied gentleness than ever, 'You have probably not thought of an artistic career until now: you did not entertain the notion, the longing - what shall I say? - you did not wish yourself an actress, or anything of that sort, till the present trouble?'

'Not exactly: but I was fond of acting. I have acted; you saw me, if you remember - you saw me here in charades, and as Hermione,' said Gwendolen, really fearing that Klesmer had forgotten.

'Yes, yes,' he answered quickly, 'I remember - I remember perfectly,' and again walked to the other end of the room, It was difficult for him to refrain from this kind of movement when he was in any argument either audible or silent.

Gwendolen felt that she was being weighed. The delay was unpleasant. But she did not yet conceive that the scale could dip on the wrong side, and it seemed to her only graceful to say, 'I shall be very much obliged to you for taking the trouble to give me your advice, whatever it maybe.'

'Miss Harleth,' said Klesmer, turning toward her and speaking with a slight increase of accent, 'I will veil nothing from you in this matter. I should reckon myself guilty if I put a false visage on things - made them too black or too white. The gods have a curse for him who willingly tells another the wrong road. And if I misled one who is so young, so beautiful - who, I trust, will find her happiness along the right road, I should regard myself as a - *Boesewicht*.' In the last word Klesmer's voice had dropped to a loud whisper.

Gwendolen felt a sinking of heart under this unexpected solemnity, and kept a sort of fascinated gaze on Klesmer's face, as he went on. 'You are a beautiful young lady - you have been brought up in ease - you have done what you would - you have not said to yourself, 'I must know this exactly,' 'I must understand this exactly,' 'I must do this exactly,' - in uttering these three terrible *musts*, Klesmer lifted up three long fingers in succession. 'In sum, you have not been called upon to be anything but a charming young lady, whom it is an impoliteness to find fault with.'

He paused an instant; then resting his fingers on his hips again, and thrusting out his powerful chin, he said -

'Well, then, with that preparation, you wish to try the life of an artist; you wish to try a life of arduous, unceasing work, and - uncertain praise. Your praise would have to be earned, like your bread; and both would come slowly, scantily - what do I say? - they may hardly come at all.'

This tone of discouragement, which Klesmer had hoped might suffice without anything more unpleasant, roused some resistance in Gwendolen. With a slight turn of her head away from him, and an air of pique, she said -

'I thought that you, being an artist, would consider the life one of the most honorable and delightful. And if I can do nothing better? - I suppose I can put up with the same risks as other people do.'

'Do nothing better?' said Klesmer, a little fired. 'No, my dear Miss Harleth, you could do nothing better - neither man nor woman could do anything better - if you could do what was best or good of its kind. I am not decrying the life of the true artist. I am exalting it. I say, it is out of the reach of any but choice organizations - natures framed to love perfection and to labor for it; ready, like all true lovers, to endure, to wait, to say, I am not yet worthy, but she - Art, my mistress - is worthy, and I will live to merit her. An honorable life? Yes. But the honor comes from the inward vocation and the hard-won achievement: there is no honor in donning the life as a livery.'

Some excitement of yesterday had revived in Klesmer and hurried him into speech a little aloof from his immediate friendly purpose. He had wished as delicately as possible to rouse in Gwendolen a sense of her unfitness for a perilous, difficult course; but it was his wont to be angry with the pretensions of incompetence, and he was in danger of getting chafed. Conscious of this, he paused suddenly. But Gwendolen's chief impression was that he had not yet denied her the power of doing what would be good of its kind. Klesmer's fervor seemed to be a sort of glamor such as he was prone to throw over things in general; and what she desired to assure him of was that she was not afraid of some preliminary hardships. The belief that to present herself in public on the stage must produce an effect such as she had been used to feel certain of in private life; was like a bit of her flesh - it was not to be peeled off readily, but must come with blood and pain. She said, in a tone of some insistence -

'I am quite prepared to bear hardships at first. Of course no one can become celebrated all at once. And it is not necessary that every one should be first-rate - either actresses or singers. If you would be so

kind as to tell me what steps I should take, I shall have the courage to take them. I don't mind going up hill. It will be easier than the dead level of being a governess. I will take any steps you recommend.'

Klesmer was convinced now that he must speak plainly.

'I will tell you the steps, not that I recommend, but that will be forced upon you. It is all one, so far, what your goal will be - excellence, celebrity, second, third rateness - it is all one. You must go to town under the protection of your mother. You must put yourself under training - musical, dramatic, theatrical: - whatever you desire to do you have to learn' - here Gwendolen looked as if she were going to speak, but Klesmer lifted up his hand and said, decisively, 'I know. You have exercised your talents - you recite - you sing - from the drawing-room *standpunkt*. My dear Fraeulein, you must unlearn all that. You have not yet conceived what excellence is: you must unlearn your mistaken admirations. You must know what you have to strive for, and then you must subdue your mind and body to unbroken discipline. Your mind, I say. For you must not be thinking of celebrity: put that candle out of your eyes, and look only at excellence. You would of course earn nothing - you could get no engagement for a long while. You would need money for yourself and your family. But that,' here Klesmer frowned and shook his fingers as if to dismiss a triviality, 'that could perhaps be found.'

Gwendolen turned pink and pale during this speech. Her pride had felt a terrible knife-edge, and the last sentence only made the smart keener. She was conscious of appearing moved, and tried to escape from her weakness by suddenly walking to a seat and pointing out a chair to Klesmer. He did not take it, but turned a little in order to face her and leaned against the piano. At that moment she wished that she had not sent for him: this first experience of being taken on some other ground than that of her social rank and her beauty was becoming bitter to her. Klesmer, preoccupied with a serious purpose, went on without change of tone.

'Now, what sort of issue might be fairly expected from all this self-denial? You would ask that. It is right that your eyes should be open to it. I will tell you truthfully. This issue would be uncertain, and, most probably, would not be worth much.'

At these relentless words Klesmer put out his lip and looked through his spectacles with the air of a monster impenetrable by beauty.

Gwendolen's eyes began to burn, but the dread of showing weakness urged her to added self-control. She compelled herself to say, in a hard tone -

'You think I want talent, or am too old to begin.'

Klesmer made a sort of hum, and then descended on an emphatic 'Yes! The desire and the training should have begun seven years ago - or a good deal earlier. A mountebank's child who helps her father to earn shillings when she is six years old - a child that inherits a singing throat from a long line of choristers and learns to sing as it learns to talk, has a likelier beginning. Any great achievement in acting or in music grows with the growth. Whenever an artist has been able to say, 'I came, I saw, I conquered,' it has been at the end of patient practice. Genius at first is little more than a great capacity for receiving discipline. Singing and acting, like the fine dexterity of the juggler with his cups and balls, require a shaping of the organs toward a finer and finer certainty of effect. Your muscles - your whole frame - must go like a watch, true, true to a hair. That is the work of spring-time, before habits have been determined.'

'I did not pretend to genius,' said Gwendolen, still feeling that she might somehow do what Klesmer wanted to represent as impossible. 'I only suppose that I might have a little talent - enough to improve.'

'I don't deny that,' said Klesmer. 'If you had been put in the right track some years ago and had worked well you might now have made a public singer, though I don't think your voice would have counted for much in public. For the stage your personal charms and intelligence might then have told without the present drawback of inexperience - lack of discipline - lack of instruction.'

Certainly Klesmer seemed cruel, but his feeling was the reverse of cruel. Our speech, even when we are most single-minded, can never take its line absolutely from one impulse; but Klesmer's was, as far as possible, directed by compassion for poor Gwendolen's ignorant eagerness to enter on a course of which he saw all the miserable details with a definiteness which he could not if he would have conveyed to her mind.

Gwendolen, however, was not convinced. Her self-opinion rallied, and since the counselor whom she had called in gave a decision of such severe peremptoriness, she was tempted to think that his judgment was not only fallible but biased. It occurred to her that a simpler and wiser step for her to have taken would have been to send a letter through the post to the manager of a London theatre, asking him to make an appointment. She would make no further reference to her singing; Klesmer, she saw, had set himself against her singing. But she felt equal to arguing with him about her going on the stage, and she answered in a resistant tone -

'I understood, of course, that no one can be a finished actress at once. It may be impossible to tell beforehand whether I should succeed; but that seems to me a reason why I should try. I should have thought that I might have taken an engagement at a theatre meanwhile, so as to earn money and study at the same time.'

'Can't be done, my dear Miss Harleth - I speak plainly - it can't be done. I must clear your mind of these notions which have no more resemblance to reality than a pantomime. Ladies and gentlemen think that when they have made their toilet and drawn on their gloves they are as presentable on the stage as in a drawing-room. No manager thinks that. With all your grace and charm, if you were to present yourself as an aspirant to the stage, a manager would either require you to pay as an amateur for being allowed to perform or he would tell you to go and be taught - trained to bear yourself on the stage, as a horse, however beautiful, must be trained for the circus; to say nothing of that study which would enable you to personate a character consistently, and animate it with the natural language of face, gesture, and tone. For you to get an engagement fit for you straight away is out of the question.'

'I really cannot understand that,' said Gwendolen, rather haughtily - then, checking herself, she added in another tone - 'I shall be obliged to you if you will explain how it is that such poor actresses get engaged. I have been to the theatre several times, and I am sure there were actresses who seemed to me to act not at all well and who were quite plain.'

'Ah, my dear Miss Harleth, that is the easy criticism of the buyer. We who buy slippers toss away this pair and the other as clumsy; but there went an apprenticeship to the making of them. Excuse me; you could not at present teach one of those actresses; but there is certainly much that she could teach you. For example, she can pitch her voice so as to be heard: ten to one you could not do it till after many trials. Merely to stand and move on the stage is an art - requires practice. It is understood that we are not now talking of a *comparse* in a petty theatre who earns the wages of a needle-woman. That is out of the question for you.'

'Of course I must earn more than that,' said Gwendolen, with a sense of wincing rather than of being refuted, 'but I think I could soon learn to do tolerably well all those little things you have mentioned. I am not so very stupid. And even in Paris, I am sure, I saw two actresses playing important ladies' parts who were not at all ladies and quite ugly. I suppose I have no particular talent, but I *must* think it is an advantage, even on the stage, to be a lady and not a perfect fright.'

'Ah, let us understand each other,' said Klesmer, with a flash of new meaning. 'I was speaking of what you would have to go through if you aimed at becoming a real artist - if you took music and the drama as a higher vocation in which you would strive after excellence. On that head, what I have said stands fast. You would find - after your education in doing things slackly for one-and-twenty years - great difficulties in study; you would find mortifications in the treatment you would get when you presented yourself on the footing of skill. You would be subjected to tests; people would no longer feign not to see your blunders. You would at first only be accepted on trial. You would have to bear what I may call a glaring insignificance: any success must be won by the utmost patience. You would have to keep your place in a crowd, and after all it is likely you would lose it and get out of sight. If you determine to face these hardships and still try, you will have the dignity of a high purpose, even though you may have chosen unfortunately. You will have some merit, though you may win no prize. You have asked my judgment on your chances of winning. I don't pretend to speak absolutely; but measuring probabilities, my judgment is: - you will hardly achieve more than mediocrity.'

Klesmer had delivered himself with emphatic rapidity, and now paused a moment. Gwendolen was motionless, looking at her hands, which lay over each other on her lap, till the deep-toned, long-drawn '*But,*' with which he resumed, had a startling effect, and made her look at him again.

'But - there are certainly other ideas, other dispositions with which a young lady may take up an art that will bring her before the public. She may rely on the unquestioned power of her beauty as a passport. She may desire to exhibit herself to an admiration which dispenses with skill. This goes a certain way on the stage: not in music: but on the stage, beauty is taken when there is nothing more commanding to be had. Not without some drilling, however: as I have said before, technicalities have in any case to be mastered. But these excepted, we have here nothing to do with art. The woman who takes up this career is not an artist: she is usually one who thinks of entering on a luxurious life by a short and easy road - perhaps by marriage - that is her most brilliant chance, and the rarest. Still, her career will not be luxurious to begin with: she can hardly earn her own poor bread independently at once, and the indignities she will be liable to are such as I will not speak of.'

'I desire to be independent,' said Gwendolen, deeply stung and confusedly apprehending some scorn for herself in Klesmer's words. 'That was my reason for asking whether I could not get an immediate engagement. Of course I cannot know how things go on about theatres. But I thought that I could have made myself independent. I have no money, and I will not accept help from any one.'

Her wounded pride could not rest without making this disclaimer. It was intolerable to her that Klesmer should imagine her to have expected other help from him than advice.

'That is a hard saying for your friends,' said Klesmer, recovering the gentleness of tone with which he had begun the conversation. 'I have given you pain. That was inevitable. I was bound to put the truth, the unvarnished truth, before you. I have not said - I will not say - you will do wrong to choose the hard, climbing path of an endeavoring artist. You have to compare its difficulties with those of any less hazardous - any more private course which opens itself to you. If you take that more courageous resolve I will ask leave to shake hands with you on the strength of our freemasonry, where we are all vowed to the service of art, and to serve her by helping every fellow-servant.'

Gwendolen was silent, again looking at her hands. She felt herself very far away from taking the resolve that would enforce acceptance; and after waiting an instant or two, Klesmer went on with deepened seriousness.

'Where there is the duty of service there must be the duty of accepting it. The question is not one of personal obligation. And in relation to practical matters immediately affecting your future - excuse my permitting myself to mention in confidence an affair of my own. I am expecting an event which would make it easy for me to exert myself on your behalf in furthering your opportunities of instruction and residence in London - under the care, that is, of your family - without need for anxiety on your part. If you resolve to take art as a bread-study, you need only undertake the study at first; the bread will be found without trouble. The event I mean is my marriage - in fact - you will receive this as a matter of confidence - my marriage with Miss Arrowpoint, which will more than double such right as I have to be trusted by you as a friend. Your friendship will have greatly risen in value for *her* by your having adopted that generous labor.'

Gwendolen's face had begun to burn. That Klesmer was about to marry Miss Arrowpoint caused her no surprise, and at another moment she would have amused herself in quickly imagining the scenes that must have occurred at Quetcham. But what engrossed her feeling, what filled her imagination now, was the panorama of her own immediate future that Klesmer's words seemed to have unfolded. The suggestion of Miss Arrowpoint as a patroness was only another detail added to its repulsiveness: Klesmer's proposal to help her seemed an additional irritation after the humiliating judgment he had passed on her capabilities. His words had really bitten into her self-confidence and turned it into the pain of a bleeding wound; and the idea of presenting herself before other judges was now poisoned with the dread that they also might be harsh; they also would not recognize

the talent she was conscious of. But she controlled herself, and rose from her seat before she made any answer. It seemed natural that she should pause. She went to the piano and looked absently at leaves of music, pinching up the corners. At last she turned toward Klesmer and said, with almost her usual air of proud equality, which in this interview had not been hitherto perceptible.

'I congratulate you sincerely, Herr Klesmer. I think I never saw any one so admirable as Miss Arrowpoint. And I have to thank you for every sort of kindness this morning. But I can't decide now. If I make the resolve you have spoken of, I will use your permission - I will let you know. But I fear the obstacles are too great. In any case, I am deeply obliged to you. It was very bold of me to ask you to take this trouble.'

Klesmer's inward remark was, 'She will never let me know.' But with the most thorough respect in his manner, he said, 'Command me at any time. There is an address on this card which will always find me with little delay.'

When he had taken up his hat and was going to make his bow, Gwendolen's better self, conscious of an ingratitude which the clear-seeing Klesmer must have penetrated, made a desperate effort to find its way above the stifling layers of egoistic disappointment and irritation. Looking at him with a glance of the old gayety, she put out her hand, and said with a smile, 'If I take the wrong road, it will not be because of your flattery.'

'God forbid that you should take any road but one where you will find and give happiness!' said Klesmer, fervently. Then, in foreign fashion, he touched her fingers lightly with his lips, and in another minute she heard the sound of his departing wheels getting more distant on the gravel.

Gwendolen had never in her life felt so miserable. No sob came, no passion of tears, to relieve her. Her eyes were burning; and the noonday only brought into more dreary clearness the absence of interest from her life. All memories, all objects, the pieces of music displayed, the open piano - the very reflection of herself in the glass - seemed no better than the packed-up shows of a departing fair. For the first time since her consciousness began, she was having a vision of herself on the common level, and had lost the innate sense that there were reasons why she should not be slighted, elbowed, jostled - treated like a passenger with a third-class ticket, in spite of private objections on her own part. She did not move about; the prospects begotten by disappointment were too oppressively preoccupying; she threw herself into the shadiest corner of a settee, and pressed her fingers over her burning eyelids. Every word that Klesmer had said

seemed to have been branded into her memory, as most words are which bring with them a new set of impressions and make an epoch for us. Only a few hours before, the dawning smile of self-contentment rested on her lips as she vaguely imagined a future suited to her wishes: it seemed but the affair of a year or so for her to become the most approved Juliet of the time: or, if Klesmer encouraged her idea of being a singer, to proceed by more gradual steps to her place in the opera, while she won money and applause by occasional performances. Why not? At home, at school, among acquaintances, she had been used to have her conscious superiority admitted; and she had moved in a society where everything, from low arithmetic to high art, is of the amateur kind, politely supposed to fall short of perfection only because gentlemen and ladies are not obliged to do more than they like - otherwise they would probably give forth abler writings, and show themselves more commanding artists than any the world is at present obliged to put up with. The self-confident visions that had beguiled her were not of a highly exceptional kind; and she had at least shown some nationality in consulting the person who knew the most and had flattered her the least. In asking Klesmer's advice, however, she had rather been borne up by a belief in his latent admiration than bent on knowing anything more unfavorable that might have lain behind his slight objections to her singing; and the truth she had asked for, with an expectation that it would be agreeable, had come like a lacerating thong.

'Too old - should have begun seven years ago - you will not, at best, achieve more than mediocrity - hard, incessant work, uncertain praise - bread coming slowly, scantily, perhaps not at all - mortifications, people no longer feigning not to see your blunders - glaring insignificance' - all these phrases rankled in her; and even more galling was the hint that she could only be accepted on the stage as a beauty who hoped to get a husband. The 'indignities' that she might be visited with had no very definite form for her, but the mere association of anything called 'indignity' with herself, roused a resentful alarm. And along with the vaguer images which were raised by those biting words, came the precise conception of disagreeables which her experience enabled her to imagine. How could she take her mamma and the four sisters to London? if it were not possible for her to earn money at once? And as for submitting to be a *protege*, and asking her mamma to submit with her to the humiliation of being supported by Miss Arrowpoint - that was as bad as being a governess; nay, worse; for suppose the end of all her study to be as worthless as Klesmer clearly expected it to be, the sense of favors received and never repaid, would embitter the miseries of disappointment. Klesmer doubtless had magnificent ideas about helping artists; but how could he know the feelings of ladies in such matters? It was all over: she had entertained a mistaken hope; and there was an end of it.

'An end of it!' said Gwendolen, aloud, starting from her seat as she heard the steps and voices of her mamma and sisters coming in from church. She hurried to the piano and began gathering together her pieces of music with assumed diligence, while the expression on her pale face and in her burning eyes was what would have suited a woman enduring a wrong which she might not resent, but would probably revenge.

'Well, my darling,' said gentle Mrs. Davilow, entering, 'I see by the wheel-marks that Klesmer has been here. Have you been satisfied with the interview?' She had some guesses as to its object, but felt timid about implying them.

'Satisfied, mamma? oh, yes,' said Gwendolen, in a high, hard tone, for which she must be excused, because she dreaded a scene of emotion. If she did not set herself resolutely to feign proud indifference, she felt that she must fall into a passionate outburst of despair, which would cut her mamma more deeply than all the rest of their calamities.

'Your uncle and aunt were disappointed at not seeing you,' said Mrs. Davilow, coming near the piano, and watching Gwendolen's movements. 'I only said that you wanted rest.'

'Quite right, mamma,' said Gwendolen, in the same tone, turning to put away some music.

'Am I not to know anything now, Gwendolen? Am I always to be in the dark?' said Mrs. Davilow, too keenly sensitive to her daughter's manner and expression not to fear that something painful had occurred.

'There is really nothing to tell now, mamma,' said Gwendolen, in a still higher voice. 'I had a mistaken idea about something I could do. Herr Klesmer has undeceived me. That is all.'

'Don't look and speak in that way, my dear child: I cannot bear it,' said Mrs. Davilow, breaking down. She felt an undefinable terror.

Gwendolen looked at her a moment in silence, biting her inner lip; then she went up to her, and putting her hands on her mamma's shoulders, said, with a drop in her voice to the lowest undertone, 'Mamma, don't speak to me now. It is useless to cry and waste our strength over what can't be altered. You will live at Sawyer's Cottage, and I am going to the bishop's daughters. There is no more to be said. Things cannot be altered, and who cares? It makes no difference to any one else what we do. We must try not to care ourselves. We must not give way. I dread giving way. Help me to be quiet.'

Mrs. Davilow was like a frightened child under her daughter's face and voice; her tears were arrested and she went away in silence.