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TALES

AND

SOUVENIRS

OF A

RESIDENCE IN EUROPE.

BY A LADY OF VIRGINIA.

2 Rives, 5th St. Page (Walker)

~~~~~  
Ami,  
De ce sommet qui nous rassemble,  
Viens, jetons un regard ensemble  
sur le passé.

LAMARTINE.

~~~~~  
1464 10

PHILADELPHIA:
LEA & BLANCHARD.

1842.

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PREFACE.

“THE gratification of friends,” must once more serve as an apology for permitting the following “Souvenirs,” or rather sketches, to see the light.

Extracted as they are, for the most part, from a Journal, undertaken solely for the entertainment of one, whose kind indulgence, it was well known, would overlook all faults, and embodied in their present form only to beguile a solitary hour, or to amuse a fire-side circle, they might, doubtless, in the eye of criticism, be liable to the charge of both negligence and egotism, especially where the Journal is left as it was originally written. It was found, however, that a suppression of the personal pronoun, and, indeed, any attempt at improvement, would only have the effect of substituting the tedious formality of a *guide du voyageur*, for the careless ease of familiar correspondence.

The “Tale of our Ancestors,” which might, with some propriety, be numbered among the “*Tales of a grandfather*,” is interwoven with a manuscript narrative in possession of the writer, which bears a date of some eighty

years since, and which gives a far more interesting account of the Indian Chieftain, Logan, and the young warrior, Allanawissca, than romance itself could produce. The first part of the story derives, from some historical reminiscences of the gaudy court of Louis Quinze whatever attraction it may present; and the whole of this story, as well as the "Soldier's Bride," and the "Valley of Goldau," may claim at least one merit—that of being founded on truth.

The imitation of an old English Ballad is designed for young friends, who "*sigh for Europe,—for Paris; and there, or at Naples, would like to end their days.*"

The scenes of which a description is attempted to be given, both in the Tales, which now form the greater part of these "Sketches," and in the Journal, were hastily delineated at the time, and frequently on the spot where they were witnessed; and to this alone may be attributed any interest they possess;—as objects, reflected in the vivacity of their first impression on the mind or the senses through a faithful, however imperfect representation, have power by their own glowing beauty, romantic wildness, or dark terrors, to impart a charm to an unskilled pencil, while an elaborate and finished picture, attempted by the same hand, would only betray the defects of the artist, and place them in bolder relief.

Farther apology for these "Souvenirs," is needless, as it is not probable that their merits will carry them beyond the limited circle for which they were designed. Such as

they are, "with all their imperfections," they are offered to those kind friends who have requested their appearance, as a memorial of the affectionate attachment and regard of the writer.



A T A L E
OF
OUR ANCESTORS.

A SKETCH FROM CARISBROOK CASTLE.

“On sloping mounds, or in the vale beneath,
Are domes where whilom kings did make repair;
But now the wild flowers round them only breathe,
Yet ruined splendour still is lingering there.”

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

Who can describe the thrill of delight that rushes to the sinking heart—the unwonted glow that animates once more the pale cheek—the hope that again sparkles in the dimmed eye, when after thirty days of unmitigated suffering at sea, the welcome sound of “*Land ho!*” is heard from the main mast? Would it be profanation to compare it with the first bright ray that dawns on the blest soul when it emerges from the shadow of the dark valley? It may be so—yet such was the thought it awakened in the minds of some of the company of the good ship ——— when on the morning of the 19th of September, 18—, after a gloomy, stormy night, this joyful sound announced the view, though still distant, of the “white cliffs of Albion.”

The blue waves of the yet heaving ocean sparkled with

sapphire-like brilliancy beneath the fitful gleams of sunshine that occasionally shot through the dark masses of clouds around her, as the gallant frigate proudly rode over them; a favouring wind bore her rapidly onward, and ere the night closed in, she was safely anchored in her long desired haven, near Cowes, in the Isle of Wight.

If there is a spot upon earth formed to exhilarate and refresh an exhausted being after the fatigues of a sea voyage, it is this lovely island, justly entitled the "Garden of England;" and it is, perhaps, only under such circumstances, that its charms can be fully appreciated. Welcome, indeed, to the weary eye that has long gazed listlessly over the wild waste of trackless and tranquil waters, or anxiously watched their sublimer aspect in the terrors of the storm, are the varied beauties which here meet it at every turn. To those who have just escaped from such duration, there is an inexpressible pleasure in gliding rapidly in a little car (a vehicle peculiar to the Isle of Wight) over the neat but narrow turnpike roads, bordered by hawthorn hedges—looking out upon bright fields clothed with the richest and most exquisite verdure—occasionally catching a glimpse of some sequestered cottage, with its miniature gravel walks, its clusters of myrtle and lauristinus, and innumerable flowers, which, at this season, in the distant land of the traveller, may have bloomed and passed away, but which here offer their brilliant tints and rich perfume, as if to revive him, with their freshness and fragrance;—while on the other hand, some proud castle rises in bold relief against the dappled sky, with its "towers and battlements bosomed high in tufted trees."

But to those who had looked for romance only in the primeval forest or the mountain stream—who had been accustomed to view the reliques of other days only through

the medium of poetry or of fiction, no feature in the varied and lovely scenery of the Isle of Wight presented such attraction as the venerable ruin of Carisbrook Castle. There was something of marvellous interest in clambering for the first time up the long flight of moss-covered steps to the top of the donjon keep, looking at the over-arching heavens through a roof that was once deemed strong enough to shelter and secure a royal prisoner, and from this picturesque height watching the effect of the alternate sunlight and shade flitting over the landscape below, as the fleecy clouds were driven by the wind through the autumnal sky, now throwing a darker verdure over the smiling fields—now gilding the spire of some old gothic church, the sound of whose chiming bells, ringing in honour of a rustic wedding, was borne through the distance to the ear with a softened and pleasing melody.

The stately edifices and modern castles, which are in view from this commanding eminence, seem, by their superior elegance, to mock the gray and frowning ruin that towers so proudly above them. Among these may be seen one, half hidden in the embowering shade of its park and gardens, remarkable for the tasteful embellishments of its present possessor, but more interesting for a tradition connected with the spot on which it stands. The ancestral trees which now lift their venerable arms above the splendid modern residence, were, eighty years ago, in the prime of their youthful vigour, the pride and boast of their proprietor, and their rich foliage shaded a mansion, which, though of more modest dimensions and less costly decoration than the one that now occupies the same site, was yet spacious and elegant; and the beauty of the grounds, may even now be ascribed more to the good taste of the present owner, in sparing the growth of former years, than to the

more fashionable embellishments which are skilfully interwoven with maturer charms. At the distant period referred to, though no statues or jets d'eau challenged the admiration of those who strayed among these pleasing shades, the lawn was as brightly verdant, the foliage as fresh, and the rustic stone seats, placed at intervals near the winding walks, some of which, half covered with moss, still remain, as winningly enticed the contemplative wanderer to repose and meditation.

* * * * *

Toward the close of a soft evening in the latter part of September, when one of those bright hours, that sometimes come with their gay smiles, to atone for the tears of the morning, gave the hope that the rains which usually accompany the period of the equinox had passed away; when the beams of the sinking sun brought into full relief the sparkling gems, which had marked the earlier day with gloom, but which now spangled every leaf and flower, as if to add fresh loveliness to a season that often seems to "breathe a second spring," a snow-white robe and silken scarf might have been seen, fluttering among the dark masses of foliage that arose on either side of one of these sequestered walks, now half in shade and then gleaming brightly in the rays of the sun, as the fair being whose presence they indicated, tripped with a light but uncertain step, her onward way. A slight angle in the pathway, might also have revealed the tall and graceful figure of a youth by her side, whose animated countenance and eloquent manner, bespoke, even before the deep rich tones of his voice gave them utterance, the thoughts that arose in his heart. A single glance would have sufficed to detect the principal theme of his discourse, but happily no witnesses intruded on their promenade or their conversation.

“It needed not so eloquent an argument, Percy,” said the lovely listener, “to convince me of the propriety of the step you are about to take. I have too often been reminded by you of my *exclusive* devotion to my own father, to persuade you to contravene the wishes of yours—but”—

“But what? dearest Ellen.”

“Only that I thought it possible”—she hesitated and blushed; “I could not entirely suppress some apprehensions lest the brilliant and fascinating gaieties of the French capital, and the atmosphere of the court of Versailles might banish the recollection of simpler pleasures—of rural walks—of fireside happiness—and of—in short, that in the society of queens and princesses, you might forget”—

“Forget! ah, dearest Ellen! It is for me to dread the benumbing influence of the fabled stream. When I see you already surrounded by courtly knights and ‘barons bold,’ may I not fear that when I am far away, some haughty rival may prefer a claim to this fair hand more imposing than that of a *cadet* of the house of Belmore, and that an alliance more suitable may be proposed for the heiress of Lansdale;—have I not some cause to fear that such a claim may at least be considered, and that Percy Medwyn may fatally realize the sad truth that ‘*les absens ont toujours tort?*’ ”

“I merit this reproof, I confess,” said his gentle companion, as a transient smile passed over her beautiful features. “It is a just punishment for having first permitted the influences of the ‘green-eyed monster’ to exercise their sway over my mind. I am not suspicious, Percy, nor do I for a moment distrust the sincerity of your—shall I use your own word?—devotion. But there is something here,” she added, pressing her hand on her heart, “that gives me a presentiment of evil, in spite of my better judgment and your assur-

ances. I hardly know what I fear, or why I should be apprehensive,"—and again the sweet smile illumined her lovely countenance,—“ unless I am troubled with the superstitious dread that is said to haunt the mind of the youthful dauphiness, Marie Antoinette, who believes herself continually subject to some fatal influence, because her birthday cannot be celebrated without reminding the gay world of the terrible earthquake of Lisbon.” The last words were spoken in a lighter tone, but they trembled on her lips, and ere she was aware, the tear that shone through her long silken lashes, stood on her cheek, like the dew on the opening rose.

“ Ellen, dearest!” said the youth, as the tear mysteriously disappeared, even as the dew-drop in the breath of morning, and the roseate cheek was consequently suffused with a brighter bloom, “ do not indulge in such sad imaginings, so foreign to your usually buoyant spirit. Have we not every assurance of happiness? have I not the sanction and approval of those who have been the guardians of our earliest days, and their blessing upon my dearest hopes of the future? This separation, though it costs me a bitter pang, must, *shall* be brief, and I shall return to claim mine own. Look how the sun’s parting beams gild the distant landscape,—the orb has disappeared, but the light of his smile still remains, and he will rise in cloudless glory to-morrow. So must I part with my present bliss,—but my spirit,—my fondest thoughts remain, and a long and joyous morning will succeed a few hours of gloom.”

“ The morning sun may be obscured by clouds,” said Ellen, indicating with her hand a dark spot that hovered on the horizon, “ yet I will not throw a shade over the bright picture you have drawn. But with those last rays, I must also disappear, for the sound of approaching voices warns

me to hide these tell-tale witnesses in my eyes. Farewell! and may good angels guard you!"

She turned aside into a narrow pathway that led directly to the house, and as Medwyn caught the last glimpse of the silken scarf, wafted into view, and then withdrawn by the caprices of the evening breeze, he felt that his sun had set, and the increasing gloom of his heart and his path, as he slowly retraced his steps, brought back in painfully vivid contrast even to his young spirit, "the light of other days."

Absorbed in meditation on the past and the future, he followed the mazy intricacies of the pathway, hardly conscious at that moment, of the existence even, far less the presence of any being beside the loved one, whose parting words yet thrilled with a sweet, though mournful cadence on his heart, when, as he was about to emerge from a thickly tangled *bosquet* of flowering shrubs that bordered the principal avenue through the grounds, he was startled by the sound of a voice pronouncing his own name, in a low but distinct tone, yet one that was evidently not addressed to his ear. Unwilling to bear the semblance, as he would have scorned to play the part of an eves-dropper, he stepped quickly forward, and found himself almost in contact with the speaker, who evidently recoiled at this unexpected interruption. His surprise was heightened at perceiving that his name had been thus unceremoniously used by one who was a perfect stranger to him, and that the remark, whatever it had been, was designed alone for the ear of his revered friend, the father of his loved Ellen, with whom this stranger had apparently been engaged in deep and earnest conversation.

"Pardon my unintentional intrusion, Sir Frederick," said Medwyn, with a bow of respectful courtesy addressed exclusively to his venerable friend. "You will permit me, I

trust, a moment's conversation with you, when you are at leisure?" and he was passing on.

"Nay, do not be in such haste to leave us, my young friend; there is no danger of intrusion. Allow me," he added, "to present to you Mr. Elford, who brings me tidings of the deepest interest from India, whence he has but now returned, after a long absence from his home and country."

"It gives me pleasure to congratulate a friend of Sir Frederick Lansdale, on his return to his native land," said Medwyn, offering his hand with graceful frankness to the stranger, though some traces of the hauteur that had at first marked his manner still remained. A moment's reflection, however, convinced him that the simple circumstance of hearing his name pronounced, without any accompanying remark either for good or evil, was no legitimate cause of complaint, and he determined to banish the remembrance of it from his mind. This would have been an easier task, had the person and manner of the stranger been more prepossessing; but there was little in either calculated to allay the distrust with which Medwyn had felt at first disposed to regard him. He had apparently advanced not far beyond thirty years; and with a figure rather above the ordinary height, features of some degree of symmetry, and a profusion of dark hair that accorded well with the moustache, which marked him at once with a foreign, as well as military air, he might have been pronounced by a superficial observer, a handsome man. But beneath the gentle and subdued smile that his features habitually wore, there lurked in the cold gray eye, and even in the curve of the lip, though almost hidden from view, an expression, which, if fully developed, might, perchance, have "raised emotions both of rage and fear." There was an easy self-possession in his manner, that might almost have been pronounced graceful, but for an

occasional absence of refinement, that betrayed it to be the acquisition of later years in camps, and perhaps in courts, rather than the natural consequence of gentle birth, and early association.

All this the discerning eye of Medwyn detected at a glance, and the feeling of repulsion that he had at first determined to subdue, was again aroused, when he observed an unwonted degree of agitation both in the tone and countenance of Sir Frederick Lansdale, and which he could not well avoid connecting with this mysterious interview. The icy barrier, which their first exchange of civilities promised to thaw, was, in the few moments of silence that succeeded, cemented more rigidly than ever.

This silence, which, brief as it was, appeared almost interminable, was first broken by the senior member of the party.

“You leave us soon for the continent, Percy?” he inquired.

“The request of my father, who desires me to join him there immediately, is urgent,” replied Medwyn, “and a knowledge of his present infirm state of health, increases my anxiety to obey his injunction without delay. I shall be compelled to depart to-morrow.”

“Indeed?” said Sir Frederick, with an air of surprise, “you were then mistaken, Mr. Elford, in the idea that Lord Belmore had returned from his continental tour.”

“My informant was probably mistaken,” said the stranger with a cool and nonchalant air, his features unmarked by the slightest trace of the emotion that flashed in the ingenuous countenance of Percy Medwyn. Apparently, indeed, he was unconscious of having excited it, for he continued to converse with the quiet self-possession and courteous tone of a man who determines not to take or give offence,

touching on various topics of general interest, and displaying, in all his remarks, a readiness and tact, which, under other circumstances, could not have failed to make him an interesting companion. But the very solicitude he manifested to banish from Medwyn's mind any suspicion with regard to the circumstances of their first introduction, increased the evil he seemed to deprecate, and when the stranger took his leave at the gate of the avenue, lingering as he paid his parting compliments, as if with the hope, either of being invited to prolong his visit, or with the idea that his example might be followed, the bonds of restraint were removed, and a deep sigh from his respected friend, revealed to Medwyn the relief he felt at the termination of this inauspicious interview.

Medwyn awaited in respectful silence the communication which he was well aware would succeed, and the youthful arm which had so often supported the less active steps of his revered companion, was readily accepted, as they returned.

"'Tis strange, passing strange!" said Sir Frederick Lansdale musingly, and as one who strives to rouse himself from some unpleasant vision that he finds it impossible to banish. "I can hardly imagine how a heart so benevolent, so frank, so guileless, can have selected such a being as the object of his idolatry. You are aware that I had once a brother, the greater part of whose life was passed in India, Percy?" The expected response given, he proceeded. "The stranger, who has just left us, brings me some interesting details of his last years, and has also shown me many of his letters, addressed to his adopted son, to whom he writes in terms of the most affectionate cordiality. This child of his adoption, strange as it may appear, you this evening saw in the person of Elford. I had heard of my

brother's predilection before, but during the years that have succeeded his death, no tidings have ever reached me of this, his adopted son. Would that he could more fully justify the affection so lavishly bestowed on him, though he may possibly hide the best qualities under an exterior, that is to me anything rather than prepossessing. All this, you may perhaps think an insufficient reason for the agitation which you doubtless perceived in my manner, when you so unexpectedly encountered us. Nay," he continued, observing that his youthful companion was about to interrupt him, "no explanation is necessary. I know your ingenuous nature too well to suppose that you would have overheard more than a single word of a conversation not destined for your ear, nor that one, if you could have avoided it. It is true there was something strange in the positive assertion he made of your father's return from his sojourn on the continent, and the insinuation that your intended absence was consequent on his own appearance here: but this was not the chief subject of our discourse. You have probably heard that there was, at one time, a claim made to my whole estate, which, unrighteously as it was founded, received the sanction of the law, and but for the reversion of my brother's oriental wealth, which he left at that very time, for a better and more enduring inheritance, I should have found myself almost destitute. Sad as was the alternative, had I been permitted to choose, I would have willingly preferred the poverty that I believed awaited me, rather than part for ever with one so dear; for though long separated by the wide ocean, the tenderness of our youthful ties was never forgotten." A rising tear, here for a moment, interrupted the relation of the venerable speaker, but recovering soon from his emotion, he proceeded. "At that time, however, 'the world was all before me where to

choose,' I was young and enterprising, and the loss of fortune presented, comparatively, but few terrors for me. Now, it is different. I find myself in the vale of years, and though a period of sorrow and suffering might be short for me, there is one dearer to me than life,—the last scion,—but I will not anticipate. This stranger throws out dark hints of a will left by my brother, which transfers all his wealth to his adopted son. If this be true, and the claim can be sustained, I shall be, for the second time, as a worldling would express it, the sport of fortune, and a ruined man. The hints which I received were but vague, and accompanied by a request that I would not repeat them, an injunction to which I am well disposed to accede; yet I determined to inform you of the whole conversation, which our present relations rendered in my eyes an imperative duty. Should my fears be realized, there will be no need to appeal to the delicacy, and if I may call it so in so gentle a creature, the pride of my daughter, or to represent to her the impropriety of the alliance of a portionless orphan, as she might probably find herself, with a son of Lord Belmore."

"My friend, my father!" exclaimed the young man, grasping with affectionate ardour the hand of his revered companion, while his fine features glowed with an expression of triumphant enthusiasm, "how often, how fervently have I wished for an opportunity of manifesting the purity of the love I bear to the being dearest on earth to us both. Can you suppose for a moment, that the world's dross would be aught but dust in the balance, when compared with the excelling loveliness that has so long thrown its magic spell around me, or that so slight a barrier could deprive me of my dearest hopes of happiness?"

"This is the language of youth and inexperience," said Sir Frederick Lansdale, as he shook his head, and a faint

smile for an instant played over his face, though he returned the pressure of the hand that rested in his own. "Such sentiments do honour to the noble and generous heart from which they spring, but I am, unhappily, too well acquainted with this cold world to permit them to exercise an undue influence on my mind. I know that your prospects, however brilliant for the future, are at present limited, and in that future view, might, indeed, become precarious, if shared with a portionless bride."

"Rich in her own angelic virtues and beauty," said Medwyn, as if concluding the sentence. "Yes! Sir Frederick Lansdale,—bestow but this choicest boon on me, and you will find me not unworthy the sacred trust. A bold heart and a strong arm may, perchance, carve out for me a higher destiny than that which might await me if basking in the smiles of fortune. With such a guiding star to illumine my path, it cannot, it shall not fail to lead me to honour and prosperity, as well as happiness."

As he spoke these words, they reached the spot to which their course had been directed, and where Medwyn's groom with his horses awaited his return. Bestowing a fervent "God bless you!" on his young friend, Sir Frederick Lansdale returned on his solitary way, while Medwyn vaulted lightly into the saddle, and a few bounds of his spirited courser, and the increasing gloom of the twilight, soon removed from his view the spot where his best earthly hopes were enshrined.

MYSTERIOUS WARNINGS.

“ Tu nous rends nos derniers signaux,
Le long du bord le cable crie,
L'ancre s'élève et sort des caux,
La voile s'ouvre:—adieu patrie!”

DELAVIGNE.

THE prophecy of the preceding evening that the “ morning sun might be obscured by clouds,” was fully realized, and as Medwyn entered the Southampton coach, a thick mist, which had hardly permitted the gray dawn to be distinguishable from the shadows of night, dissolved in heavy showers of rain. Had the prospect without been less comfortless, it might, possibly, have dispelled the sad thoughts which in spite of his efforts to repel them, haunted the mind of our traveller; but the rain continued its ceaseless pattering against the glasses, and no sound but an occasional gust as the autumn winds swept by, and the encouraging voice of the coachman urging on his willing steeds to yet greater speed, interrupted his reverie. Wrapping himself more securely in his travelling cloak, he withdrew himself as far as he might from the chilling influence of sights and sounds which only increase the impatience of the wayfarer to terminate his day's journey. His thoughts dwelt successively on the past,—the present, the future.—He thought of the days,—of the years past, and a fairy form flitted before him, her golden ringlets floating lightly over her snowy shoulders,

her blue eyes radiant with infantine glee, and the dimpled cheek and ruby lip wreathed with smiles, as she lavished her innocent caresses on him, her happy and favoured playmate and companion. Again, "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream." The fair blossom was unfolding its silken leaves;—the same bright being still hovered near him, but a timid blush mantled on the soft cheek, and those blue eyes that were wont to meet his own, now sunk beneath his glance. This was the period when emancipated from college thralldom, he hastened to Lansdale park to watch the expanding charms of its lovely inmate, and to receive lessons of wisdom from her revered parent, who had ever regarded him with parental affection. Years again passed by—once more the blessed vision approached, and in the full bloom of womanly grace and beauty, he beheld his own Ellen,—his heart's dearest treasure,—his promised bride. Hitherto their lives had passed on, "as a clear stream by care unruffled." No apprehensions for the future had ever clouded their blissful day-dreams, and until the hour of their recent separation, no thought of coming events had ever cast its dark shadow over the brightness of their prospect. There was something of prophetic sadness in the parting words of Ellen, that sunk deeply on his heart. The last surviving child of a numerous and lovely family, who had been successively consigned to an early tomb; the idol of her father, of whose declining years she was the sole stay and consolation, Medwyn had attributed her apprehensions to some thought connected with the misfortunes of her loved parent. But it was now more probable that she was aware of this mysterious stranger's visit; he, who had come into their Eden as if to mar the happiness denied by heaven to himself;—and though unconscious of the cause of his appearance there, her forebodings might have arisen from witnessing the effect

produced in the agitation her filial tenderness detected in her father's manner. But the first tear he had ever seen on that fair cheek, usually radiant with smiles, had marked the moment of their parting, and brighter thoughts came with that sweet remembrance. To a manly and enterprising spirit like his, there was little in the evils that threatened them, to excite his apprehensions. "Yes!" he again internally repeated, "with such a guiding star to illumine my path and cheer me on my way, it must, it shall lead to honour and prosperity. In my thoughts of the future, its brightness shall banish every dark recollection, and this bird of ill omen shall not again flit across my path to interrupt my dream of happiness."

As he uttered these words, he was aroused from his meditations by perceiving that he was entering the great emporium which he had found it necessary to visit before his departure for the continent, and the bustle consequent on his brief sojourn there, banished for the time, the thought of other cares. The next evening found him at Dover, ardently invoking a favouring wind for the passage of the following day; for though he felt that "each remove" lengthened "the chain" of absence, an unnecessary detention would only have increased his impatience. The favouring breeze was granted; but alas! the marvellous power that now bears the traveller so rapidly to his destination, was then unknown, and a day was not sufficient for the passage that is now performed within a few hours. The wearisome watches of a night at sea, at length came to a close, and the morning sun was gleaming brightly on the ocean when he arrived at Boulogne-sur-mer.

While a negotiation was pending for a post coach, Medwyn walked out on the ramparts of the town; not as is now the traveller's wont, to marvel at the projects of the

modern Cæsar, in his contemplated invasion of England, or to admire the lofty column of Corinthian architecture commenced in commemoration of his intended achievements,—not to meditate on the gorgeous magnificence of the *champ de drap d'or*, which was displayed at a few leagues distance, and which might, perhaps, have been seen from a neighbouring height, when the meeting of the haughtiest and most powerful monarchs of Europe gave it the celebrity it has ever since that period possessed, but to take a last view of the white cliffs of his native shore. As he lingered on the beach, a footstep passing near him, withdrew his attention from the object of his contemplation, and reminded him that the time had probably arrived when he must continue his journey. He turned to retrace his steps, and to his great surprise, observed that the stranger he had met with at Lansdale stood before him. Medwyn involuntarily started. The stranger, however, manifested not the least surprise, nor exhibited any change of his rigid features, except a slight movement of the cheek that might have indicated either a smile or a sneer. Without the least attempt to renew their acquaintance, except by a scrupulously courteous bow, he passed on, and in a moment more, turning the angle of a wall, he was lost to view. This circumstance, simple in itself, awoke afresh the unpleasant reflections that Medwyn had vainly endeavoured to banish from his mind. There was something of mystery in the movements of this man, that perplexed and annoyed him. During the conversation of the evening they had first met, not a word was said of his intended journey, and yet, from the circumstance of his being already at Boulogne, he had probably set out within a few hours of his visit to Lansdale. Could this sudden movement have been the consequence of his own departure, and

why was it that this "bird of ill omen," as he had once termed him, still crossed his path?

No farther space was, however, at that moment, allowed him for conjecture, for he was hastily summoned to continue his route, and there is something in the very atmosphere of France that banishes gloomy thoughts from the mind of the traveller. The very aspect of the postillion and his horses, to one unaccustomed to their peculiarities, has something inexpressibly ludicrous about it. The rough steeds with their rope harness, jingling chains and rows of bells,—the postillion, with his merry-andrew costume of blue and scarlet, garnished with shining buttons—the broad brimmed hat which might supply the place of an umbrella at need, and boots so huge and clumsy that none but the initiated would ever for a moment imagine the purpose to which they were destined,—the smiling faces,—the bustling alacrity,—the incessant prattle which the traveller hears at every turn, cannot fail to withdraw his mind from more serious reflections. The journey was soon accomplished, and the resounding whips were brandished with yet greater alacrity, when, after Medwyn's passport had been duly examined at the *barrière*, the coach drove through the avenue of Neuilly toward the splendid *place*, then bearing the name of the ruling monarch of France, Louis Quinze. It is impossible to emerge from the avenue into this *place*, without, at a glance, recognizing in it the taste of the metropolis of France. Medwyn entered it just at that witching hour when the approach of twilight softened all the beauties of the objects in view, without obscuring them, and the silvery light of the moon imparted something of a supernatural whiteness to the marble statues around, and a mysterious charm to the sluggish Seine, whose tranquil waters gleamed like a mirror beneath her beams. The stately buildings that are now seen

on either side, the fine façade of the Madelaine and the Chambre des Deputés, have arisen since that period, and the colossal statues of naval and military heroes that now adorn it, have been the work of later days: but there was the old Château of the Tuileries, with its beautiful garden, and the distant towers of Nôtre-dame rose boldly on the view, yet darker from the contrast of the lingering sunset glow that gave them relief, and the sparkling lights that were glimmering forth like stars, as they were reflected from the bosom of the river.

Short time, however, is allotted to a traveller, to mark all these objects of curiosity and interest; and almost before he had time to observe them, Medwyn arrived at the hotel, where an *appartement* was prepared for his reception.

He found his father recovering from a recent attack of gout, the alarming symptoms of which had induced his attendants to summon his son with such urgent haste. The malady had, however, subsided, and he was rapidly recovering. Medwyn was received by him with as much kindness as a man of the world, who rarely ever sees his children, and troubles himself but little about them, usually bestows on a son whom he does not regard as the inheritor of his name and rank;—one in whom, with whatever mental or personal endowments he may be gifted, he sees not “the stately tree, whose rising strength will bear his trophies well.”

“My illness was a fortunate one for you, Percy,” he said, after coolly offering his hand to his son, and at the same moment rising from the depths of a luxurious *bergère* that had almost concealed him from view, and wrapping his ample silk robe-de-chambre carefully over the twinging foot, as he extended his length on the sofa. “Paris was never more gay and brilliant than at present. The young

dauphiness spreads a charm over the court that it never before possessed, and I dare say you have no objection to a presentation. You will find in the *spectâclés à la cour*, and the balls at Versailles, a pleasant contrast to the humdrum life you have lately led. I am nursing my foot, as you perceive, that I may fulfil an engagement to the ambassador a few days hence. *Si cela vous fait plaisir*, as these French people say, you may prepare to accompany me."

Medwyn expressed the gratification it would afford him to accede to his father's proposition, and a few minutes more terminated the conversation and his visit.

The first few days of his sojourn in the metropolis, were devoted to the examination of the monuments of art that are scattered in such rich profusion throughout its extent. It was his first visit to the continent, and to an ardent and inquiring mind like that of Medwyn, every object in a foreign land is replete with interest. He was returning from a distant *course* one morning, and passing by a fashionable *café* on the Boulevard, entered to look at the morning journals. Absorbed, for a short time, entirely in an interesting article, it was only in raising his eyes to the top of the page, that his glance passed to one of those huge mirrors which are the chief ornament and highest pride of a Parisian *café*, where to his astonishment he perceived the ominous figure of the stranger, Elford, standing behind him. The utmost self-possession was requisite to avoid springing from his chair, for there was an expression of still more sinister import on that dark brow than he had ever before seen there; but for once, Medwyn imitated the calm and cold nonchalance that he condemned, and remained in exactly the same attitude, still apparently intent on the journal, but observing minutely the movements of the

stranger and another individual who appeared to have accompanied him into the *café*. Not a word was spoken, but he distinctly saw Elford grasp the arm of his companion with one hand, while the other was directed toward himself, as if in reference to something that had just occurred in their communications with each other. This mute signal was answered by a corresponding gesture, and an assenting nod of the head on the part of Elford's companion, and in another instant they had disappeared.

There was something in this circumstance as strange as perplexing: but it was impossible to avoid the conviction that the direst enmity was felt toward him by this singular man, for every circumstance that Medwyn recalled of his countenance, his manner, from the moment they first met, had heightened this impression on his mind, and the dark scowl with which he had been regarded when the stranger imagined himself unseen, the significant gesture which seemed to point him out for some sinister design, could not be misunderstood. Manly and fearless as was his disposition, Medwyn recoiled at the idea of having a sort of mysterious surveillance continually exercised over him, and had a moment's time been allowed him, he would have demanded an explanation of what he had just witnessed. This, however, the rapidity with which the whole scene had passed, precluded, and after an hour spent in fruitless conjectures as to the object or motives of his pursuer, he resolved to banish the unpleasant reminiscence, and to seek some more congenial occupation; a resolution, to which the novelty of all around him, enabled him to adhere without difficulty. The rest of the morning was agreeably occupied, and he returned at a late hour to prepare for the fulfilment of his numerous engagements for the evening.

He found the usual assortment of cards and billets d'inv-

tation upon the table on his return to the hotel; and glanced carelessly over them before retiring to his chamber. There was nothing of unusual interest among them except a small note edged and sealed with black, and addressed in the minute characters of a delicate female hand. Before breaking the seal, Medwyn examined it more nearly. It had neither initials nor arms by which the writer could be known, and the impression upon the black wax was a hand and dagger, with the word "*veillez*" in small letters above. On opening it a single line appeared, the words were these, "Beware of intimacy or even acquaintance with Adh mar de Vaudemont; it may prove fatal to you." There was neither date nor signature, and Medwyn looked with some anxiety at the superscription, and with a feeling almost of certainty that he had inadvertently opened a billet which had not been designed for his eye. But the address was distinctly to himself; even the name of the hotel, the street, and the number of the house carefully written. It could not have been accidentally sent to him. Had his sojourn in the metropolis been of longer date, he might have supposed that this was some *badinage* from the hand of an acquaintance, who sought to amuse herself with his credulity; but his stay there had been too short to admit of such an idea. It was impossible, however, to form any opinion of the matter, as the writing, the seal, even the name of the person within, against whom he was so solemnly warned, were all unknown to him.

"I am certainly destined, to-day, to mysterious rencontres," he said, as he read and re-read the single line contained in this note, "but at least here seems to be a benign influence to counteract the spirit of evil. If they could only come to an understanding, I should have no cause for foreboding; but be that as it may, I shall not permit the satisfac-

tion of my first visit to this interesting place to be marred by either threats or warnings of unseen and unimagined dangers. 'Beware of intimacy or even acquaintance with Adhémar de Vaudemont,' he repeated, 'why, this is as laconic and rather more incomprehensible than the note that gave his treacherous brother warning of the escape of Cœur de Lion from the Austrian dungeon. '*Take care of yourself,*' &c. I suppose I am to take care of myself, if I chance to meet with this redoubtable personage. Well,—I have been for many years accustomed to this office. Have no fears for me, my kind, invisible friend.'

Such were some of the thoughts that escaped in words, while Medwyn awaited the hour for the fulfilment of his evening engagements.

A REVELATION.

“ Thus while he spake, each passion dimm'd his face,
Thrice chang'd with pale ire, envy, and despair,
Which mark'd his borrow'd visage and betray'd
Him counterfeit.”

PARADISE LOST.

DAYS passed on, and Lord Belmore still found himself confined to his sofa, and unable to perform the promise he had made to his son, of accompanying him to Versailles. His health, however, began to improve more rapidly, and Medwyn received a summons from him, relative to this matter, then deemed one of high importance in the fashionable world. Though he regarded it with far less interest than his father, whose devotion to the lighter pursuits and amusements of society, rendered it an affair of the greatest consequence in his eyes, he felt, nevertheless, a natural and laudable curiosity to see the interior of this stately palace, now glittering more with the reflected splendour of the *grand monarque*, than boasting anything of dignity beneath the influence of his successor, who, at this period, seemed more disposed to astonish the world by his countenance of unexampled profligacy, than by that encouragement of arts and arms, which had, notwithstanding the tyrannical injustice of his reign, elevated his predecessor to the exalted name and station he at one time possessed amid the crowned heads of Europe.

At the hour appointed, Medwyn repaired to his father's hotel, and was ushered by a valet into a *cabinet d'étude*, adjoining his chamber.

"My lord is engaged at this moment," he said, bowing respectfully, and offering a package of English journals of late date. "The moment he is ready to receive, I will return."

Medwyn took the papers, and was soon occupied with their contents, which could not fail to interest him. His attention was, however, in spite of himself, drawn to the sound of voices in the next room, which, though in a low tone, occasionally fell on his ear. Every one has, at some time or other, probably experienced the nervous sensation occasioned by hearing voices engaged in deep and earnest conversation, one of which is perfectly familiar, and the other left in part to the surmisings of imagination, and both too distant and too low to admit of listening to them with propriety.

Could the deep low tone he heard in such earnest conversation with his father, be that of the man who seemed destined to haunt his mind as well as watch his movements? He remembered the striking impression made by that voice the first time it met his ear, and the resemblance was perfect;—but it was impossible; the conversation was evidently not characterized by that coldness which marks the intercourse of strangers, and how could he suppose any intimacy between Lord Belmore, and one, who, whatever might be his talent, possessed too little refinement to please so fastidious a taste. At one moment, his father's voice rose above that of his companion, and Medwyn feared that he might unwittingly as well as unwillingly be made a party to their communications. He rose from his seat with the determination of summoning a servant, and requesting

to be shown into another room, when the door was thrown open, and his suspense was terminated. Lord Belmore and the stranger, Elford, appeared. The surprise he naturally felt was not diminished, when he observed from the demeanor of the latter, that he evidently intended to disguise all recollection of having previously met with him, and was at its height when Lord Belmore presented to his son M. de Gourville. Again Medwyn received the same cold courteous bow, and in a few minutes the stranger retired.

Lord Belmore at first seemed unwilling to break the silence that succeeded his departure; his son was equally taciturn, and each seemed waiting for the other to speak.

“You seem surprised, Percy,” at length he said, though with visible embarrassment in his manner, “to find me engaged in conversation with M. de Gourville. It is true he is not quite so polished a specimen of the society of the court here as you may sometimes find, but he enjoys favour in high places, nevertheless, and his talent is admirable. He is a special favourite with the beautiful comtesse who now rules the successor of the grand monarch with as tyrannical a sway, as his predecessor ever exercised over his unhappy subjects. You will probably often meet with him here.”

“I have already had the honour of an introduction to M. de Gourville,” replied Medwyn, “and I cannot say that I feel particularly solicitous to extend my acquaintanceship with him. Is your lordship aware that this interesting personage boasts the convenient privilege of two names, either of which he assumes as circumstances require? Or is his advantageous position as a retainer of the Comtesse du Barry sufficient to gloss over all imperfections in a circle where she leads the ton?”

These words were spoken in a low tone, and one per-

fectly respectful; but there was a gravity in Medwyn's manner that offered a striking contrast to the levity affected by Lord Belmore, and which the penetration of his son detected as assumed for the purpose of concealing some deeper feeling. Despite his usual self-possession, he felt his eyes sink beneath the ingenuous glance that met his, and could not avoid the self-reproach consequent on speaking thus lightly of persons and circumstances whose scandalous notoriety had already aided in laying the train to that tremendous convulsion which was destined to sweep like a tornado through the nation, and to involve not only the guilty but the innocent in its awful consequences. "The grave rebuke, severe in youthful beauty, added grace invincible," and Lord Belmore attempted no farther encomium on his new acquaintance. Returning, however, to his usually cold and careless manner, he said, "I was not unaware of the circumstance to which you allude, and that M. de Gourville has, for special reasons, been occasionally compelled to use another name, but those reasons he explained to me this morning, and I find them entirely satisfactory to me."

Medwyn perceived from his father's manner, that the subject was annoying to him, and he pursued it no farther. Their terms of intimacy had never been sufficient to invite any special confidence on his part, and he had received no encouragement to speak freely of the impression made by Elford, or M. de Gourville, as he now styled himself, upon his mind. But his thoughts reverted to the dear friends he had left, and he internally resolved to make them the depositories of his discoveries and suspicions. Apparently this idea had passed through the mind of Lord Belmore, for he remarked,

"I have been politely requested by our ambassador to

send to his charge any letters I may wish to forward. If, therefore, you desire to write to our friends at home, it will be the safest as well as most speedy conveyance that will probably be offered us for some days."

He then briefly requested his son to meet him at an hour appointed the following day for their intended visit to Versailles, and retired.

As the fowler, who spreads his snare, glides stealthily to watch the chances of his success, so did Medwyn's "evil genius," as he felt disposed to regard him, watch his departure from the hotel in which Lord Belmore had taken up his temporary residence. He had entered one of the usual places of resort for fashionable loungers, on the opposite side of the street, and within half an hour after Medwyn left the house, he was a successful applicant for a second interview.

"You will pardon my intrusion, I trust, my lord," he said, "but in the confidential communication I felt it my duty to make to you this morning, I omitted some circumstances of importance, which I thought it best to impart to you at once, even if I subjected myself to the imputation of impertinence in so speedily renewing my visit."

"I am happy to have an opportunity of profiting by your friendly communications, M. de Gourville," said Lord Belmore, motioning him to be seated, and wheeling his *bergère* near the chair he indicated for his guest. "You may easily imagine that I feel the deepest interest in our conversation of this morning."

"I certainly should not have taken the liberty of making the revelation I have done," said M. de Gourville, accepting the offered seat, "had I not felt the warmest solicitude for the welfare of your son, whose mental and personal qualifications struck me the first moment I saw him, as far

worthier to shine in a court, than to be obscured by adversity, and blighted by an ineffectual struggle against misfortune,—perhaps penury. The alliance he contemplates with the daughter of Sir Frederick Lansdale, must be ruinous to his prospects, since he is, at this moment, as I before assured you, in imminent danger of losing his whole fortune.”

“Of this, then, you have no doubt,” inquired Lord Belmore with anxiety.

“None whatever. If it were necessary, I could prove this day to your lordship the existence of the will, which must soon render him destitute; and I thought I should ill perform the part of a friend, if I permitted the truth to be longer concealed from you. I will not, however, take the liberty of giving my opinion with regard to the management of so delicate an affair. The intimacy and confidence that exist between a father and son, forbid my expressing even a thought on the subject.”

A sudden pang shot through the heart of Lord Belmore, as he reflected how little these expressions accorded with the state of feeling and the intercourse between himself and his son; but he felt desirous to know the ideas that passed through the mind of his visitor, and he invited him to express them by saying,

“I have been for a long time entirely separated from my family, by circumstances which I found it difficult to control, and there is, perhaps, less of intimacy than you suppose, in our intercourse. I should, therefore, regard any suggestion you may make, as a farther proof of your friendship. You need be restrained by no motives of delicacy from expressing your thoughts.”

“Since then you invite me to give them,” said his guest, “and you cannot suppose that I am actuated by any

but the purest motives in wishing to save your son from a ruinous connection, and your lordship, perhaps, from being involved in its consequences, I confess, that I should use every means in my power to dissuade him from his fatal purpose. It is true that your consent has been given to his union with Sir Frederick Lansdale's daughter, but that was under entirely different circumstances from those which are likely soon to exist. He is now withdrawn from the influence of her attractions, and amid the gaieties and dissipation of this metropolis, and the court circle, her image will soon be banished from his mind."

Lord Belmore shook his head. "That suggestion is vain, M. de Gourville. I have not a very intimate acquaintance with my son, but I know that his feelings and principles are entirely adverse to the tone of society here, and perhaps the contrast with what he has left may only rivet the bonds we would sunder. I fear therefore"—

Lord Belmore paused, for again his conscience reproached him with *fearing* that his son might be proof against the frivolities, nay, perhaps the vices that had enslaved his own mind.

"In that case," continued his visitor, rousing from a deep train of thought in which he had been absorbed, while in an attitude of respectful attention he had awaited the conclusion of Lord Belmore's speech, "it might even be justifiable to have recourse to stratagem. Were I a father, and with the interests of such a son at stake, I should not hesitate—no,—not a moment, to break off all communication between him and the ignis-fatuus that is leading him to the brink of ruin, by any means placed within my reach."

Lord Belmore looked anxiously at his guest, as if awaiting the fuller development of his suggestion.

"I repeat," continued de Gourville, "that I should not,

for a moment, hesitate to use means, that might be perhaps considered unjustifiable in a less urgent matter. Were I, for example, made the depository of any letter, or other memento that might serve to fan and keep alive this fatal flame, I should not hesitate to withhold it."

He paused for an instant, and fixed his eye on his host, as the serpent is said to observe the fluttering of the bird that hovers near him, while, at each instant, the destined victim narrows the circle in which he flies around his tempter.

"Perhaps, however," he continued, in a lower and more subdued tone, "I have gone too far. Pardon me, my lord, if I have been led by my friendship for yourself and my anxiety for the future welfare of your son, to make a suggestion that your better judgment might disapprove. It is unnecessary to add more at present, of the thoughts that pass through my mind, or again to repeat my request that our conversations may be strictly confidential. Your son is unconscious of the interest I feel in his welfare and happiness, and has probably conceived a very natural prejudice against me from the circumstance I mentioned to you this morning. But I have already trespassed too long on your time, and am probably keeping you from more agreeable engagements." And courteously renewing the parting compliments he had so lately made, he departed.

Lord Belmore slowly paced the apartment to and fro for some minutes after his visitor had disappeared. He was absorbed in deep and anxious thought, when his meditations were interrupted by the entrance of a servant with a package of letters, which he silently placed on the table, and withdrew. They were the letters sent by Medwyn in accordance with his father's request. The temptation was offered at precisely the moment the tempter would have selected to

ensure his success. The mind of Lord Belmore had been at work only on the arguments which could, in his opinion, justify such a proceeding as the destruction of whatever letters of his son to Sir Frederick Lansdale might fall into his hands, and the remorse that should have succeeded such an idea in his mind, was not yet fully awakened.

Still, however, it was difficult to suppress the feeling of shame that oppressed him, as he paused, and rested his elbow on the mantel. The venerable form of Sir Frederick Lansdale arose before him, and he remembered their early friendship, the ties of which had only been dissolved by the uncongeniality of their pursuits, and his own continued absence and silence;—he thought of Ellen,—her beauty, her gentleness, her piety,—the anguish that would sear her heart and blight her young spirit in believing herself forgotten—neglected—forsaken;—he remembered the devoted attachment of his son, fostered and encouraged by himself, when he believed it would conduce not only to his happiness, but to his worldly prosperity and honour. But now—the dark side of the picture presented itself to his view—and mammon triumphed! A few minutes more, and the lines which poured the full tide of a pure and noble heart—that were destined to revive the loveliest flower that ever pined in the shade when the sun had withdrawn his smile, were consigned to the flames, and their ashes scattered to the winds. Apt emblem, alas! of the visions of glory and of bliss, that sometimes blaze with meteor-like brilliancy around, as if to mock with their transient splendour the dust and ashes into which they are doomed to fall!

But while a dark flush arose to the very brow of Lord Belmore, as he turned away from the contemplation of the crushed and blighted hopes that were withering at his feet, what were the thoughts that passed through the mind of his

tempter? At this moment de Gourville was striding through the most retired part of the garden of the Tuileries, amid its deep and embowering shades, where the gay world rarely enter. He was alone, and his cold eye brightened with anticipated triumph, and a haughty smile rested on his lip, as these thoughts came forth in words—

“Yes!” he exclaimed, and his step became still more firm and more rapid, “the prize is within my grasp, and mine shall not be the fault if I do not clutch it! Yes, proud lover! I shall yet see thee humbled in the dust, and thou shalt know and feel my power! In vain wilt thou struggle in the net that I have so warily spread for thee. Amid the shoals and quicksands that threaten unsuspecting youth in these scenes of dangerous fascination, I will, unseen, be thy pilot, and I will lead thee to safety; ay,—” and he laughed bitterly and scornfully, “such safety as the mariner feels when clinging to his last plank in mid-ocean, when no hand is near to succour or to save. The father shall be the guardian and director of the son,—meet protector,—and then, seared, blighted, stained with dishonour, perhaps by crime, thou wilt be my fitting competitor for the prize at which we both aim! But even should my well devised schemes fail, and thou shouldst resist my undiscovered influence, there are yet means to open my way to those treasures which are now destined for thee. My hand is steady and sure, its strength hath been tried ere now,” and he struck the handle of a stiletto concealed within his breast. “And thou! bright and beautiful star of promise, that I have watched secretly, and hardly dared even to gaze on, though all unknown to thee,—thou, whose angelic purity removes thee to such an immeasurable distance from me, that I feel as one who worships a planet that he can never approach, thou, beauteous

Ellen! in all thy loveliness and innocence, thou shalt be mine—yes,—mine!”

He left the garden as he spoke, and passing through the gate that opened on the Place Louis Quinze, mingled with the crowd that thronged the Champs Elysées, and disappeared.

VERSAILLES.

“Come now, a roundel and a fairy song,
Then to your offices, and let me rest.”

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

“A merrier man
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal.”

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

VERSAILLES! How many associations does the name only of this once splendid residence of the haughtiest of monarchs, call up in the mind! How many graphic scenes sketched by the fairy hand of the graceful de Sévigné, are again invested with life and motion, peopling its now deserted halls with the gay, the beautiful, the proud! Not then, as now, did the foot-fall of the solitary wanderer through those stately halls startle his own ear, and interrupt his meditations with its solemn echo.

At the epoch here referred to, in that kingly palace, all was life, animation and gaiety, and as Lord Belmore's coach entered the *place d'armes*, he perceived that an unusual number of persons were assembled for the reception which he had been invited to attend. It was fortunate for Medwyn and his father, that their rapid drive to the château had not been retarded by a few minutes delay, for the usual hour of the reception had been anticipated by the impatience of the sovereign to enjoy the peculiar beauty of the day, in

devoting it to the pleasures of the chase, of which his immoderate fondness was well understood; and the customary expression "*Le roi ne fait rien aujourd'hui,*" when the day was not dedicated to this favourite amusement, had been already in circulation, and even met the royal ear without giving offence.

The great folding doors of the *salle du trône* were thrown open, and the king appeared, as Lord Belmore and his son took their places in the circle, around which his majesty rapidly passed, pausing a few minutes to accost those individuals, whom he deemed most worthy of his notice, and passing by others with a smile or gesture of recognition; but notwithstanding his outward civility, evidently manifesting his ennui at the formality of those rules of etiquette established by his predecessor, which it was well known he heartily hated, as well as his anxiety to exchange so uncongenial a scene for employments better suited to his taste.

Brief was the space allotted for the display of stars and garters, of crosses and orders, of gold embroidery, of jewelled swords and snowy plumes. He paused for some minutes to converse with the ambassador, near whom Lord Belmore and his son were standing, and during their colloquy his eye glanced to the manly and graceful form of Medwyn. Alive to whatever promised to conduce to his gratification, he saw at once in the symmetrical yet athletic youth before him a desirable companion in his favourite amusement, and the ceremony of presentation was hardly completed, when, with a smile that strikingly contrasted with the cold reserve which had hitherto marked his manner, he accosted him.—

"The chase has doubtless its attractions for you," said his majesty, throwing aside the stately air that he deemed it necessary to assume in public, and for a moment returning

to the careless ease of manner that marked his intercourse in private.—“ A few days hence will find us in our château at Fontainebleau, and the season invites to livelier pleasures than the *salons* of Paris at present afford. We shall expect you at the royal chase on Thursday.”

Medwyn bowed, and signified his acceptance of this flattering invitation, so different from the ceremony usually practised on such occasions. But the barriers of etiquette were too often broken by the King, for such a circumstance to attract particular remark; and his present infringement on its rules elicited no farther notice than a *badinage* after the reception was over, and a congratulation to Medwyn on the success of his first appearance at the Court of Versailles. The tour of the circle was soon completed, and his majesty, with his attending suite, retired, leaving his guests at liberty either to return to the metropolis, or to amuse themselves by driving through the park, or strolling through the grotesque yet splendid garden, while he prepared for the business of the day, *la chasse*.

Medwyn decided in favour of the former, and while his father took his solitary drive through the park, he rambled amid those bosquets and stately groves of marronniers, that even then had developed much of that beauty with which nature, in her charming freaks, often decorates the works of art; and though the moss-covered rocks, that now resemble so much those arranged by her hand, might then, to a critical eye, have betrayed their artificial construction, they gave a sylvan effect to the scene, and heightened its more regular beauties. The waters of the Seine, which like all else around him, had obeyed the behest of the grand monarque, were thrown high in sparkling showers by the hands of the bronze and marble deities that seemed to hold their court in the fairy scene, or fell in murmuring cascades through thickets of

shrubs and trees that invited the midday wanderer to seek their cool recesses.

Medwyn was passing slowly through one of these bosquets, watching the rippling of the stream that fell over the rocks above, his thoughts, probably, at that moment occupied with far distant objects, when his ear was arrested by the sound of a guitar, struck by a hand of no ordinary skill. The circumstance of hearing music at such an hour, and in such a spot, excited no surprise, for in these shades where pleasure reigned, the goddess was ever ready to receive the homage of her votaries. After a delicate symphony, a soft and plaintive female voice appeared to continue the *pastorale* that had been previously commenced.

“ Arbres epais, et vous, près émaillés
 La beauté dont l’hiver vous avait de’pouillés
 Par le printemps vous est rendue;
 Mais mon âme ne reprend pas
 La joie hélas! que j’ai perdue!”

“ Too grave, too grave, by half,” said a laughing voice near. “ Why, my pretty Ismène, what has put such fancies into your head this morning? but come,—give me your guitar, I will finish your song with an appropriate sentiment.” A chord was struck, and Medwyn heard the rich tones of a manly voice.

“ Quand l’hiver a glacé nos guérets
 Le printemps va reprendre sa place,
 Et ramène à nos champs leurs attraits;
 Mais hélas! quand l’age nous glace,
 Nos beaux jours ne reviennent jamais!”

“ There is a sentiment for you. If ‘ nos beaux jours ne reviennent jamais,’ should we not make the best of them now?”

“Your *refrain*,” said his companion, “may be suitable for you, but mine is more appropriate for me.” “*Mon âme ne reprend pas la joie hélas! que j’ai perdue!*” she repeated, shaking her head with an air of deep sadness. “But my minstrelsy is at an end, give me back my guitar, and do not forget the warning in my first stanzas. Adhémar de Vaudemont, remember!”

She spoke these words with energy, and in rather an elevated tone, and as Medwyn passed, they fell on his ear with such distinctness, that they seemed addressed to himself.

“Adhémar de Vaudemont will not forget your friendly counsel, fair *Ismène*, but why need it be spoken so loud? There is no need to awaken the echoes to witness our compact; they might prove faithless.”

Medwyn passed on, and for a moment he endeavoured in vain to recollect the association in his mind with the name that had twice been repeated in his hearing, and once, as he had fancied, and almost believed, uttered with the design to attract his attention. It was the recollection of the mysterious billet he had received on his first arrival in the metropolis, which then alone induced him to recall the appearance of the persons whom he had seen a moment before.

He had hardly observed aught in the female figure but its fragile delicacy, and the whiteness of the slender fingers that swept the chords of the guitar. Her companion’s appearance was far more remarkable. There was something fantastic in the troubadour style of dress he had assumed, probably for the adventure of the morning, that heightened rather than impaired the effect of a figure of slight proportions but perfect symmetry, and the striking beauty of his features and complexion were redeemed from the charge of

effeminacy only by the expression of a laughing and brilliant eye, that bespoke a votary of the "goddess fair and free," while the gay smile on his lip seemed ever ready to proclaim the sentiment if not the words, "Mirth, with thee I mean to live."

As Medwyn was recalling the appearance of these two persons to mind, he was accosted by a Parisian acquaintance, and the ordinary salutations of the morning were hardly exchanged, when a light footstep was heard behind them, and the young troubadour laid his hand on the shoulder of Medwyn's companion.

"Whither so fast, my friend," he exclaimed, as they were about to continue their walk. "Are you so soon tired of this courtly region, or have you some more agreeable employment for the rest of the day? By the way, Monteil, where were you last night?"

"A pretty question, truly," replied Medwyn's companion. "It is not very probable that I should receive a very satisfactory answer to a similar one, but at least I will make the experiment; pray where were *you* last night? but before you answer my query, I must see an acquaintance *en train* between my friend Mr. Medwyn and the prince of good fellows, Adhémar de Vaudemont. However," he continued, after this unceremonious introduction, "I do not intend to forget the inquiry to which your own indiscretion has subjected you. Where were you last night?"

"It will take me some moments to consider," de Vaudemont began.—

—"And to make a good story, perhaps," said his friend, laughing as he finished the sentence for him; "but proceed."

"Well, on condition that I am not to be interrupted, for I have a long story to tell. After an hour at the Opera, I was at a fête champêtre."—

“ A fête champêtre, and after the opera! I suppose your present troubadour or pastoral style of dress was ordered for that interesting occasion.”

“ Nay, positively, if you interrupt me again,” replied de Vaudemont, “ you shall tell the story yourself, or the truth rather, for, singular as my adventure was, it was witnessed by a thousand persons. All Paris is ringing with laughter at it this morning, and your haste in paying your court to his majesty has alone prevented you from hearing it sooner. After the opera I went to the magnificent hotel of our friend, the Duchesse de M., whose exuberant corpulency and romantic affectation of sentiment present so amusing a contrast, where I found the *beau monde* assembled, and where I marvel more and more that you were not. What do you suppose was the style of the entertainment? Why, precisely as I told you, a fête champêtre,—all bowers, and roses, and Floras, and shepherds, and shepherdesses. But the most superb, and what proved the most amusing part of the scene, was a large apartment, separated by a transparency from the *salle de danse*, and in which were represented hills and dales, valleys and rivulets, while on the borders of one of these clear streams, and reposing on the velvet turf, we beheld a graceful shepherdess, the *prima* of the *danseuses de l’opera*, holding a crook in her hand, and intently and apparently with no little anxiety, watching the movements of her snowy flock.”

“ Quite a pretty idea,” again interrupted his friend. “ A triumph no doubt, of the scenic art.”

“ Mistaken,—altogether mistaken,” returned de Vaudemont, “ it was no scene, but a reality, as we all found soon to our cost. But to continue;—this beautiful pastorelle was suddenly revealed to our view, and reflected from the mirrors with which the adjoining saloon was ornamented, and

which are,—*were*, alas! I should say, the most magnificent in Paris, and it is impossible to imagine the admiration it elicited. This was the moment for the music to give the signal, and for the beautiful shepherdess to conduct her fleecy charge across the apartment occupied by the scene I have described; when, by some unfortunate mistake of the orchestra, which was to have breathed a delicate *pastorale*, the musicians burst forth in one of the grandest flights of the opera, and in one moment the whole illusion vanished. The flock of sheep which were to have followed their *bergère* off the stage, suddenly became frenzied with terror, and breaking through all decorum, and through the transparency at the same moment, rushed in among us, scattering the dancers, who with alternate shrieks of alarm and of laughter, fled in every direction, while the crashing of the splendid mirrors, which flew in fragments on every side, as the terrified animals in vain endeavoured to escape, and the cries and exclamations of the guests, mingled with the piteous bleatings of the flock, converted the magnificent fête champêtre into a perfect scene of bedlam.”

“Exhausted with my efforts to save my partner from the wreck, and with laughter at the touching despair of the now unsentimental duchesse, who, herself, actually aided in pursuing the destructive fugitives, I made my escape, and took refuge on the other side of the street in the *toison d’or* where I awaited my coach, and while regaining my breath, congratulated myself on exchanging a fête champêtre for an ‘*argonautic expedition.*’ ”

“A charming adventure, truly,” said his friend, laughing heartily as they recounted the names of some of the principle actors in the scene. “I regret more than I supposed I should, that I was not present on the occasion. An engagement I thought more promising than this Arcadian fête drew

me in another direction. At another time I shall submit myself more implicitly to your guardianship."

"You will act wisely, for you cannot have a more prudent counsellor. 'The prince of good fellows,' as you have just had the goodness to style me, cannot be better employed than in giving salutary advice to his subjects, and occasionally enlightening them upon topics, on which they are profoundly ignorant. Though you were before me in your courtly attendance to-day, I doubt not I have better information of what passes in the palace. Are you aware that the beautiful tyrant who rules the sovereign with such undisputed sway, the Comtesse du Barry, is in the depths of despair? It is true, I assure you. She has been in terror for some time past, lest the beauty and innocence of the young dauphiness, so recently adopted into the royal family, should present rather a striking contrast to her own charms; and yesterday an act of imprudence (a remarkable circumstance, you will probably think,) has nearly broken the fetters in which she has held majesty captive so long.

"Her morning was all sunshine,—as usual. She even made her appearance in the council chamber, and perched herself on the arm of the grand *fauteuil*, during the council, to the scandal of the graver members of which it was composed, and the divertisement of the less rigid. But in the evening came a cloud, and a most threatening one. A large package of letters were delivered to the king in her presence; she took them from his hand, and denouncing them as treasonable to herself, declared her determination to destroy them. His majesty pursued the agile fugitive around the room, and when about to recover his despatches, to his utter astonishment she threw the whole into the fire. The king became furiously angry, and seizing her by the arm, led her to the outside of the door, where she has been ever

since in the deepest penitence and despair; awaiting her return to favour, which it is hoped by others, and feared by herself, is rather a doubtful matter. I am sure of the truth of the story I have heard, for I have observed to-day, not only her own absence from court, but what is more remarkable, that of her little *sapajou*, the African page, Zamore, whose sable visage and diminutive stature, form so striking a type of the reputation of his mistress. Black as is his ugly physiognomy, however, it has earned him a large pension from the coffers of the state.

“But I forget how largely I am dealing in scandal, when I am to be the guardian and guide of such grave and reverend signors.”

As he spoke they reached the *orangerie*, and descending the hundred broad steps that lead into it, passed through its fragrant shades, and exchanging salutations, separated at the outer *grille*.

“This, then,” said Medwyn internally, during his drive to the metropolis, “is the demon against whom I have been so solemnly warned. A handsome one he certainly is, and the merriest of his calling he must be; yet perhaps the more dangerous from these very attractions. Thanks to my unknown counsellor for her kind surveillance. But it would appear from the words that passed this morning, that he, too, has received a warning, and in spite of his careless ease of manner, I remarked his surprise on hearing my name, and the watchful scrutiny with which he observed me. I have, however, wearied myself with conjectures concerning this matter, which, perhaps, after all, deserves no consideration.”

But the scenes he had just witnessed, were not so readily dismissed from his mind, and they occupied it to the exclusion of all others, at least until events of deeper interest, superseded rather than banished them from his thoughts.

A VISION.

“My hoarse sounding horn
Invites thee to the chase,—the sport of kings;
Image of war without its guilt.”

SOMERVILLE.

THE brightest days of the early autumn are, in all climes, almost as lovely as the spring, and their comparative merits have long formed a subject of controversy between their respective advocates. It is, perhaps, the difference between freshly budding youth, and more staid and matronly graces, and it may be for this reason that the loveliness of the spring is more delightful to the young, while the riper charms of autumn have greater attraction for those who can appreciate maturer beauties.

There are, however, some exceptions to this rule, and Percy Medwyn was one of these. It was, perhaps, that he would have been called, at least by his new acquaintance, de Vaudemont, *older* than most young men of his age, and this might have been the cause of his preference; but on the morning that he prepared to accept the royal invitation to join the chase at Fontainebleau, this preference could not have surprised the most enthusiastic admirer of spring.

The sun rose in cloudless splendour, and the deep and brilliant blue of the arch above was reflected from each rivulet that wound its way through the forest, as the party assembled for the sport of the day, and the resounding notes of the *cor de chasse*, the clanging of horses' hoofs, and the

merry laugh and gleeful voices around, awoke the echoes, and already gave notice to the startled deer of the approaching fate of one at least of their herd.

“You see I am in time to-day, for once, Medwyn,” said de Vaudemont, patting the neck of his spirited courser, and endeavouring to restrain his ardour until they were all fairly mounted. “But what a superb charger you have there! the only danger is that he may break your neck; however, there is not much danger of that, I perceive,” added he, as Medwyn sprung to the saddle, and permitted his fiery steed to bound and capriole at will, while with the most perfect grace and ease, he subjected him instantly to his control. “Such *centaurs* are not always to be found here,” continued de Vaudemont, “and you have the advantage of us in that high-bred courser. But his majesty is approaching, we must make our court before the chase begins, and it will not be our fault, I am well assured, *si le roi ne fait rien aujourd'hui.*”

Brief was the ceremonial preceding the business of the day, for the king was impatient for its commencement, and the chase began. A noble stag was soon roused from his covert, and in the ardour of the pursuit the party were soon completely separated. Medwyn found himself alone, and hearing the *cor de chasse*, and the shouts of the hunters at a distance, he began to fear that he had mistaken the course of the deer. He remembered, however, that it was precisely in this direction that he was bounding when he lost sight of him, and resolved rather than return on an uncertainty, that he would await his probable return to this spot.

It was a beautiful glade, and a gentle streamlet flowed through it from a spring beneath a large moss-covered rock. The chequered shade from the forest trees above, fell fit-

fully upon the verdant slope, and invited to a momentary repose from the fatigues of the chase. Medwyn dismounted and throwing the bridle over a low projecting branch, "scooped the brimming stream," and then leaned carelessly against the mossy rock, keeping his *fusil* near, however, to be in readiness for a surprise, if the deer should chance, as was most probable, to pass this secluded glade.

In this attitude he remained for some minutes, taking in at a glance the various objects around him, and imagining the beauty of a picture that might be composed from them, when he was suddenly startled by the rustling of the leaves behind him. Quickly, and instinctively, he laid his hand on his *fusil*, and turned hastily around; but instead of the branching antlers he had anticipated, a female form presented itself to his astonished view.

No creature of earth's mould could have been more beautiful than this unexpected apparition. She had probably not yet numbered sixteen summers, and the dazzling fairness of her complexion was rendered yet more striking by the fresh air and exercise; her fair hair fell in rich profusion over the swan-like neck, and a form of the most exquisite proportions was displayed to the greatest advantage, by the simple yet elegant costume to which it imparted grace, instead of borrowing from it.

Struck with surprise, and for the moment almost doubting whether "a vision so delightful" could indeed be a reality, Medwyn stood motionless; until the fair stranger, who at the first moment had manifested a design of retreating again into the *bosquet* from which she had emerged, advanced toward him, and with an air of the most winning grace, yet with perfect dignity, accosted him.

"Pardon me," she said, while a rising blush suffused her cheek, "the liberty I take in addressing myself to a

perfect stranger; but I have heedlessly wandered alone in the forest, and find some difficulty in returning to its more frequented paths. Perhaps you could direct me to the *grand allée* which I left a few minutes since, and forgot that I might lose my way in these attractive shades."

She ceased speaking, and Medwyn listened for an instant, before he replied to her inquiry, in the hope of hearing those silvery tones again. Those gentle accents,—those dark blue eyes,—the eloquent blush, the timid smile,—the graceful form, all, all brought his loved Ellen again to his view. Is it surprising that he almost forgot that the question of the beautiful stranger demanded an answer, as he gazed on her. Recovering himself, instantly, however, he stammered forth an apology, and respectfully offered to be her guide to the point which she had indicated.

They were about to leave the spot, when the rustling of the leaves, that had before aroused Medwyn from his meditations, was again heard, and the huge antlers of a stag peered from among them. Maddened by the pursuit of the hunters, and already wounded, the furious animal dashed onward, precisely to the place where stood the fair incognita. With a shriek of terror, she attempted to fly, but the antlers already touched the floating veil, borne on the breeze behind her, and her foot at the same instant became entangled in the gnarled root of a neighbouring oak. With the speed of lightning Medwyn rushed forward, and seizing his fusil with a giant's grasp, aimed a powerful and effective blow with it. The infuriated stag turned on his assailant, and forsaking the object of his first attack, returned the blow with his sharp antlers. Medwyn warded it off with his arm, and his next effort was more successful. The stag was now withdrawn to a sufficient distance from the fair unknown to permit a more appropriate use of his fusil, and

in another moment his once powerful enemy lay expiring at his feet, and he received the sinking form of the beautiful stranger in his arms. All this occurred in far less time than it has required to relate it; and as Medwyn was about to bear his lovely charge to the rivulet, and to revive her with its waters, she recovered, and the eloquent blood that had forsaken her cheek, tinged it with a bright flush.

“Unfortunate as imprudent!” she murmured to herself. “Why is it that others are always exempt from dangers, while I, I cannot even escape for a moment from the miserable thralldom to which I am subjected, without the occurrence of something that threatens my very existence. But oh!” she continued, glancing at Medwyn, with a mingled expression of terror and solicitude, “how selfish I am to think only of myself. You are wounded,—see! the blood is flowing freely from your arm!”

Medwyn in vain assured her that the wound was trifling.

“It is in my cause,” she continued, “that you are losing these precious drops,—it is ever thus,—I am doomed to misfortune, and those who would rescue me from it must do so at the risk of their own lives. And even now, as much as I owe you—my preserver—my deliverer—my rigorous destiny forbids me from acknowledging the obligation. I dare not permit the event that has just occurred to be known, for indiscretion is, in the eyes of those who watch over me, synonymous with crime. May I then beg you to conduct me a few steps on my way, and implore you not to make mention of this adventure. Perhaps, at a more suitable time, I may remind you of it. You are not, perhaps, so devout a believer in reliques as I am,” she continued with a sweet smile, “but here is one that will aid in your recovery from the injury you have just received.”

She took from a chain of gold around her neck, a superb

cross of the purest brilliants. "Keep this," she added, "as a souvenir of one, who, though ever unfortunate, is not ungrateful. There may come a day when you will recognise the hand that offers it, but for the present I feel assured that you will grant my request, and bury the events of the morning in oblivion."

Medwyn placed the splendid relique in his bosom, and even Ellen might have forgiven him for touching with his lips the delicate hand that offered it. In a few minutes they reached the spot to which she had requested him to conduct her.

"I can hardly resolve to obey your commands, and 'leave your fair side all unguarded,' lady," said Medwyn as she bade him farewell. "Were not your orders so peremptory, I should feel it almost a duty to accompany you, notwithstanding your prohibition."

"Yet you must leave me, and that promptly," said the incognita, in an agitated voice. "And even now it may be too late!" she continued; "look there, and judge how closely my movements are watched!"

Medwyn looked in the direction in which she pointed, and perched on the lower branch of a neighbouring tree, he beheld a figure, which rather resembled one of the monkey tribe, than an animal of the human species. A more scrutinizing view, however, revealed the diminutive proportions of a half-grown lad, richly habited in green velvet, ornamented with a profusion of gold lace. The visage was almost of an ebony hue, and contrasted strangely with a row of ivory teeth, which he fully displayed, on finding himself observed.

"Come down from thy perch, bird of darkness," said the lady, "and dare not on thy life reveal that thou hast seen me this morning. It is thy gracious mistress that hath sent

thee on this errand. But come,—thou shalt for once be my page, Zamore. Under such guidance," she continued with a smile, "must I return;—but I shall find means to silence this *sapajou*. Adieu! remember my entreaty."

She walked on rapidly, and was soon lost to view, and Medwyn returned to the glade where he had recently vanquished his unexpected and formidable foe.

He had hardly reached the spot, when the *cor de chasse* burst forth, the huntsmen rushed through the thicket, and surrounded the lifeless stag which lay stretched on the sward, while they gazed on Medwyn, who was preparing to remount his horse, though the blood still flowed from his wounded arm.

"Why, here has been an adventure, doubtless," said de Vaudemont, as he examined the animal, and then glanced at Medwyn. "And you have not even taken the precaution to cut his throat. You are not so good a sportsman as I thought you would prove, after all, Medwyn! You see I must say something to lighten the chagrin of his majesty, who is just now within hearing," he continued in a low voice, "for he cannot brook a rival in his favourite amusement, and your favour at court would have been much greater but for this *contre-temps*."

"I have not achieved my victory without some loss, however," replied Medwyn, smiling, as he pointed to the ruddy stains on his hunting dress. "This may be some atonement—as a proof that I acted in self-defence, and I may, perhaps, stand excused from paying farther court to-day. I cannot return to the château in my present unsuitable garb."

"Make your apology, then," said de Vaudemont, "and I shall have a good excuse in accompanying you; for in truth the whole pleasure of an excursion to Fontainebleau is now over, and the rest will be, as I know, from sad experience, an intolerable bore."

Medwyn adopted the suggestion, and alleging his wounded arm as a reason for his immediate return to the metropolis, the excuse was readily accepted by his majesty, who had now made his appearance.

While he was speaking, the diminutive and sable-visaged page, whom Medwyn had encountered half an hour before, suddenly sprung from the thicket behind them. The king started at this unexpected apparition.

“How now, Zamore,” he exclaimed, “what mak’st thou here?”

“A letter from my gracious mistress, please your majesty,” replied the page, offering a paper tied with silk, and sealed with his own emblem, the fleur de lis, while at the same moment he made an almost oriental prostration at the king’s feet.

“Stand back, imp of darkness,” said his majesty, “and frighten not my horse with thy ugly visage.”

The page retreated, but in doing so, he cast a furtive glance at Medwyn, and with a look of recognition, again displaying his full row of ivory teeth in contrast with his ebony visage, nodded his head, and disappeared.

Quickly as this glance was bestowed, it was observed by the king, who, with a clouded brow, received the parting homage of Medwyn and de Vaudemont.

“Unfortunate fellow that you are!” said the latter, when fairly out of hearing; “what can be the meaning of the look of recognition that ourang-outang bestowed on you? Why the king has been stung to death by the libels upon his fair inamorata already, and it is no wonder he should be *enragé* at an apparently secret understanding between her favourite page and a handsome cavalier like yourself. I fear sadly that this morning’s work has undone all that your prepossessing figure effected the first day of your appearance at Versailles.”

“In a multitude of rivals, as well as counsellors, there might be safety,” returned Medwyn, laughing, “though I have never seen the object of his idolatry, and cannot be numbered among them. But,” he continued, in a graver tone, “I meant not to speak with levity of what may well raise a blush on the cheeks even of the frequenters of the court of Versailles. My only marvel is, that an insulted nation should so long have submitted to such guidance. But the vengeance of heaven must, and will overtake the actors in these scenes of profligacy and crime. The justice of an offended God cannot be much longer delayed, and may He, who in wrath remembers mercy, avert the calamities they may entail upon the innocent victims who will probably share their fate, though they participate not in their guilt!”

De Vaudemont was for a few minutes silent. As Medwyn finished speaking, he was about to make some light reply, but there was something impressive and even solemn in the words he had just heard, that awoke a better feeling in his heart.

“You are grave to-day, Medwyn,” he said, “and your remarks have, really, almost a prophetic tone; but it is no wonder you are somewhat shocked at the state of things here. I have rather more acquaintance with them than you have, and yet I am not altogether reconciled,—reconciled, did I say?—Alas! but a short time has elapsed since I regarded vice as you now do.”

He paused, and seemed struggling with some overpowering emotion.

“Medwyn,” he continued, in an altered voice, “I was not always the thoughtless, careless troubadour-courtier you now behold me. There was a time when I should have scorned the idle, and—why should I disguise it? the

vicious life I now lead. In my early youth I had a protector,—a mentor, who trained me to virtue, and consequently to happiness. But he is in his grave.—Happily he has not lived to see the fruit of all his tender cares blighted and perishing. He cannot now behold the heart, whose young emotions were ever open to his view, a prey to ‘the worm that dieth not.’ Notwithstanding the solemn warning I have received concerning you, and a mysterious assurance that any confidence reposed in you will be my death-warrant, there is something that draws me to you as one, who, by his superior wisdom and excellence, might aid me in again finding the path from which I have so widely swerved. Promise me then,” he continued, grasping Medwyn’s hand with eagerness, “that you will one day listen to me, and counsel me. Not now,—for I have not courage yet to make you the depository of my follies—perhaps my crimes. But at a future day, I feel assured you will not only hear, but sympathize with me.”

As he spoke these words, they reached the *barrière* of the metropolis, and uttering a hasty “adieu,” he left Medwyn to meditate alone upon what he had just heard, as well as the events of the morning.

THE MINSTREL.

“ And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight that it would fling
Aside for ever,—it may be a sound,—
A tone of music,—summer’s breath, or spring,—
A flower—a leaf—the ocean, which may wound,
Striking th’ electric chain wherewith we’re darkly bound.”

BYRON.

IN a retired hotel near the Champs Elysées, an *appartement* had been fitted up with that exquisite taste which distinguishes the *artistes* (as the inventors of Parisian luxuries delight to call themselves) of the metropolis of France. The rooms were small, but each one presented in its rich tapestry, its splendid gilding, its sumptuous mirrors, its gems of sculpture and painting, of mosaic and precious marble, a model of elegance, and showed it, at a glance, the abode of opulence and luxury. Costly flowers in the rarest vases, mingled their delicate odours with the richer perfumes of the east, and these, with the harp and guitar, the music and half-finished silken embroidery, indicated the occasional presence of the gentler portion of creation.

It was evening, and the lights were beginning to twinkle among the trees of the grand avenue; but as yet this *appartement* was lighted only by a single lamp, that, placed in the centre room, shed its lustre feebly through the folding doors into those adjoining it. The outline of a slight and fragile form, reposing on a sofa in the one farthest removed, was

hardly distinguishable by the faint light, but her attitude, as she rested her forehead upon her white slender fingers, the careless tresses of dark hair that fell over them,—the paleness of the almost transparent cheek, showed that even in this abode of elegance, sorrow and suffering had found an entrance.

A deep sigh seemed to be heaved from the inmost recesses of her heart, as she pressed her hand more closely to her throbbing brow, and with some difficulty arose from her recumbent posture, and tottered rather than walked into the adjoining room. The casement was partly open, and she appeared to be revived by the fresh evening breeze that found its way through it, and partially dispelled the rich, though almost oppressive atmosphere by which she had been surrounded.

She swept her hand over the harp that stood near the window, and started at the deep tremulous chord that reverberated through the still and solitary apartment. Again she touched the strings, and a few notes, soft, plaintive, and low, came forth in exquisite unison with their full and harmonious chords.

“I cannot sing!” she exclaimed, as she again rose, and pushing the harp from her, approached the open window more nearly. “Poor hapless bird!” she continued, “why should’st thou sing in thy gilded prison? Thy voice was once sweet and joyous when it rung through thy native forests and hills, but now,—now!”— She covered her face with her hands, and the tears that had been restrained with difficulty, fell like rain-drops over her pale cheek.

“Yes!” she murmured after a few minutes pause, “I was then happy, and it is only in moments of solitude and darkness, that I feel and know what I have lost. Every sweet scene of my childhood rises before me;—my hum-

ble cottage,—the woodland dell, where with my youthful companions I have carolled so blithely, as we returned from our homely but happy employments. 'The bright stream that leaped in joyous rills over its rocky bed,—the verdant meadow,—the forest shade,—the wild birds that gladdened my path with their sweet notes,—and oh! sad, sad remembrance! the friends I have left in that humble retreat for a life of splendid misery. My father,—my mother,—alas!'

The murmuring voice died away, and again she hid her face in her hands, and sobbed aloud.

Absorbed in her emotions, she heeded not an approaching footstep, and was aroused only by the touch of a hand upon her arm. She looked up for an instant, and with a slight shudder, again hid her face.

"Ismène, why this extravagant sorrow," said the deep voice of the speaker, his tone, however, modulated to a cadence, apparently of unusual softness. "You are nervous, you are ill. Why should you indulge in such solitude and such fancies? 'The evening air is fresh and balmy, why have you not enjoyed it?'"

"Because nothing now can bring me happiness," she replied. "'The fresh air of heaven that breathes coolness on my burning brow, pierces my weak frame, and chills my heart. Yes!'" she continued, gazing upward, as a single star shone forth, and was as suddenly concealed from her view by a passing cloud, "even those resplendent luminaries that once were wont to impart to me their brightness and joy, now veil their faces if I dare look on them. Tell me, oh! tell me, thou beauteous planet!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands, and raising them toward heaven with almost frantic eagerness, as the cloud passed away, and the star again shone forth, "is all hope lost to me? Shall I never behold the blest spirits that inhabit thee, and the celes-

tial glory that surrounds them? May not years of penitence and suffering atone for days of folly and of sin, and when purified from the stain of earth in the furnace of affliction, may I not become as one of them?"

She paused, and her large dark eyes beamed with almost supernatural lustre, as they were still riveted on the planet she invoked. Her companion recoiled as he gazed on the almost unearthly expression of the once lovely but now faded face and form before him. Recovering instantly, however, he said in a tone of raillery,

"Why this is madness,—absolute madness, *ma belle Ismène*. 'This is the consequence of lonely days and idle fancies. Be warned by me, and permit not another bright planet that I could name, to withdraw its gentle beams from the world they should lighten with their smile. Look at those delicate flowers, and remember they are the emblems of youthful beauty. 'Their fragrance and loveliness breathe a charm to-day that we might seek in vain to-morrow; is it not then fair to place them where they shall not blush unseen, and where their sweetness shall not be wasted? Come then,—the gay world awaits but your presence to begin its revelry; pleasure offers her golden cup;—quaff the precious cordial, and it will revive your drooping spirits, and restore the rose to that pale cheek.'—

"It will never bloom again," *Ismène* replied, in a tone of despairing sadness, as she withdrew her eyes from the star on which she had been gazing, and again pressed her hand on her aching brow. "Those flowers shadow forth but too plainly the doom of one, who like them may once have been fair and bright, but which, plucked from the parent stem, will droop and die to-morrow, and be 'cast like loathsome weeds away.' Tempt me no longer, *de Gourville*, with thy golden chalice, which hath ere now

brought poison to my lips;—free me from the costly but galling fetters which now bind me,—give me but a line from your hand to prove that I have been the victim of treachery rather than the willing slave of vice, and I will release you from the charge of one whose charms are gone, and whose spectral image will no longer haunt you. Grant my request, and I will return to my humble home, and—die.”

“Why, fair one,” replied de Gourville, still continuing his tone of raillery, “thou art, indeed, sad and moody to-night. And so, thou wouldst have me confess that the jolly priest who united us, was not so regularly in orders as some that wear a mitre; but at least his head was as cunning if his heart were less simple than many concealed beneath a cowl and cassock, and what does it signify? You have been the gainer;—contrast the luxury and elegance by which you are surrounded with your former obscurity and indigence, and then think if a few scruples cannot be easily silenced.”

“A gainer!” repeated Ismène, while a momentary flush stained her pale cheek with a crimson hue; “a gainer!—yes!—I have bartered peace and innocence,—and oh!” she added, again clasping her hands in agony, “not only these, but the happiness of others that were dearer to me than life:—these, have I exchanged for the glittering dross that now only serves to dazzle my fading vision, and remind me of past happiness, and of future retribution. Give me but what I ask, de Gourville, that I may not be spurned from my poor old father’s threshold, and I will leave this gilded prison-house, and free you from the presence of one, who, I am well aware, is now to you an object of *suspicion*, if not of hatred.”

The dark cloud that was rising on the brow of de Gourville deepened to blackness as the last words passed her

lips. He approached her more nearly, and grasping her slender arm, gazed in her face as if he would have read her inmost soul.

“Suspicion!” he repeated,—“Ay—and not without cause. Thou hast thought, perhaps, simple one, that thou couldst deceive me:—but thou hast to deal with one whose sleepless vigilance can easily baffle thy weak schemes. Yes! thou art right. I *do* mistrust thee, woman! It was my folly that first brought my willing victim hither, and permitted thee to discover the bond of our intimacy. But thou wilt not dare to warn him how dangerous he may find it to trifle with me, or to reveal what our compact keeps secret. Thy own life, as thou art well aware, as well as his, may be in the issue.”

“My life is ebbing fast,” replied Ismène, “and I fear not thy wrath, de Gourville. There is a dread on my mind which overshadows all terror of man. Thy heart is wily, and thy arm is strong,—but why should I fear thee? thou canst but shorten the brief period of my earthly existence; and could I but expiate some of my folly by counteracting thy dark schemes, I would willingly make the poor sacrifice. But as yet I have only warned thy victim, as thou may’st well call him, of his danger, in bestowing his confidence on one, who may, perhaps, feel a still deeper interest in defeating thy schemes than I do; one who, perchance, without a similar warning might have drawn thy vengeance upon his own head. Fear thee?—no! treacherous man!—thou wilt have cause to fear *me*, when my disembodied spirit shall return to haunt thy awe-stricken soul, and remind thee of thy guilt, and of my wrongs.”

She glided from the apartment as she spoke, and as her slight shadowy form melted away in the dim light, de Gourville’s obdurate heart sunk within him, and despite his usual

boldness, he shuddered, as her last words, though low and musical, rung like a death-knell on his ear. For a moment he listened to her retreating footsteps, and then rushed from the house.

He strode silently and moodily through the gay throng assembled near his dwelling, nor stopped until he reached a retired part of the Champs Elysées, where the passions that were boiling in his breast broke forth.

“Fool! madman, that I was!” he exclaimed,—“to trust a woman, and one wronged and injured, with a confidence of such vital importance to me! True, she cannot live long to frustrate my plans, but the mischief may already be accomplished. Time passes, and I must be gone. The dark billows of ocean, with which I have so long been familiar, must roll beneath me ere I again seek my rest. I must away, and that instantly!”

A DECLARATION.

“ Then let the trial come! and witness thou,
If terror be upon me;—only do not thou
Forsake me,—oh, be thou ever near,
’That I may listen to thy sacred voice!”

AKENSIDE.

“ I was awe-struck,
And as I pass’d I worshipp’d.”

COMUS.

THE resolution quickly formed was as rapidly executed, and favouring winds and waves seconded the wishes of de Gourville. But few days elapsed before he was again hovering near Lansdale. This was not the first time he had been in that vicinity since the departure of Medwyn, and de Gourville had succeeded in his ardent wish of forming a slight personal acquaintance with Sir Frederick Lansdale and his lovely daughter.

The passion he felt for Ellen, and which has already been hinted by his own words, was of far less recent date. Many months before the present period, he had seen her, and as he said, worshipped her as a planet that he could never hope to approach. Strange that a heart so obdurate, and ordinarily so cold and selfish, should have been touched by a sentiment as sacred as that of love; but this marvel had been effected by the angelic loveliness of Ellen Lansdale. He had watched her movements,—he had waylaid her

path,—in her morning walks, in her evening rides,—even in the house of God, which otherwise would not have been profaned by his presence, he apparently did homage, not to worship his Creator, but the earthly object of his idolatry. True, he would rather have gazed on her beauty in any other than this hallowed place, for as he marked the holy expression of her countenance, now softened in penitential tenderness, now radiant with the exalted hopes awakened by the promises of future bliss,—as he heard her soft voice mingling in the chant, and hymning the praises of Him, who had created and redeemed her;—it reminded him but too forcibly of the immeasurable distance between them, and his heart died within him.

Still he indulged in that “hope that comes to all,” though he had never received the slightest encouragement either from Sir Frederick Lansdale or his daughter even to continue the visits he had occasionally made them. Always courteous in their manner towards him, there was yet something of coldness, and what might almost have been termed *hauteur* in that very kindness, which his knowledge of the world but too plainly told him, was intended to keep his advances as well as himself at a distance; and the hopes he indulged were founded more on the advantages he expected to derive from the force of circumstances, than from any merit of his own.

Bold, daring, and insolent, in the circle in which he was accustomed to move, his character was altogether changed when within the magic influence of the lovely being who had so completely fascinated him, and his manner then became timid and irresolute. Often when the shadows of evening obscured his path, and screened him from observation, he would approach the dwelling of the idolized but almost dreaded object of his worship, and in moody silence,

pace to and fro, while he endeavoured to summon courage to enter. Often before he ventured to approach, would he watch the lights from the windows, and spend hours in picturing the fair image on which his fancy loved to dwell. But then would come the vivid contrast of the peace and innocence which reigned in that Eden, and the scenes of profligacy and turmoil in which his life had habitually been passed;—and when he thought of the purity of that gentle creature, which awed while it fascinated him, partaking less of earth than Heaven, in comparison with the passions that raged in his own dark soul, the reflection was madness,—and striking his hand on his breast as if he would have driven forth the legion of evil spirits that dwelt within it, he would silently retire, without even seeking admission to her presence.

It was, therefore, amid a variety of conflicting emotions that he presented himself on that threshold, on the evening succeeding that of his return from the continent; nor were they diminished by the reply of the domestic who answered his summons, and informed him that Sir Frederick Lansdale was at that moment absent, but that his daughter was at home. With a faltering step he followed the servant who conducted him to the drawing-room. The door was partly open, and he had time to glance within it before his name was announced.

It was at that hour when the day is drawing to a close, and “parlour twilight” invites to meditation, rather than encourages the continuance of any occupation, however agreeable it may be. Apparently, however, Ellen had found her’s unusually interesting, for the book which she was reading, absorbed her whole attention. A light stand, on which were thrown a few roses, the last of the season, had been removed to the window, as if to catch the

faint rays of the parting day, and on it was placed her book. One fair cheek rested on her hand, and her downcast eyes were riveted on the page before her.

She started from her attitude of fixed attention, as the servant announced a visitor, and rose from her seat, with a glance of inquiry directed to the door, and de Gourville flattered himself that some appearance of agitation marked her manner when she heard his name, and as she courteously returned his formal and constrained salutation. There was something, however, in the quiet and lady-like dignity of her air that chilled his hopes, and wounded his pride; and when she raised her blue eyes to his face, with a look of mingled surprise and inquiry, the glance asked as plainly as words could have done, what could be his object in thus intruding on her presence in so unwonted a manner?

“I regret that my father is absent this evening, Mr. Elford,” she said, as she gracefully offered him a seat, which her visitor perceived, however, was removed to a very inconvenient distance from the one she resumed. “Your visit,” she added, “was, doubtless, intended for him, and he will return soon. I will order lights, and you will, I doubt not, find in this new publication, in which I have been deeply interested, an agreeable resource during the half hour that will probably elapse before his return:” and she was about to ring the bell—

“Pardon me, Miss Lansdale,” said her guest, rising as if to possess himself of the book thus offered, though in reality to approach more nearly to the fair hand that held it, “but permit me to beg that you will first allow me a few minutes conversation with you.”

De Gourville was not mistaken *now* when he thought he observed some agitation in her manner. She looked surprised and perplexed, but politely acceding to his request,

again took the seat she had left, and silently awaited the communication he was about to make.

“I have just returned from the continent,” he began, “and”—

Ellen started, and even by that faint light he perceived that she turned pale.

“It is then as I feared,” she said, “and you have kindly come to warn us of some evil tidings, that may reach us unexpectedly.—Do not, I pray you,” she added, clasping her hands,—“do not keep me in suspense. We have friends there,—very dear friends, from whom we have no recent tidings. Something terrible, perhaps, has occurred!”

She paused and awaited his reply in breathless alarm.

“Calm your fears, Miss Lansdale,” said de Gourville. “Nothing, that I am aware of, has happened, that should agitate you thus. Happy, thrice happy are the friends whose welfare is a source of such deep solicitude on your part! What sacrifice would I not make, to awaken such emotion?” he continued, with a deep, and perhaps an involuntary sigh. “But if among those friends are included, as I presume, Lord Belmore and his son, I have the pleasure to inform you that his lordship has entirely recovered from his recent illness, and that both are in the enjoyment of excellent health, and basking in the smiles of court favour.”

It was fortunate for Ellen that the light in the apartment was too dim to permit her visitor to read her thoughts fully in her ingenuous countenance. But he yet perceived the deep blush that suffused her cheek, and an expression of vexation, at having permitted one, almost a stranger to her, to draw forth the thoughts that were passing in her mind. She sat silent and perplexed, and a pause of some awkwardness ensued until de Gourville resumed.

“I regret,” he said, “that Miss Lansdale should suppose that I can have no other motives in presenting myself here, than those she has been pleased to indicate, though it would certainly be my duty to pay my respects to her father, who has shown me such courtesy, and a pleasure it could not fail to be, to remove any fears from her mind. But my motive was far different. I came”—and he paused as if summoning resolution to proceed—“because it was impossible to restrain the emotions with which my heart is full. I came,—thus to kneel at your feet,—to declare my passion,—to tell you that I worship,—that I adore you!”

Had a thunderbolt from a clear sky fallen near her, it would hardly have surprised Ellen more than this unexpected declaration from one whom she had hitherto regarded in the light of almost a perfect stranger.

“Yes,” he continued in a low but impassioned tone—“beautiful and angelic creature! Thou to whom in imagination, I have so often breathed my vows! I come to offer thee the homage of a heart, which until now hath never known the influence of love,—of a soul, on which thy pure image is so deeply graven, that I would barter all hope of heaven for thy smile. Ellen Lansdale, I repeat I worship, I adore thee!”

The astonishment excited by his first declaration was heightened by the passionate fervour with which these last words were uttered. Ellen trembled, and the blood forsook her cheek, but making an effort to recover her self-possession, she replied with dignified calmness, “These are expressions as unsuitable for me to hear, as for you to utter, Mr. Elford, and I cannot disguise the surprise it occasions me to hear such language addressed to me by one who is almost a stranger. Rise, I entreat you, from that humiliating posture, appropriate only to the worship of the Great

Creator, and offer not that homage to a mortal, which is due only to him."

"A mortal!" exclaimed de Gourville, with increasing vehemence, "say, rather, an angel that hath strayed from her own bright sphere to illumine this dark world by the light of her presence."—"Stay"—he continued, "I implore you to stay and hear me; permit me only to prove the disinterestedness of my affection, and then if I offend you, I will be gone. Stay only one moment," he supplicated, "and I will not renew the subject that has displeased you, without your consent. The communication I shall make, deeply concerns your father."

At the mention of this revered name Ellen paused, and the determination she had evidently formed to leave the room, was shaken.

"On that condition alone," she said, "I will grant your request. But I cannot remain longer, to listen to your first expressions, which I must confess, not only surprised, but shocked me." And she again took her seat on the nearest sofa.

"My task is indeed a difficult one," said de Gourville, "but I will endeavour to fulfil it rather than be thus abruptly bereft of your presence. Nay," he continued, observing her increasing paleness, "do not fear that I will again awaken the agitation I have so unfortunately caused. My communication shall be brief. I have come hither not only to declare the sentiments I have just uttered, but to save your father from ruin;—and to offer to his now portionless daughter my heart, my hand, my fortune;—to restore him to his possessions, which are now mine, and which I cannot enjoy, unless his lovely daughter will consent to share them with me. I am aware," he added, lowering his voice to a softer cadence, "that time may be

requisite for the dissolution of other ties, which may have been previously formed, but even in this, my disinterestedness may be proved. I have an intimate acquaintance with Lord Belmore, and he has given me permission to repeat the sentiment I have often heard him utter, that his son should never, with his consent, wed a portionless bride. Nay, more, he has every reason to believe that his son concurs with him in this sentiment, and that amid the brilliant scenes, and fascinating gaieties, by which he is, at present, surrounded, former attractions, and former attachments have been forgotten."

He paused, and a momentary flush of indignation kindled on Ellen's cheek, as she was about to deny the unworthy charge. The words were rising to her lips,—but her fears whispered that it might, alas! be too true.—Why else, the strange, cold silence that Medwyn had observed since their separation? No line,—no word, had ever reached her from him; her father's kind letters all disregarded,—not a word to assure her that she was still remembered. She had already experienced that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," and now, even that hope was to be blighted; and despite her effort to believe that the whole was perhaps a fabrication designed to further the suit to which she had been an unwilling listener, she felt something like conviction force itself on her mind. The mingled emotions awakened by these strange communications, and the yet stranger manner in which they had been made, entirely overpowered her. The blood rushed in a torrent to her heart,—her head leaned heavily against the casement near which she was sitting, and all consciousness forsook her.

De Gourville sprung forward, and throwing open the window to admit the fresh air, supported her head on the pillow of the sofa on which she reclined. What were not

his feelings as he gazed on this beauteous image of death! what would he not have given to touch with his lips that marble brow or the pale pure cheek! but he dared not:—his dark spirit felt and owned that it would have been profanation,—sacrilege;—he dared not even touch the white hand that lay lifeless by her side.

A deep sigh that seemed to bring relief to her oppressed heart, soon betokened returning animation. She passed her hand feebly over her forehead, as if to aid her recollection of the events that had just occurred. De Gourville had withdrawn to a respectful distance, and no trace remained of the aid he had rendered her, but the open casement, through which the cold evening air blew freshly, and speedily revived her. She rose, and pleading sudden indisposition, was about to leave the room, when the door opened, and Sir Frederick Lansdale entered.

Happily for his paternal solicitude, the gloom of the apartment did not permit him to observe the paleness or the agitation of his daughter. He approached the spot where she stood, and gently chid her for her imprudence in exposing herself to the chilling influence of the night air.

“You have forgotten, my dear child,” he said, “that you were not well this morning; why do you thus run the risk of increasing your indisposition? your hand is cold and trembling, and this room seems to me as comfortless as dark.”

He had said these words before he perceived de Gourville, and immediately apologized for permitting his anxiety concerning his daughter’s health to make him apparently negligent of the rules of good breeding. “You will find it warmer in the library, my love,” he continued to his daughter; “and,”—he added, lowering his voice, so that his words reached her ear alone, “I will be there as soon as this visit is over.”

Ellen needed not this hint to make her escape, and she thankfully availed herself of her father's permission to retire. The entrance of lights and a fresh supply of fuel, diffused an air of more cheerfulness through the room, and as Sir Frederick Lansdale drew his arm-chair toward the fire, he invited his guest to occupy the one on the other side.

“I am fortunate in receiving a visit from you this evening, Mr. Elford,” he said, “as I have been, though unsuccessfully, to seek you. I have, for some time past, been anxious to inform you of my determination respecting the papers you showed me, and copies of which, you placed in my hands, but your absence from the country has hitherto prevented me from doing so. I have examined them with the care their importance demanded, and have consulted with others, who are better skilled than myself in these matters. The result of my own reflections as well as their opinion, has led me to admit the validity of your claim. I cannot doubt my brother's writing, and the witnesses who attest his will are known to me as honourable men, though they are very far distant. By engaging in a vexatious suit, which would, at last, probably be determined against me, I should only plunge myself into deeper embarrassments, and be deprived of the remnant of my property here. You may, therefore consider this estate as your own, and I shall take steps, immediately, to put you in possession of it—”

“It would be a source of the deepest mortification to me, Sir Frederick Lansdale,” replied de Gourville, “if I should be the unfortunate cause of your abandonment of a home to which you are doubtless attached. No,—there are other means of adjusting this important litigation, which may preserve you from such an unnecessary trial, and my conscience from the overwhelming remorse I should feel in

being the unwilling instrument of such a sacrifice. Sir Frederick Lansdale, you have a daughter"—

Sir Frederick started, and de Gourville's keen eye perceived that his still fine form became more erect, and a cloud overshadowed his brow. He was silent for a moment, and then said,

"It would be affectation in me, if I were to pretend that I do not understand your allusion, Mr. Elford; and I feel grateful for the kindness that suggested it. You merit my acknowledgements for your disinterestedness, but it is useless to pursue your suggestion farther."

"Perhaps if you were aware of some circumstances, that have recently come to my knowledge, Sir Frederick, you would not, at least, refuse me the privilege of farther explanation."

His host looked impatient and vexed, but with his usual courtesy yielded to his demand.

"Then," continued de Gourville, "I will only take the liberty of repeating what I believe and know to be the sentiment of Lord Belmore with regard to his son. The engagement contracted by him was with the *heiress of Lansdale*,"—

"It is unnecessary to add more," said Sir Frederick Lansdale, drawing himself up to his full height, while his eye flashed with indignation. "But Lord Belmore might have spared himself the trouble of sending, and me the pain of receiving such a message through a third person. Humiliating as the loss of fortune may be, it will never deprive me of a proper degree of self-respect, and there is no danger that the fulfilment of any engagement previously made will be insisted on. But my daughter, as well as myself, will ere long, be too far removed, to alarm his paternal anxieties, or to encourage the advances of his

friends. It has pleased his majesty, who has heard of my complicated misfortunes, to offer me large and valuable possessions in the western world, which are at his disposal, and I have unhesitatingly accepted the offer. I have survived most of my friends here, and as it appears from your communications, as well as other circumstances, out-lived some friendships that I would willingly have carried with me to my grave. I have, therefore, every inducement to seek another home, and with the blessing of divine providence, I shall do so without farther delay."

The astonishment of de Gourville at this unexpected revelation, may be better imagined than described. A movement so destructive of all his schemes, had never once entered his imagination, busy as it ever was. He saw, in the cold, and almost haughty manner in which his advances had been met by Sir Frederick Lansdale, and the repulsion, and even terror they had awakened in his daughter, a sufficient cause of alarm; but this plan, so calmly and positively announced, that he could not doubt the resolution of his host to carry it into execution, brought with it the death-warrant of all his hopes. He felt that it would be worse than useless to attempt any argument against it, and that if he were destined to succeed, it must be by some other means than those he had already used. The conversation became embarrassing to him, and evidently irksome to his host. He soon took his leave, and retired, to brood over new schemes, and Sir Frederick immediately fulfilled the promise he had made his daughter of following her to the library.

Ellen was sitting at a table near the fire, apparently engaged in reading; but the hand that rested on her brow was closely pressed to it, and her father's watchful eye soon detected the attitude, as well as the expression of deep and

painful meditation. She remained motionless until he approached, and laid his hand gently on hers. Startled from her reverie, she raised her head and looked up in his face, as he bent over her, and then, throwing her arms around his neck, hid her face in his bosom, and burst into tears.

“Ellen, my dear child,” he said, though his own voice faltered as he spoke, “do not give way to such sorrow;—remember the promise you made me when I first warned you of our approaching troubles. You were to be, as you have ever been, my consolation and support.—Where is the firmness you promised to exert?”

“Pardon me for once, dearest father,” she replied, “if I have permitted my feelings to overcome me. There is a wide difference between ‘casting the fashion of uncertain evils,’ and having them suddenly brought forward in all their terrible reality, and in a manner so unexpected, and so appalling. But I trust that I shall be able to fulfil my promise, now that those evil days have come;—and that the merciful being who has watched over me while my life was one continued scene of happiness and prosperity, will not refuse to aid and counsel me, now that some of his blessings are apparently withdrawn. I will trust and believe that ‘though his face may be hidden from us’ for a time, yet ‘with great mercies and with everlasting kindness he will gather us.’”

“It is indeed a consolation to see you thus reasonable, my child,” said her father, kissing the tears from her cheek. “You are too young in affliction for me to find fault with you, for yielding at first to your natural feelings; but you will have to learn the lesson I was early taught, that we must not repine when we receive ‘evil as well as good’ from His hand who sends us all; and may you be enabled

to say as I have done, in troubles greater than these which now threaten us, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!'

"I will—I will do and say all you could wish, with *His* help," said Ellen, again throwing her arms around her father's neck, "only pray for me, dearest father!" she whispered, pressing her cheek to his.

"And *with* you, dearest child," he added, clasping her to his heart as she sunk on her knees by his side.

Sweetly did those mingled prayers arise like incense to that gracious being, whose ear is ever open to the supplication of his afflicted children, and the blessing asked was already bestowed. The balm of consolation they implored, was shed abroad in their hearts, and when the father bestowed his parting benediction on his daughter, there was a degree of peace and tranquillity in the minds of both, that could have been His gift alone, and which proved that even in their troubles they were not forsaken, but had the assurance of being safe "beneath the shadow of his wing."

SURPRISES.

—— “Behold a man much wronged.”

COM. OF ERRORS.

—— “I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in—glittering like the morning star, full of life and splendour and joy.”

BURKE.

UNCONSCIOUS of the events that were occurring at Lansdale, Medwyn, at the urgent and almost peremptory request of his father, was still a sojourner in the metropolis of France. He remained, however, entirely against his will, for beside the anxiety he felt to return, his apprehensions were excited by the cold silence of the dear friends he had left, which was to him as unaccountable as painful. One letter, and only one, from his revered friend had he received since his departure:—the fate of the rest may be surmised without explanation. They had been addressed to the care of his father, whose determination to destroy whatever tokens of remembrance from that quarter might fall into his hands, has already been revealed. He had succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations, and no word or line from Ellen had found its way to his son, since he left his native shore.

There was something, too, in the very atmosphere which surrounded him, that appeared to Medwyn almost contagious. As one who strives to rouse himself from some

pleasing yet baneful vision, he strove to shake off the fetters which threatened to bind him. He felt that the life of busy idleness he was now leading, was altogether inconsistent with the career of honour and of usefulness which had formerly been the object of his ambition, and that he was sacrificing in frivolous amusements that precious time which he felt and owned was given him for higher and nobler purposes. He had almost resolved to break the bonds, which thus held him captive, when he was assured by his father that his wishes would detain him but a few weeks longer, and Medwyn was then content to bear this farther trial of his patience.

He was occupied one evening in communicating the agreeable intelligence of his anticipated return, to his absent friends, when he was interrupted by the entrance of de Vaudemont, whose usually gay and careless mood often led him to seek the company of his associates in the most unceremonious manner.

“Writing—writing!” he exclaimed as he entered, “and the hour has come, and past; positively you will be too late, my dear fellow. All the world are at the *Français* by this time; you see I am *en grand costumé*, why have you been so negligent?”

“Because I have declined going, this evening, de Vaudemont,” replied Medwyn. “The gay world can do very well without me, and in truth I am tired of this round of frivolity, which the beau monde calls pleasure.”

“That is just what I supposed,” returned his lively friend. “And for this reason I have come to make a most solemn proposition. It has been truly said of this metropolis that her churches are theatres, and her theatres churches. You cannot have a better opportunity of perfecting yourself in the language than by frequenting the *Français* and

L'Odeon; and Nôtre-Dame could not offer you a more grave, and certainly not half so imposing a spectacle as we shall see at the former to-night. The tragedy is the *Siège de Calais*, and the royal *loge* will be occupied by their highnesses, the dauphin and the young and beautiful dauphiness, whom you have never yet seen. They returned to the city only yesterday. The enthusiasm is at its height, for the unpopularity of the present king increases with his declining years, and even now, the salutations of the royal family are mingled with praises of Louis Seize, and Marie Antoinette, who, though as yet entitled only to the appellation of the dauphin and dauphine, are regarded as king and queen of the nation."

"Your arguments are powerful," said Medwyn, smiling, "and for the hundredth time, since our first acquaintance, you will have had your way. Amuse yourself here, for a short time, as well as you can, and I will prepare to accompany you."

De Vaudemout paced the room impatiently until Medwyn's return, and tried in vain to confine his attention to the book he had taken from the table. His thoughts, however, were far otherwise occupied than with his apparent anxiety concerning the *spectacle au Français*, which, to a superficial observer, might have seemed to engage them. An expression of deep and painful resolution occasionally flitted over his handsome features, and was as quickly succeeded by one of mistrust and indecision. Twice he laid his hand on the door of the inner apartment, as if determined to unburthen his mind without farther delay, and as often withdrew it, and again, in moody silence, paced the room. He was interrupted by the re-entrance of Medwyn, who signified his readiness to accompany him, and they descended the stair-way together. De Vaudemont's carriage

was still at the *porte cochère*, and they were soon dashing through the illuminated streets.

Medwyn was surprised to find his usually communicative friend disposed to be taciturn and abstracted, and he endeavoured in vain to draw him into his wonted humour. He was about to rally him on this novel mood, as he felt disposed to call it, when he observed, by the lamp-light that occasionally threw its glare on his face, that he was pale and dejected, and evidently endeavouring to summon resolution to speak on some unpleasant theme. Medwyn's thoughts immediately recurred to their interview on the morning of their visit to Fontainebleau, and he awaited in silence the confidence, which he now felt assured that de Vaudemont wished to repose in him. This idea was speedily confirmed by his friend, who laid his hand on his arm, as if to arrest his attention.

"You recollect, Medwyn," he said, "our conversation on the morning of our return from Fontainebleau?"

Medwyn replied in the affirmative.

"I then asked your counsel and your sympathy," continued de Vaudemont, "and I have been endeavouring, ever since, to summon resolution to acquaint you with the circumstances on which I found my claim for both. It is a difficult task, for I have a confession to make, which I fear may lower me in your good opinion. But painful as the revelation will be to me, I feel impelled to confide in you. I must be brief, for our time is short, as I perceive we have already reached the file of carriages before the door of the Français; but the half hour that we shall be detained here will suffice for my purpose.

"I once told you, Medwyn, that I was not always what I now seem to be, and my words were designed to convey more meanings than one. Not only my nature, but my

name has been changed within a few years past; and though you have often expressed surprise at the perfect facility with which I speak your language, you will cease to wonder at it when I tell you that I am, both by birth and education, your countryman. At an early age, I accompanied my parents to India, where I had the misfortune to lose them both; and should have found myself alone in the wide world, but for the kindness of one of my father's friends, on whom fortune had lavished her treasures, and who was blest with a heart as benevolent as his coffers were overflowing. He adopted me as his own son, and under his auspices I came to this metropolis to complete my studies.

“By a singular freak of fortune, it happened, that during my college career, I was instrumental in saving the life of the old Marquis de Vaudemont, whose gratitude was unbounded, and who would content himself with nothing less than lavishing half his splendid income upon me, and bestowing on me his own name, which, as you are well aware, is one of the noblest in the nation. Thus, I have found myself for the second time, an adopted child, but unhappily, an *enfant gâté*. Far different have his counsels been from those of my own father, or the excellent friend, to whose guardianship my early years were confided. The kind-hearted old marquis believes that pleasure is, very naturally and properly, the sole object of youth, and I have unfortunately imbibed his sentiments, though my better judgment, and the remembrance of the days past, both warn me to the contrary. In my eager pursuit of this alluring phantom, which ever eludes my grasp, I forgot what was due to the friend and guardian of my early youth;—nor can I describe the pang I felt, when accounts reached me of his death, and when the last letters he ever wrote, were put into my hands, together with a copy of his will,

bequeathing to me his whole fortune. It was now, however, too late to repair my error, and amid the fascinating gaieties by which I surrounded myself, the reproaches of conscience were stifled. Years since that period have passed by, and I find myself still more eager in my pursuit of happiness, and still farther than ever from my object.

“Now comes the confession I am about to make.—Notwithstanding the lavish bounty of the Marquis de Vaudemont, it was insufficient to support the career of folly in which I was engaged, and I began to be in want of means to compass the extravagance of my wishes. That fatal temptation—the gaming table, presented itself as a resource, and I added one more to the miserable victims who are daily and nightly immolated at it. I fell into the hands of an accomplished villain, who speedily stripped me of all that I could call my own. In a luckless hour, I was persuaded to accompany him to his own house, where, by his specious arts and seductive flatteries, he so far won upon me, that I entrusted to his charge the important papers of which I have spoken, (the letters and the will of my guardian,) which he assured me should only be detained as hostages, to be returned as soon as he was convinced of my determination to abjure the dangerous habits in which I indulged.

“I have since, however, had reason to suspect, that his intentions are altogether different, and that some dark scheme is the result of my imprudence. He carefully eludes my scrutiny, and I am at a loss how to proceed. I have been warned that his designs are of the most desperate character, and that his determination is to assume my real name, to possess himself of my fortune, and for these ends, to attempt my life. This I can readily believe, for his genius is as subtle as his heart is corrupt, and wo to the

unwary youth who falls into such hands as those of de Gourville."

De Vaudemont was surprised at the sudden start with which Medwyn received his last words.

"The name of de Gourville, apparently, is not unknown to you," he resumed, "and in truth, he is but too familiar in the circle we both at present frequent. But you certainly have not the same reasons that I have had for seeking his acquaintance: do you then know him? or can you give me any information respecting his present movements?"

"I have seen him," answered Medwyn, "and my unfavourable opinion, from the first moment I met with him, is now fully confirmed. I can, I believe, aid you in unravelling some of his schemes, but you must first submit to be questioned on one point. May I ask the name by which you are designated in the will of your former guardian?"

"My father's name was Elford," replied de Vaudemont, "and the name of Seymour Elford, which was mine before I adopted that of de Vaudemont, is the one which appears in the will of my guardian."

"And the name of your guardian?"—

"Lansdale," said de Vaudemont. "By this will I am entitled to a splendid estate, which bears the same name; but through the carelessness and indiscretion which have ever been my bane, I took no steps to prosecute my claim, until it has been jeopardized by the folly I have this night confessed to you. I may, however, have some pretension to generosity in delaying it so long, for I learn that the present possessor, the brother of my guardian, is an excellent man, with a lovely daughter, and this consideration will go far to reconcile me to the loss of a fortune (if I should lose it) of which, until now, I have never felt the slightest need."

“Your information has been correct on all these points,” said Medwyn, “and in return for the confidence you have reposed in me, I will not withhold mine from you. The revelation you have made involves consequences to me, which, when you know all, will astonish you as much as your communication has surprised me. I must, however, delay, until our next interview, my communication, for, as you see, your carriage already arrests the file at the door of the theatre; but in the mean time, I must add my warning to that of your mysterious monitress against this strange and desperate man. From what has already fallen under my own observation, you have need to be on your guard!”

They descended the steps of the carriage as he spoke, and entered the Salle du Spectacle of the Théâtre Français.

They found it brilliantly illuminated, and full to overflowing, and all eyes of the gay company assembled there were turned to the royal *loge*, where sat their highnesses, the dauphin and the dauphiness. At the moment Medwyn and de Vaudemont entered the Salle, they heard these words from the stage:

“Le Français dans son prince aime à trouver un frère,
Qui, né fils de l'état, en devienne le père.”

Every eye was raised toward the dauphin, and unbounded applause arose from the assembly. The next instant, the following beautiful line was received with the same marked approbation by the dauphin.

“Rendre heureux qui nous aime, est un si doux devoir!”

As he rose and bowed to the multitude, around and below him, the enthusiasm was at its height;—and when the young and beautiful dauphiness, Marie Antoinette, with a gesture

of the most graceful condescension, acknowledged the sentiments which thus drew the prince toward the nation, and at the same moment expressed the loyalty of the people to their prince, the *salon* echoed with shouts of joy and triumph.

Medwyn looked fixedly at the bright and beautiful being, blazing with the jewels of Austria and France, and yet more radiant in her own dazzling loveliness, as, smiling through her tears, she acknowledged the compliments awarded her, and he could hardly credit the evidence of his own senses. But no!—it was no illusion!—in the fair dauphiness, he beheld the charming incognita of the forest of Fontainbleau!

“That was certainly a glance of recognition, her royal highness bestowed on you, Medwyn,” whispered de Vaudemont, when after the rapturous applause had subsided, and the audience became more composed, Medwyn turned again to catch another view of the beautiful dauphiness. “This may certainly make amends for your unfortunate rencontre with the African page at Fontainbleau, and promises well for your future success at Versailles. But you will soon have an opportunity of making your court, for I see one of her attendants approaching us.”

De Vaudemont’s conjecture proved correct, for an officer of the king’s household at that moment won his easy way to the spot they occupied, and politely signified to Medwyn the wish of her highness, that he should pay his devoirs at the royal loge. He followed his conductor, and was received with the gracious courtesy which always marked the manner of the youthful dauphiness.

“The silence I requested you to observe with regard to my adventure in the forest of Fontainbleau,” said her highness, after Medwyn had paid his court to the occupants of

the loge, "may now be considered as terminated. I have confessed my sins," she continued, with a smile, and glancing at the dauphin, "and have received absolution; though I hardly merited so fortunate an issue when guilty of such imprudence; but no one can imagine the delight of escaping from the rigid rules of *Madame L'étiquette*,* for a wild ramble through the forest. This may serve to extenuate the folly, even of a princess, when it is remembered that she has not yet completed her sixteenth year."

The dauphin added his warm acknowledgements of the timely service her highness had received, and both intimated their wish of seeing her champion the following evening at the *bal à la cour* at Versailles. Medwyn expressed his sense of the honour thus tendered him, and at that moment the *spectacle* terminated, and he withdrew. He found himself separated so completely from de Vaudemont, that it would have been idle to attempt to seek him, and he returned to his hotel alone.

The scenes he had just witnessed, afforded him an ample field for reflection during his solitary drive. The singularity of his accidental interview with the fair dauphiness at first occupied his mind; nor can it be a matter of surprise, that so bright an image should, for a moment, have thrown all other objects into the shade. But his thoughts soon reverted to the earlier events of the evening, and he recalled the communications of de Vaudemont carefully to mind.

It may well be imagined, that he felt the deepest interest in the circumstances which had been thus related to him. From their first acquaintance, he had felt a peculiar kindness for de Vaudemont, whose winning manners and affec-

* La Comtesse de Noailles.

tionate disposition had almost concealed, from the view of his friend, the follies he had so ingenuously confessed. There was a latent spark of virtue and generosity still slumbering in his breast, which Medwyn trusted would not be extinguished, and which, if he could have been removed from the fatal influences by which he was surrounded, might have been fanned into a flame, and aroused the nobler energies of his nature. Under other circumstances, Medwyn would have rejoiced at the prospect of his improved fortunes, and still more at that of his removal from the dangerous scenes with which he was familiar; but his heart sank, when he contemplated the other side of the picture, and beheld the ruin of his best friend, and the probable consequences of that event upon his own destiny. The idea of sacrificing his dearest hopes upon the altar of mammon never once found a place in his thoughts; but he knew the lofty spirit of Sir Frederick Lansdale well, and he feared that even the resolution of the gentle Ellen would be proof against his entreaties to unite her destiny with his, until more propitious days should dawn on their now clouded prospects. What would have been his feelings, had he known what was passing amid the peaceful and happy scenes he had left! But though entirely unaware of the success of de Gourville's dark schemes, a vague apprehension overpowered his mind, and he resolved, at all hazards, to return immediately.

The following morning, he called on his father, and mentioned his wishes and intentions. Lord Belmore received his communication with a clouded brow, but opposed no obstacle to the wishes of his son. He had already received intelligence from de Gourville, of the determination of Sir Frederick Lansdale to leave his native land for the

western world, and he trusted that this design had been already executed. He therefore simply remarked,

“It will be useless to undertake the journey until a few days hence. I have just been looking over the journals, and you will find no packet at Boulogne at present.”

Medwyn satisfied himself of the necessity of patience for a few coming days, and assented to his father's proposition of accompanying him to the *bal à la cour* at Versailles in the evening.

A COURT BALL.

“Speak to me, voice of sweet sound, and tell,
How can'st thou wake by one gentle breath
Passionate visions of love and death!”

HEMANS.

“Hold thy desperate hand!
Art thou a man?”—

ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE hour that brought with it so many bright anticipations of the young, the gay, the beautiful, at length arrived, and the court was unusually thronged. The etiquette, which in former days would have excluded much of the youthful loveliness that now lent its graces to the scene, was waived, in consideration of the age of the dauphiness, and for once,

“Everything young, everything fair,
From east to west was blushing there.”

The palace was brilliantly illuminated, and the marble stairways, and ante-chambers were tastefully and richly ornamented with exotic flowers, whose splendid colours were heightened by the festoons of coloured lamps that sparkled among them. Within, all was blazing with lustres and *or moulu*, paintings, and mirrors. The rich and curious tapestry of the Gobelins, and the rarest and most costly ornaments of foreign climes lent their aid to the gorgeous splendour of the scene. The vacant throne, with its draperies of purple velvet studded with golden *fleurs de lis*, and

surmounted by the jewelled crown, was rendered yet more imposing by the snowy banners, the Bourbon emblems, that floated majestically above it. The *salle du spectacle* had been converted into a *salle de danse*, and in this fairy scene was assembled the chivalry and the beauty of *la grande Nation*. "Bright jewels of the mine" were outshone by brighter eyes, and gold embroidery, white plumes, and jewelled swords, were mingled with the lighter costumes of the fair. The murmuring voices of the gay assembly were scarce heard amid the pealing music of the orchestra, save when some low, breathing, flute-like symphony preceded a superb flight of the opera.

Suddenly, the music ceased, and all eyes were turned to the folding doors, which were thrown open, and his majesty entered, followed by the dauphin, and the youthful dauphiness. Arrayed in a robe of the lightest and most delicate texture, and of the purest white, with no ornament but her own matchless loveliness, she moved, like a being of another sphere, through the brilliant and gracefully yielding throng. Happy were those who could catch her bright smile, and happier still, those on whom a gentle word or gesture of recognition was bestowed. Among this favoured number were our young hero, and his friend de Vaudemont, who received a gracious salutation.

"How do you like our fête," said the king to his minister of finance, near whom they were standing. The minister bowed low, and the word "*Impayable*," alone reached their ears. His majesty smiled, and passed on.

"*Impayable!*" repeated de Vaudemont, when he was out of hearing: "A bold reply for a financier to his sovereign; but it probably concerns the former far more than the latter. It is the affair of the minister to raise money;—the king has only the trouble of spending it, which from my

experience, is by far the easiest part of the task. But what have we here?" he continued, as a small party approached.

The group that drew near them consisted of eight or ten persons, habited in the costumes of the different Swiss cantons, and each provided with some musical instrument.

"This is probably a fancy of the dauphiness for varying the scene," continued de Vaudemont. She has a romantic turn, and has already been playing the shepherdess in the park of the palace. I trust, however, that these are Parisian or Italian connoisseurs under the mask of peasants, for though the Swiss music is charming in the open air, and softened by the dashing of a waterfall for its accompaniment, with the splendours of Alpine scenery to lend it enchantment, it is detestable in a gilded *salon*."

He took Medwyn's arm as he spoke, and they followed the musical group into an apartment withdrawn from the ball room. A crowd speedily followed, and they found themselves in "contact inconvenient" with the musicians, who impatiently awaited the permission to occupy a separate space allotted to them. During these moments, Medwyn occupied himself in surveying the costumes near him, and his glance encountered a pair of large dark eyes fixed wistfully on his face. There was something of mournful and beseeching sadness in their expression that riveted his gaze, as he strove to remember where he had seen that face before.

Longer he might have gazed in vain, but for the sudden start of de Vaudemont, who, at that instant, released his arm, and in a low voice pronounced the name of "Ismène." His memory thus aided, Medwyn recalled the scene in which he had first met with de Vaudemont, and though without this assistance he might not have recollected the

minstrel, whose plaintive notes had enchained his ear that morning in the bosquet of the garden, he now remarked the same fragile form and white hand that had swept the guitar. To the simple and sombre costume of Argovie, she had added, in the place of the black riband that binds the bright locks of the peasant, a black veil, which floated on either side, and presented a strange and sad contrast with the cheek of marble paleness it seemed designed to shade. Startled at the sound of her own name, though uttered in a voice so low that it would have been lost on a less delicate ear, the minstrel withdrew her eyes, and looked on de Vaudemont. Bending forward, as if to extricate the lute she held from the throng near her, she said to him in a tone as low as his own,

“Ismène is not then concealed by the costume of Argovie or the black veil of the nun. But I came hither to warn thee. Amid these gilded and illuminated halls,—beneath these blushing wreaths of flowers, there lurks a serpent,—Adhémar de Vaudemont, beware!”

The last word alone fell on Medwyn's ear, as the minstrel pronounced it with more energy than the rest. He observed that de Vaudemont changed colour, and a slight shudder passed over his frame, as the words of ominous import fell from her lips. Another moment, and she had mingled with the musicians, who were now occupying the space allotted for their reception.

Their first prelude convinced the listeners, that the pretended Swiss peasants were the finest *artistes* that the sunny south or the kindred spirit of harmony in the north could supply, and their exquisite skill elicited the unbounded applause of the enraptured audience. Solos, duetts, trios succeeded, and it appeared impossible to satisfy the unwearied listeners. At length, after a few minutes' pause,

several of the musicians approached the spot where stood Ismène, her long black veil half shading her face, and seemingly unconscious of the passing scene. The proposition they made apparently struck her with terror, for she shrunk back; but the entreaties of the musicians were seconded by the audience, and the wish, expressed by so many united voices, sounded like a command. With a slow and faltering step she approached the harp, which was brought forward, and as she touched the strings, the soft and tremulous notes were scarce heard throughout the breathless audience. A hectic flush rose on her cheek, her eye brightened as she seemed to collect herself for the trial of her skill, and the genius of the Improvisatrice burst forth. The chords of the harp, first low and tremulous as the summer wind, swelled into the most exquisite harmony, and breathed the very soul of music. "The voice! the voice!" exclaimed the audience, when a moment's pause admitted of their entreaty. The bright flush on the minstrel's cheek had subsided, and it had resumed the marble hue. She pressed her hand on her brow with an expression of suffering, and as if to recall her wandering thoughts, and after a low and plaintive symphony, those thoughts apparently came forth in words:

The light is blazing in bower and hall,
And the wine-cup sparkles high,
The garlands are wreath'd, and soft music's call
Invites to the revelry.

It is not in scenes of such dazzling light
That the nightingale's song is heard,
The stars' faint glow, and the moon's pale light,
Are lov'd by the pensive bird.

By the deep lone dell, and the silvery stream
Is her song,—and the woodland glade,

And the mossy couch where the fairies dream,
And the quivering forest shade.

Why call ye the sombre bird of night
Amid gilded halls to roam?
Her voice is hush'd—till she wings her flight
Back to her own lov'd home.

But the spoiler's ruthless hand was there,—
Desert that place of rest,—
The scenes she lov'd still are soft and fair,
But to her they are all unblest.

Yet once more would she turn to that silvery stream,
And the dark wood, waving high—
Invoke the bright spell of her spirit's dream,—
Breathe her last note,—and—die!

As the last words of the minstrel were murmured forth in a cadence, "soft, gentle and low," she clasped her hands on the harp over which she leaned, and rested her forehead on them. The attitude, and the paleness of her cheek, displayed so evidently the deep feeling which had abstracted her from all around, that a breathless silence ensued, and for a few moments the idea prevailed, that her words might have been prophetic, and that with these last strains of touching harmony, her spirit might have winged its flight. But again she raised her head,—the hectic flush rose in her cheek, and the lustre of her dark eye once more shone forth. She swept her hand over the strings, and a strain, deep, rich, and solemn, accompanied her words.

Why call ye the child of the mist and storm
Amid blushing flowers to dwell,—
Or why should the seer to an angel form
A vision of wo foretell?

A TALE OF OUR ANCESTORS.

Why trembled the earth in her caves afar,
 Why mingled the lightning's gleam
 With the first bright ray of this gentle star,
 When a dark world hail'd her beam?

See ye a form in a robe of light
 With seraphic beauty crown'd;
 The cheek is fair, and the smile is bright,
 And the laughing loves are 'round.—

A palace her's,—and a kingly hall,
 And fair knights around her bow;
 The festal train—and the garlands—all,—
 And a crown awaits her brow.

See ye those sunny locks that wave,
 And the hope in her radiant eye?
 Alas! for the promise her bright youth gave,
 Too soon is it doom'd to die!—

Ah, why should a brow so soft and fair,
 And the lightly wreathed smile
 Be seal'd by the ruthless hand of care,
 And forget their gentle wile?—

Not as the murmuring summer stream
 That exhales in the sun's bright ray,
 Not as the fount in that ardent beam,
 Will her bright life melt away.

The broken flower on the tempest's wing,
 When the wild storm rages high,
 The coral wreath that the surges fling,
 Shadow forth her destiny.—

On the tempest of human passions borne
 While the deep bell sounds its peal,—
 To her princely home she will ne'er return,—
 Wo for the blood-red steel!—

The rich and solemn strain was hushed,—but the dark eye of the minstrel rested on the “seraphic form,” the theme of her prophetic song. There was something in its deep, tender, and mournful gaze that riveted the young and beautiful dauphiness to the spot. Accustomed, from her earliest years, to associate the idea of misfortune with her destiny, the sad and ominous warnings sank on her heart like the death-peal that rung out in the song of the Improvisatrice. The bright smile forsook her lip,—she turned pale, and would have sunk to the floor, but for the sustaining arm of the dauphin, who was standing near her.

All eyes were turned towards the spot where she stood. The music ceased, and a crowd of eager courtiers pressed forward to offer their aid and sympathy.

“Her highness should not be thus moved by the words of the Improvisatrice,” said a deep voice amid the throng, “she is mad.”

The words were uttered in too low a tone to reach the ear of the dauphiness, but they were soon repeated, and echoed from lip to lip. The interest, first awakened on behalf of the minstrel, was renewed, and eager glances sought the spot she had occupied a moment before. It was deserted—the Improvisatrice had disappeared.

“That strain was sad and wild,” said de Vaudemont, musingly, as with Medwyn he descended the steps of the château that led to the garden. “It had indeed, ‘a dying fall,’ though rich and soft as the poet’s dream of ‘the sweet south upon a bed of violets, stealing and giving odour.’ There was something of deep solemnity in it, oppressive and ominous in the midst of so dazzling a scene. I feel happy to escape from its influence to the more quiet though less brilliant one on which we are now entering.”

As he spoke they reached the garden, which, though

illuminated in that part of it nearest the palace, where the *jets d'eau* were playing in the light of the variegated lamps around them, yet presented an aspect less inviting than in a warmer season.

It was, however, a mild winter evening, and Medwyn found relief from the oppressive atmosphere he had just left, in the cool breeze which fanned his brow, as they entered one of the superb alleys, bordered with towering *marronniers*. The tall and stately trees, despoiled of their foliage, waved in the wintry wind, and threw their dark shadows across the pathway, giving alternate light and shade to the groups of statuary, and pure white of the Grecian vases on either side of the walk.

“The Improvisatrice is, apparently, a friend of yours,” said Medwyn, after a few minutes silence, during which de Vaudemont seemed to be occupied with his own reflections. “There is something of mystery in the deep solicitude she manifests for you, that may well awaken a corresponding degree of interest on your part, and the ‘meek intelligence’ of those dark beseeching eyes, would move a heart of less sensibility than yours. But can there be any truth in the rumour we heard around us before we left the music room?”

De Vaudemont shook his head. “Ismène is not mad,” he said, “though the wildness of the thoughts she sometimes breathes forth in these soul-subduing strains might justify such a suspicion. She is not mad, but her fancies are often visionary and enthusiastic; and for this reason I do not heed the warnings she sometimes addresses to me, as much as prudence might dictate. Her story is sad and touching, and adds another link to the chain of de Gourville’s crimes. Her most ardent wish, now, is to return to the home, from which, in a luckless hour he induced her to stray, and there to terminate her existence, which, as may

be easily judged from her pale cheek and fragile form, cannot be of long duration. Several times she has warned me, as she did this evening, when you probably heard her words; and if I mistake not, you received a mysterious billet from her hand soon after your arrival in the metropolis. Of this she herself informed me, after she perceived that its effect had not been what she had hoped, and that despite her kind counsel we had become associates and friends. She had discovered that de Gourville bore a deadly hatred towards you; and had even employed spies to watch all your movements; and she feared that, if to this feeling were superadded a suspicion of our mutual confidence, it might prove dangerous, if not fatal to you as well as to me, for she seems but too well acquainted with his recklessness and desperation. By preventing any acquaintance from being formed between us, she hoped to lull the suspicions of de Gourville, until she could inform us of his schemes; which he had, contrary to his usual cunning, confided to her, but which my confessions of the last evening have partially brought to light, and which you told me would be yet more fully developed by yourself, when we had another opportunity of conversing without restraint."

"My promise can be fulfilled at the present moment," replied Medwyn, "perhaps better than at any other, for we may not again speedily have such an opportunity of private conversation. I shall leave the metropolis in a few days, to return to the friends I have left, and though I may be the bearer of sad tidings, I shall be well assured of a kindly welcome. You will be surprised to learn, de Vaudemont, that the brother of your guardian, Sir Frederick Lansdale, the excellent man whose fortunes are to be ruined by your claim, is my best, and most revered friend; and his daughter,"—Medwyn paused; there was something too

deep and pure in the emotions that fondly clustered around that loved image, to permit them to be the theme of ordinary communication. Apparently, however, de Vaudemont divined all that was passing in his mind, for he grasped his hand, and looked earnestly in his face, as if he would have read his thoughts.

“Medwyn!” he exclaimed, “can it be possible?—and should I not, then, in recovering this estate, mar, nay, perhaps entirely destroy your prospects? Yes! it might, indeed, be so, for I know the pride of family and of fortune, and I should, perchance, be enriched at your expense. Hear me!” he continued, as a glow of enthusiasm mantled on his fine features. “As far as I have swerved from the paths of wisdom and of virtue, I trust the precepts of my early and beloved monitors have not been entirely obliterated, and that one spark of generosity is yet left in a heart that may have been rendered but too callous by self-indulgence. I will not accept of this gift of fortune, even if it is placed at my disposal. Give me but your friendly counsel, and your own example, and with the blessing of heaven, I will, at once, break the ignoble bonds by which I have so long been enslaved. My income will be amply sufficient for the rational life I propose to lead, and if this will should be restored to me, or the plots of its present possessor held up, as may now easily be done, to the scorn and derision of the world, I will scatter its fragments to the winds of heaven, and demand in return for the sacrifice only your friendship and confidence.”

Medwyn silently and warmly returned the pressure of the hand that rested in his own.

“I appreciate fully these noble sentiments,” he said, “and I trust your generosity may be rewarded by a firm adherence to your wise and excellent resolutions. The

sacrifice you contemplate would be great; and yet I do not for a moment doubt your willingness to make it. From my first acquaintance with you, de Vaudemont, I have felt for you a fraternal tenderness, for I at once perceived the slumbering sparks of virtue and generosity that might be awakened in your heart. You will soon have an opportunity of calling them into exercise by a complete change in your mode of life. Sir Frederick Lansdale will never be induced to accept the sacrifice you propose making for his benefit; and even were the proof of your right to his estate destroyed by your hands, so delicate is his sense of honour, that he would feel himself only the more imperatively called on to relinquish it. But it will be to him—to us all—a source of congratulation to know, that his successor is worthy the gift which providence has been pleased to bestow on him, and that a noble and generous spirit will still preside at Lansdale.”

He paused, and for some moments they walked on slowly and silently. Absorbed in their reflections, they had turned from the principal alley into a narrower side walk, where the glare of the lamps around the jets d'eau, no longer enlightened the obscurity, and they were guided only by the whiteness of the path, and the occasional gleam of a marble vase or statue, which marked their way.

Medwyn's reverie was interrupted by a light and stealthy step behind him. They turned at that instant, with the design of finding their way back to the more frequented part of the garden, when the figure of a man, though almost lost in the dark shadows around, glided hastily by them. A few moments more passed, and Medwyn's ear was again startled by the same stealthy footstep which had aroused him from his meditations. He turned quickly, to assure himself whether it were indeed an eves-dropper, or only the

swaying of the gigantic trees on either side, when a sudden flash of light illuminated the darkness, and the report of a pistol awoke the echoes around. Medwyn's sudden movement, and the brilliancy of the light, conspired to reveal the assassin. As he had raised the instrument of death for its murderous aim, the flash displayed, too fully to be mistaken, the dark features of de Gourville.

With the firm determination and manly presence of mind, which, on occasions of difficulty and danger, always characterized him, Medwyn sprang forward, and arrested the offender, who was hastily retreating, by seizing his arm. His antagonist, however, with wily subtlety, instantly unfastened the thick mantle which was wrapped in heavy folds around it, and as Medwyn was about to secure his prisoner, dexterously released his arm, and drew another pistol from his breast. The ball slightly grazed Medwyn's cheek, and in another moment the assassin fled, leaving to his antagonist only the pistol and the mantle he still held, as the trophies of his unavailing victory.

The event, which it has taken far more than a minute to record, passed in less time, and Medwyn returned to the spot where he had left de Vaudemont. The almost instinctive feeling of apprehension which oppressed his mind was heightened by the discovery that he was no longer there, and from hearing a deep sigh, or rather groan near the place where he stood, he found de Vaudemont leaning heavily against one of the large marble vases on the side of the walk. One hand supported his drooping head, and with the other he vainly endeavoured to staunch the vital stream that flowed freely from his side.

"Medwyn," he said, in a faint voice, as his friend, with an exclamation of grief and alarm, sprung to his assistance, "I am wounded—dangerously I am certain—mortally, I

fear;—stretch me on the earth, which may perhaps be my last bed, and call for aid.”

Medwyn was about to accede to the request, when a number of persons, attracted by the report of the pistols, appeared. Lights were instantly procured, and the rumour of this appalling event was rapidly circulated, spreading dismay and agitation through the scene that had, a moment before, been all gaiety and happiness.

The first impression of the bystanders was, that the wounded man was the victim of a duel, and that Medwyn was the aggressor. Some hints to this effect reached the ear of de Vaudemont, and though each word he spoke seemed to accelerate the current in which his life was apparently ebbing away, he raised his voice to deny the charge.

“Let not my death,” he said, “if it is the will of Providence that I die, be laid to the charge of my best friend. I solemnly believe Meurice de Gourville to be the author of this foul deed.”

Medwyn’s testimony was needless, though even without the proofs in his possession, his own conviction of de Gourville’s guilt could not have been shaken. These, however, placed it beyond controversy. Successful as audacious in crime, he had not provided for the contingency of being arrested by a hand as strong and a heart as bold as his own, and both the pistol and the mantle bore the initials of his name. Orders were instantly issued for his arrest, while de Vaudemont was carefully and tenderly conveyed to a distant apartment in the palace, where every care, that friendly kindness and interested skill could bestow, was freely lavished on him. The wound was, as he had surmised, “dangerous—perhaps mortal.” Such was the unsatisfactory answer of the surgeon to Medwyn’s anxious inquiries.

THE LAST HOUR.

“Is death at distance? No—he hath been on thee,
And given sure earnest of his final blow!

YOUNG.

THE contrast between the evening of a brilliant fête, and the morning which succeeds it, has often and skilfully been drawn, and all who have participated in these scenes of gaiety, must have felt and owned the justice and fidelity of the pictures, sketched by the hand of the poet as well as the artist. There is something inexpressibly sad in the idea of withered garlands,—extinguished lights,—hushed music,—“the banquet hall deserted,”—and above all, in the deep silence which succeeds the gay and busy hum of the recently assembled multitude.

The *bal à la cour* of Versailles was terminated at an earlier hour than usual, for the happiness of the young dauphiness had been overcast by the ominous and prophetic song of the Improvisatrice; and the startling event of an attempt on the life of de Vaudemont, whose winning manners and elegant person had rendered him a favourite in the court circle, effectually banished all thought of enjoyment from her mind. The scene gradually changed,—group after group disappeared,—the stentorian voices, that announced the titled names at the doors of the palace, became less frequent, and the thundering sound of wheels, and the stamping of impatient steeds died away. Within, all became equally silent and deserted. The marble stairway no longer

echoed with voices of gay salutation, or with the sound of multitudes of delicate and satin-clad feet,—the rich and undulating draperies of silken tapestry no longer waved over the plumes and diamonds that had lent their grace and brilliancy to the throng beneath them; and even the attendants, wearied by the excitement of their recent exertions, retired, leaving the scene to darkness and oblivion.

How many young hearts, that had entered these splendid halls full of hope and pride, withdrew from them in weariness and lassitude! and some there were to whom the change was as great, as to the gay multitude assembled in later days at Brussels, where the pealing of the cannon that announced the tremendous conflict at Waterloo, caused the ball-room to be exchanged for the battle-field.

Ideas, such as these, were rapidly passing through the mind of Medwyn, as he sat by the couch of his wounded friend, and gazed on his pale features, beautiful even in the semblance of death. He slept,—but the slumber was heavy and agitated, and the frequent contraction of the polished brow announced suffering and danger, and proved that his sleep was rather the effect of the anodyne, administered to allay nervous excitement, than a natural visit of the “sweet restorer.” The cold gray light of morning stole through the closed shutters, and gave a “deeper hue of paleness” to the brow on which Medwyn’s eye was riveted. He touched the hand that was listlessly stretched on the couch; the pulse was feeble and fluttering, and the touch, gentle as it was, startled the slumberer. He opened his eyes, and looked, as if unconsciously, around. His gaze at length rested on Medwyn, and a faint, a very faint smile illumined his face. He was apparently making an effort to speak, when Medwyn prevented his intention by laying his hand on his lips. The sign was understood, for he raised his

own feeble hand, and pressed that of his friend yet more closely to his lips. There was something inexpressibly touching in this mute acknowledgement of the tender solicitude that Medwyn had felt and manifested ever since the occurrence of the sad event which now drew him to the couch of de Vaudemont, and despite his efforts to prevent it, a tear fell on the wan cheek of his friend. The intensity of the emotion that might have overpowered him, was happily somewhat dissipated by a low rap at the door, and he rose to admit the surgeon, and physician, who came to renew their visit. The attendance of the latter was given at the special request of Medwyn, who had long known and prized him, not only for the extent of his medical skill, which his success had placed beyond all cavil, but for his amiable deportment, and sterling worth. He had, for many years, attended Lord Belmore and his family, before his present sojourn on the continent.

“I am happy to relieve you from your painful duty, Mr. Medwyn,” said the benevolent and kind-hearted physician, “but I fear I am a messenger of evil as well as good. I shall be compelled to banish you for the rest of the morning, for I regret to announce that your father has another attack of the malady from which he has so recently been relieved, and requests me to summon you to him without delay. I am aware of the deep anxiety you feel for our patient,” he continued, lowering his voice to a tone still softer than that in which he had at first spoken, as he observed the solicitude with which Medwyn regarded his friend. “I will not give you hopes that may, perhaps, never be realized, but I will promise to deal with you honestly and fairly. The case is one of the greatest difficulty and danger, but you may be assured that the most ceaseless vigilance and attention will

be united with whatever medical skill I possess in his behalf."

Medwyn pressed the hand of the excellent man without speaking. His heart was too full to trust his voice. He knew that Dr. M. was a man of few words, but that his promises were sacred, and that whatever human skill and benevolence could effect, he had secured for de Vaudemont. With one more anxious glance at the couch, where his friend had again sunk into a disturbed slumber, he departed.

He found his father ill, as the kind physician had represented, but suffering more from the effects of nervous and mental agitation, than from his usual bodily infirmity. His manner was embarrassed, and even distressed, as Medwyn approached and with filial affection and courtesy inquired after his health. Recovering soon, however, his wonted self-possession, he answered coolly,—

"I am better this morning, far better than I was a few hours ago. The shocking event of which we received the news last night brought on my attack. Our first account here was that you were killed."

Medwyn's heart was deeply touched by this expression of solicitude for his safety. His father's manner had always been cold and reserved towards him, and he had never before manifested such parental solicitude. Alas! had he known, that the illness which he thought was the effect of anxiety for his welfare was brought on by the stings of a troubled conscience, and the idea that one who had been honoured with the friendship and confidence of Lord Belmore should be arraigned as an assassin, how would it have chilled his generous emotions! but the real causes of his father's nervous excitement were concealed, and Medwyn gratefully

acknowledged the kindness thus apparently expressed toward him.

“I am happy to hear these expressions of filial affection and duty, Percy,” said Lord Belmore, “for I am about to put your generosity to the proof. Aware of the anxiety you naturally feel to return home, I should not, under circumstances less urgent, prefer my present request, which is, that you will accompany me to Italy, and remain there with me two or three months.”

Medwyn started at this unexpected proposition, so different was the disposition he had already, in his own mind, made of those coming months. Lord Belmore had anticipated the embarrassment and unwillingness with which his claim would be met. He looked fixedly at the changing countenance of his son, and then, with a sigh, withdrew his eyes.

“It was an idle hope,” he said, “the choice between a father and a dearer object is easily made. I must then go alone,—live alone,—perhaps die alone. I shall strive to be resigned to my fate.”

The last words were spoken in a low tone, and as if the speaker were soliloquizing;—but they fell with painful vividness on the ear for which they were designed. Had his father demanded such a sacrifice in an imperative tone, it might have awakened a spirit of resistance to a requisition so unreasonable; but there was an irresistible eloquence in that languid form and those subdued tones, that arrested Medwyn’s eye and ear.

“Yes!” continued Lord Belmore, “you have now a right to be master of your own actions; I have no design to command, and it is, perhaps, in vain to entreat.”

“My father!” exclaimed the young man, overwhelmed by the conflicting emotions which agitated his mind, “I

will do anything you wish, but allow me one privilege first;—that of returning home for a few days, and I will then endeavour to prove my gratitude for your paternal kindness.”

“The sacrifice will then be unavailing,” replied Lord Belmore. “I am commanded by my physicians to leave this place immediately, and to go, even before recovered from my present attack, by short and easy stages, to a more congenial clime. The winter is just approaching, and I shall have time to reach the south before its rigour is severely felt. The anxiety I feel to hasten my departure is, moreover, heightened by the circumstances attendant on the attempted assassination of de Vaudemont. Should de Gourville be arrested, as the vigilance of the police gives every assurance he will be, you will most probably be detained to give evidence against him, as the only material witness. A few more days, and the only opportunity I may ever enjoy of ameliorating my health, nay, perhaps, of saving my life, will be lost.”

Lord Belmore ceased speaking, and again looked earnestly at his son. The latter part of his appeal carried with it the conviction of truth, for his wasted form and sunken cheek spoke more eloquently than words could have done.

“I do not insist on a definitive answer at this moment, Percy,” he continued. “I shall await your decision a few hours hence. I must endeavour to rest for the present, for my own resolution to follow the advice of my physicians is taken. I shall depart for the south immediately.”

Medwyn retired with a heavy heart from the sick chamber of his father. His mind was embarrassed almost to distraction by the variety of emotions with which it was agitated. The unaccountable silence of his distant friends perplexed and alarmed him, and he had heretofore only been reconciled

to remaining on the continent, by the prospect of a speedy return to them. What might they not think of his continued absence at a moment when he so ardently desired to prove the depth and sincerity of his attachment?—would they not have reason to suspect him of duplicity? and then how could he plead his cause when so fearful a distance separated them? He well knew that it would demand all,—nay, more he feared, than all,—his eloquence to reconcile Sir Frederick Lansdale to his union with his now portionless daughter; and even the guileless and confiding Ellen would have but too much cause to distrust the sincerity of his professions, if he remained so long absent at a period fraught with difficulty and distress to herself as well as her loved parent.

Then came the image of de Vaudemont. His pale face and inanimate form seemed to reproach him with the cruelty of leaving him to his probable fate. It was true, that their attachment was of recent date, but there was something in the confiding affection which de Vaudemont seemed to bear to him, that deeply touched his heart; and he had every reason to hope, that if his life were, by the mercy of Providence, spared, he would rise from his couch of languishing, a wiser and a better man. The sacrifice he had contemplated, and so fervently expressed his determination to make, during their conversation just before the attempt of de Gourville upon his life, proved not only the depth of his attachment to himself, but the noble generosity of a soul that had only been warped from its original excellence, and which, under different circumstances from those in which he had been placed, might have brought to maturity the fruits of those seeds of virtue and wisdom which had been in his early life implanted in it. He had anxiously and affectionately sought the counsel and friend-

ship of Medwyn, whom he evidently regarded as the monitor to guide his future course, and preserve him from the snares in which he had, alas! been so fatally entangled. To leave him now, on his couch of pain, perhaps of death, would seem to be treacherous as well as cruel. But then,—a father's wishes,—entreaties,—his life perhaps dependent on the faithful discharge of filial duty.

“The sacrifice is great, indeed!” said Medwyn internally, with a heavy sigh, “but it is one which heaven will regard with approbation. In ordinary cases, ‘it is a small matter to be judged of man,’ but in the present instance, those whom I most prize and love will have too much reason to condemn my apparent neglect. Painful as it is, however, I will not swerve from the path of duty.—My decision is made.”

“I await your commands, my father,” he said, when, after an absence of a few hours, during which he had again visited de Vaudemont, he re-entered Lord Belmore's chamber. “I have been to bid an adieu, perhaps a final one,” and his voice faltered,—“to my wounded friend, though I have, at least, the consolation of knowing, that he is in faithful and competent hands. I am now ready to depart at any hour you may indicate.”

Lord Belmore knew too well the strict principles of duty, by which his son was ever guided, to have doubted the result of his reflections on the proposition he had made. His preparations were already completed, and ere the day was terminated, they were several leagues distant from the metropolis.

The season was one which presented no temptation to the traveller to linger on the route, and the anxiety of Lord Belmore to reach his destination during the fine weather, which happily favoured their journey, stimulated him to a

degree of exertion that under other circumstances he would have believed it impossible for him to make. The barriers, which nature has placed between the northern and southern regions of Europe, were passed with far less difficulty than they had apprehended, and our travellers soon found themselves established in Florence.

Had Medwyn's mind been more at ease, a visit to this land of poetry and romance, of music and of song, would have been to him a source of the highest gratification. Italy is emphatically the land of music;—even the ordinary greetings of the peasantry, as in their classic costumes they return laden with the spoils of the vineyard to their humble homes, have something of the rich harmony of recitative music. Gladly would Medwyn have availed himself of the opportunity of studying those splendid specimens of art left in this favoured land by the hand of a Raphael,—a Correggio,—a Titian, and by all the illustrious band who have left the impress of an art, which, exerted by them on the holiest themes, may almost claim a right to the sacred epithet so often bestowed on it, of “divine.” This is the charm which gives to the *Madonna de la Ségiola* a superiority even over “the statue which enchants the world.” Venus de Medici cannot boast the holy beauty that breathes in every lineament of the mother of the infant Saviour.

But beside the anxiety that oppressed the mind of Medwyn in his waking hours, and haunted his restless couch, the attention required by his father's illness, occupied almost his whole time. The mind of Lord Belmore was evidently ill at ease, and deprived as he now was of the resources of society that offered him such attraction in the metropolis of France, he became restless and impatient. Rome,—Naples, were visited and forsaken, and even the “City of the Hundred Isles,” though farther north than

the advice of his physicians warranted, was, for the sake of variety, made the place of their sojournment. The chilling breezes of the Adriatic soon warned the invalid of his imprudent choice, and Venice was exchanged for Milan. There, for a while, he found relief in the charms of a society, of which the illustrious family of Visconti then, as now, were the highest ornaments.

“I believe it is in vain to deceive myself longer, Percy,” said he with a sigh, as he sat one evening near an open window to enjoy the first breath of spring that was wafted through the orange grove near it. “This air is soft and balmy, but yet it is not enough so to revive me. Close the window, and draw your chair closer to mine. I feel strangely oppressed this evening;—my voice would be lost to you at that distance.”

Medwyn immediately replaced in his portfolio the drawing materials with which he had beguiled a tedious hour, in sketching the façade of a neighbouring cathedral, and approached the spot where his father sat. There was an unusual degree of agitation in Lord Belmore’s manner, which alarmed his son, and he was about to ring for attendants, when his father arrested him, and by a silent gesture indicated his wish that he should occupy the seat near him.

“You have been attentive and dutiful to me, Percy,” he said, “during my stay in this foreign land. Nay,” he continued, after a moment’s pause, “why should I limit it to that period? You have never failed in the duty you owe to me; would to God I could make a similar boast of my fidelity to you!”

Again he paused, and his agitation became extreme.

“Do not interrupt me, Percy,” he continued, as his son was about to speak. “I know what you would say. The goodness of your heart would palliate my errors;—but listen

to me. The warnings I have received, that I have not long to live, have been recently too often repeated to be disregarded. Until recently I have never known how much I lost by keeping you at such a distance from me, and your affectionate attentions have softened a heart, alas! but too obdurate. Can you believe, that the generous sacrifices you have made to me have been repaid by treachery and deception? yet it is even so:—The pride of earthly distinction and the world's wealth are fading before me, and I see their vanity now that I am in sight of "that bourne whence no traveller returns." I have wronged you, Percy,—and those that well deserve to be nearer and dearer to you than a father, whose duties have never been fulfilled towards you. With shame and grief do I make the confession,"—he paused as if to recover strength to proceed, and a bright spot for a moment burned in his cheek. "I have been instrumental in separating you yet more widely from them than even by the fearful distance that the land and sea have spread between you. I have destroyed the memorials of affection and remembrance that on either side were entrusted to my hands."

He covered his face with his handkerchief as he spoke, for the look of agonized reproach, which he read in the ingenuous countenance of his son, was more than he could bear.

"I have more to say to you," he said, "but this painful theme overpowers me. Leave me for the present, Percy. When you know all, I fear you will regard me as indeed less than a father;—but you will at least,—forgive me."

The last words were spoken in a broken and tremulous voice, and they penetrated Medwyn's heart. He sank on his knee and pressed his father's emaciated hand to his lips.

"Rather let me ask forgiveness," he exclaimed, "for

my rebellious heart has, I fear, been but too apparent in the manner in which I have received this appalling intelligence. Forgive and bless me, my father, before I leave you!"

Lord Belmore laid his trembling hand silently on the noble head that was thus bowed in meek submission beneath it. Another moment, and Medwyn had summoned the attendants, and was pacing his own apartment.

It would be a vain attempt to describe the distressing emotions awakened in his mind by the confession of his father. A thousand dark and appalling images flitted before him. This, then, was the cause of the strange, cold, unaccountable silence of his loved friends. And what was at that moment passing in their minds with regard to his apparent conduct? was it not enough that his hope of a union with the being dearest on earth should be deferred, perhaps destroyed, but that he must be lowered in her estimation and appear in the light of a hypocrite—a deceiver? He dared not think of the agency of his father in the transaction of which he had just spoken;—the reflection crimsoned his cheek. Thoughts, tender and soft, were mingled with the darker current that rushed unbidden through his mind, as he hastily paced the room.

The night was far advanced, when, exhausted with the violence of his feelings, he threw himself on his couch, and fell into a heavy and disturbed slumber. The images of Sir Frederick Lansdale,—of Ellen,—of de Vaudemont,—of his father, alternately flitted before him. Even the slight form of *Ismène*, as he had last seen her, with her pale cheek shaded by the black veil that threw its funereal folds around her, mingled with the group of shadowy images. Again were her dark imploring eyes fixed in mournful "perusal of his face;"—she seemed to approach him near, and yet nearer, until at last she laid her hand on his. Its touch was

icy cold;—he started, and awoke from his dreamy vision. A hand rested on his own, and it was indeed, icy cold and trembling. He looked up, and his father's favourite attendant stood before him.

“I am sorry to rouse you from your sleep, Mr. Medwyn,” he said, “but we knew not what to do without alarming you. I fear my lord is very ill this morning. If you please, I will show you to his chamber.”

Medwyn hastily wrapped his *robe de chambre* around him, and followed his father's valet. He approached the couch softly, and looked for a moment at the form before him. One glance was sufficient to assure him of the terrible reality.—His father was no more!

“Forgive me, Mr. Medwyn,” said the valet, as he saw the deadly paleness that overspread his features, while he supported him to another room; “I suspected the sad truth, but I dared not announce it. These are strange people, and I feared that without your testimony, his lordship's servants might have been accused of his sudden death.”

Medwyn was inexpressibly shocked by this unexpected event. It was true, that his father's health had been for some time past precarious, but he had never for a moment imagined his life to be so near its close. Until a few months past, he had been accustomed to regard him almost as a stranger, and had he, before that time, heard of this visitation of Providence, it would probably have awakened no other emotion than that of awe. But now he wept with filial tenderness and sincerity over those remains which were destined to be

“By strangers honour'd, and by strangers mourn'd.”

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

“Ne me plaignez pas,—si vous saviez combien de peines ce tombeau m’á epargnées!”

It may be easily imagined, that Medwyn’s return was delayed no longer than the obsequies of his father, and a necessary attention to his affairs, demanded. A few days found him on his way to the metropolis of France, whence he determined to return immediately home. The season had been one of unusual mildness, and though the early spring is generally dangerous for travellers amid the Alps, the route was passable through a portion of Switzerland, and he selected it in preference to the one by which he had gone to the south. He accomplished the passage of the mountains with less difficulty than he had anticipated, and arrived safely in the valley on the northern side. The region which he was now traversing is one of peculiar beauty and interest, and had it been a more propitious season, and his mind less harassed by painful reflections, the wild and beautiful freaks of nature, which met his eye at every turn, could not have failed to attract the admiration of Medwyn. His route lay by the lovely lake of Geneva, and the frowning towers of the chateau of Chillon, and the rocks of Mellierie gave to its natural charms a wilder and more romantic interest.

Just before entering on the picturesque vicinity of Lausanne, and while his route yet followed the course of the Rhone, his attention was drawn to the singular and lofty

position of an isolated church in the midst of the valley through which he was rapidly hastening. The delay, incident to a change of horses in the village at its base, afforded him time to ascend the elevated eminence on which the church rested. As he approached it, the soft and solemn chant of a funeral dirge met his ear. The sound was soothing to a mind ill at ease, and he gently approached and entered. The large wax lights were burning on the altar, and a procession of priests in their sombre robes were assembled near it. Clouds of incense threw their perfume around, and gave a still more solemn and impressive effect to the soft strains of the *Stabat mater dolorosa*, which stole in gently breathing melody through the darkened aisles. The procession began its march through them, and Medwyn retired through the door he had first entered, to permit the continuance of their rites. His attention was there arrested by the interesting appearance of a young man, who seemed absorbed in deep and melancholy meditation. As Medwyn passed near him, he started, and politely saluted him. They were, apparently, both strangers, and this circumstance, together with the subdued expression of sadness that marked the brow of each, touched the "electric chain" of sympathy, and Medwyn accosted him.

"These ceremonies possess unusual interest to me," said the stranger, in reply to the remark addressed to him. "I knew well the young and gifted being they are designed to honour. She was not a native of this spot; her wild and splendid genius was the offspring of a warmer clime, but she was the adopted child of the canton of Valais, and the exquisite music of the Improvisatrice will long be remembered here, as in more civilized places; for her exquisite talent was perfected amid more luxurious scenes, and displayed in the halls of princes. In an evil hour she was

betrayed from the home that had been for many years blest by her presence, leaving a dark void in the circle she had once lightened with her smile. The aged and drooping forms, you doubtless observed in the procession, were her parents. Happily they were permitted to grant their forgiveness and their blessing to the poor *Ismène*."

The stranger paused, for *Medwyn* was startled by the name he had just uttered. The coincidence was too perfect to admit of a doubt. It was then the minstrel of *Versailles*, who had accomplished her last wish,—that of "returning to her humble home, to die." The unbidden tears sprang to his eyes as he recalled the remembrance of the wild and beautiful strains which rang in his ear when last he had seen her,—and the brilliant images of that eventful evening crowded upon his mind.

"The *Improvisatrice* then returned to her parents and home?" he inquired, "and did she obtain the entire forgiveness of those whom she had so deeply wounded, and so justly offended?"

"They would have been hard-hearted indeed," returned the stranger, "if they could have withheld the blessing so imploringly and so humbly sought. When she re-appeared here, after her long absence, her once beaming smile had departed, and the lustre of her dark eye was dimmed. The peasants watched, with superstitious awe, her shadowy form as it slowly disappeared in the mountain mist, when she rambled in the dusk of evening, to avoid the inquisitive eyes that were turned on her wherever she was seen. Yet they regarded her with affection as well as wonder, for there was still magic in the lightest tones of that exquisite voice, and her very words were music. She soon regained her influence over the simple hearts she had left, and when, as a wreath from the mist of yonder dashing waterfall, she

disappeared from their view for ever, they wept her departure as tenderly as if she had never strayed from their cottage. Peace be with thee, hapless Ismène!"

Medwyn silently but fervently joined in the blessing invoked by the stranger. They descended the steep together, and reached the village, where, after exchanging a cordial adieu, they separated.

Painfully occupied as was the mind of our traveller, he was not insensible to the charms of the lovely country through which he was now passing. The beautiful lake of Geneva glowed in the sun-light with prismatic colours, and the snowy summits of the Alps beyond it were relieved against the brilliant azure of a cloudless sky. The vicinity of the towns through which he passed, brought the image of the home he had left forcibly to his mind, and every variety of woodland, of hill and dale, of hawthorn hedges, and of tasteful cottages that adorn the Isle of Wight, were here mingled with the wild scenery of Switzerland.

The rich and smiling valley was passed, and the route now led among the rugged passes of the mountains of Jura. Medwyn turned to take a last lingering look at the scenery he was leaving, as he attained the summit that commands the most extensive view of it. On each side lay the mountains amid which he was about to enter,—high, craggy and dark,—beautifully contrasted with the distant Alps, whose soft and aerial blue seemed to melt into the broad and calm waters of the lake below. There lay the lovely and peaceful valley, with its fertile fields and villages and farm houses, and far beyond the lake,—so distant as to resemble the white vapour that floated around it,—rose the Alpine king, Mont Blanc.

The bright picture was soon concealed from his view by a huge promontory of rock that formed an angle in the

road, and the remainder of the route for the next two days, presented scenery too wild and savage to claim much attention or admiration. The vine-clad hills of Burgundy at length appeared, and the rest of the journey through *la Belle France* was performed with all the celerity which a smooth country, fresh post-horses, and well paid postillions could ensure.

Medwyn returned to his hotel in the metropolis, with a heart throbbing with anxiety. The distance which had separated him from de Vaudemont, and his constant change of place, had deprived him of whatever communications he might otherwise have received, and no word or line, that gave him any hope of his recovery, had ever reached him. He dared not trust himself to think of what might have been his fate. His image constantly rose before him as he had last seen him,—pale,—inanimate, and stretched on his couch of pain, from which he would, most probably, never arise. His imagination pictured his friend calling on him in his last moments, and reproaching him with the cruelty of thus quitting him in his utmost need.

Such were the ideas that flitted through his mind, as he descended from the post-coach at the door of the hotel; whence he instantly despatched a note to Dr. M. With unspeakable impatience and anxiety he paced the apartment, pausing with breathless eagerness to catch the sound of every passing footstep, as the time arrived for the probable return of his messenger. An hour passed, and the delay became too painful to admit of longer endurance. He was hastily leaving the room, with the determination of accomplishing, in person, the object which he now blamed himself for entrusting to less faithful hands, when the door was thrown open, and the anxiously expected visitor appeared.

Medwyn looked earnestly in his face without speaking, as he grasped his hand. The glance that met his was one of condolence and sympathy, and his heart sank.

“I may then, I fear, apprehend the worst,” he said, in a voice which expressed the intensity of his feelings.

Dr. M. looked at him with an expression of surprise. “The worst,” he said, “has already been announced here. We learned yesterday, that Lord Belmore died suddenly a few days since.”

Medwyn breathed more freely. He had then been misunderstood, and there might yet be hope.

“My apprehensions,” he said, “were for my friend, de Vaudemont.—In one word,—tell me;—does he still live?”

The kind-hearted physician was almost overpowered by the deep sigh which burst from the heart of Medwyn, and the ejaculation of thankfulness, which involuntarily flowed from his lips as he received his answer.

“He lives,” he said, “and though still confined to his house, to which he has been recently removed, you will find him rapidly recovering. Nay,” he continued, as Medwyn hurried from the room, “you must remember that I am now, comparatively, an old man, and that I cannot, as you do, leap with the speed of a chamois down this spiral stairway. Let me have the benefit of your young and vigorous arm, and in return for your assistance, I will conduct you to your friend.”

“The bird has flown, I find,” he continued, as they entered de Vaudemont’s apartments, and found them untenanted. “He had my permission to take the air, for the first time since his accident, for half an hour to-day. Had I known what happiness was in store for him, I should not so readily have granted the permission.”

“Happiness indeed!” exclaimed a well known voice near

Medwyn's ear. He turned, and was locked in the embrace of his young friend.

The benevolent physician looked with swimming eyes on the overflowing of these two youthful and generous hearts, and then, faltering out an excuse for his departure, abruptly retreated, leaving them to the enjoyment of their newly restored happiness.

“You find me, I trust,” said de Vaudemont, as Medwyn seated himself by the couch, on which his friend reclined to repose himself after the unusual exertion of his morning drive, “as you have often kindly predicted I should be, a wiser, if not a better man than I was before the occurrence of the event which so nearly terminated my existence. After you left me, my life was, for some time, despaired of, and it appears almost a miracle, that I have been snatched from the premature fate which seemed hourly awaiting me. At that awful period, how vain, and worse than vain, appeared to my sobered thoughts the course of life in which I had been indulging. My follies, as the world, with too much levity, would call them, magnified themselves into crimes of the deepest dye. The revered images of my early friends and monitors, my father and my guardian, flitted before my restless couch, and their sad and solemn warnings, that had in my thoughtless hours been so often disregarded, rang in my ear, while their kind glances of reproachful tenderness penetrated my heart. The remembrance of misused talents,—of wasted time,—of opportunities of once more finding the paths of wisdom and piety, from which I had strayed, neglected, lost—perhaps, for ever, weighed down my spirit, and almost crushed it beneath a load of despair. But a bright and blessed light has since shown amid that Ethiopian darkness, and I have arisen as if from the remembrance of a

frightful dream, with a firm determination, not in my own strength, which I now feel to be weakness,—but by the help of that Almighty arm on which I now lean for help, and which will never fail me, to walk henceforth in the paths of true wisdom.”

Medwyn’s heart swelled high with gratitude and joy, as he watched the beautiful expression of the animated countenance on which his eyes were fixed. Sincerity, deep, strong, and holy, was painted there in letters of living light, and he could only press the hand that clasped his own.

“You will find me unchanged,” continued de Vaudemont, with a smile, “only in one determination,—that of endeavouring to restore the gift of fortune,—which, with her usual blindness she has bestowed on one who needs, as little as he merits it,—to those who are worthier of her favours. If your design is to remain here for some weeks, I shall, at the end of that time, be sufficiently restored to accompany you home, and our united persuasions may accomplish much.”

“I fear I should be a poor advocate in a cause where the interest I have at stake might naturally and properly subject me to suspicion,” said Medwyn, “beside that I cannot with sincerity, adopt your idea, though I know it arises from the purest and noblest motives. Sir Frederick Lansdale will never take advantage, as he would say, of the generous enthusiasm of youth. He would remind you of the interests of later years, and convince you that his spirit is as noble as your own. With regard to your design of accompanying me to our native land, it would give me the highest gratification to bear you company; but I cannot, even for that happiness, longer delay my return. I should not now be here, but for my solicitude for you. This very

evening I must be on my way, but you will soon follow me, and we shall then meet again."

With an affectionate adieu the friends parted, and Medwyn hastened back to his hotel, to make the preparations necessary for his immediate departure from the metropolis.

What pen could portray the emotions that agitated the breast of our young traveller, as the vessel in which he embarked rode over the foaming billows, and neared the white cliffs of his native shore! A thousand delightful images crowded on his mind; but one, fairer, lovelier than the rest, beamed brightly on his vision, as does the beacon on the gaze of the tempest-tossed mariner. The short distance, that separated him from all his heart held dear, seemed almost interminable. In vain did he endeavour to repress his impatience by the supposition that he would be received with indifference—that the heart, which once beat so fondly for him, was now estranged by mistrust, and that the sweet smile which should have rewarded his constancy might be chilled to coldness. An hour—nay, a moment, he knew would be sufficient to dissipate all suspicions, and one confiding glance of those blue eyes would reward him for all the pain he had felt during his absence. How wearisome to his ear was the measured splash of the oars, when, after leaving the ship, he watched the motion of the barge that was tardily bearing him to the Isle of Wight. The wind,—the tide,—all was favourable, and yet the distance seemed endless. At length the blest moment arrived. The barge neared the shore,—he sprang on the beach, and in half an hour was in sight of the casket which contained his priceless gem,—the home of his loved Ellen.

His heart beat almost audibly as he ascended the well known steps, and laid his hand on the door. The ceremony of summoning an attendant was forgotten,—the lock yielded

to his familiar touch, and he crossed the threshold. Another moment, and he was near the apartment where his happiest hours had been spent,—where his pure and ardent vows had first been received, and where the tell-tale blush, the averted glance, and the gentle sigh, had told him more eloquently than words could have done, that he had not breathed those vows in vain. He paused, for the idea now arose in his mind of the agitation his unexpected appearance might cause, and he gently approached the half open door. How many well remembered objects there met his view! each one, on which his eye rested, recalled some bright moment of happiness.—But it was silent,—the room was untenanted, and he entered.

He threw himself for an instant on the sofa to recover from the effect of the emotion which oppressed his heart almost to bursting, when a step was heard on the stairway; he sprang from his seat, and approached the door,—but the step was not the one of sylph-like lightness, which had so often sounded on his ear like the faint echo of distant music;—its tread was heavy and assured, and a stranger appeared.

Had Medwyn been less intensely occupied with his own emotions, he could not have avoided a feeling of perplexity at the broad look of unfeigned astonishment, with which the stranger regarded him. But his thoughts were far otherwise engaged, and with the air of one who finds himself at home, he motioned the supposed visitor to a seat, and rang the bell.

The look of astonishment, with which the stranger had at first regarded him, was now changed to one of dismay, and as Medwyn, almost unconscious of his presence, impatiently awaited the answer to his summons, his eye was arrested by that of the stranger, which was fixed upon him with a stare of surprise, mingled with terror, and which

could not fail to attract his notice. He now remarked for the first time, that the stranger, a respectable middle aged man, was without his hat, and apparently a guest. He might, perhaps, have been surprised at seeing one, entirely unknown to him, act with the familiarity of an inmate of the house, and Medwyn instantly banished the feeling of anger that was rising in his breast and on his brow, at being thus so impertinently scanned.

“Pardon me, sir,” he said, with his usual courtesy; “I thought at first that you were a visitor here. I now perceive that you are a guest. Be seated, and I will ring for an attendant,” and he again rang the bell.

It would have been impossible now to misunderstand the expression of mingled astonishment and dismay that again spread itself over the quiet features of the stranger. Medwyn, in spite of himself, experienced a feeling of indignation at his extraordinary manner, as well as impatience at the neglect of his summons, which at last found vent in words.

“Strange negligence!” he said to himself, as he hastily paced the room, “but perhaps Sir Frederick has not returned from his morning ride,—you seem rather surprised,” he said to the stranger, “to see me apparently so familiar an inmate here, but I have this moment returned from several months sojourn on the continent, and my anxiety to see Sir Frederick Lansdale renders me thus impatient.”

The wonder and terror, that had marked the stranger’s features, at once vanished, and their usually placid expression was restored. He heaved a sigh, and his mind seemed relieved from some vague apprehension as he answered,

“I felt, indeed, not a little troubled at your manner, before I understood the circumstances you have just explained. I began to think that madness,—nay, do not be angry,” he continued mildly, “before I mention the causes of my sus-

picion. Events may have occurred during your absence, of which you are as yet, unapprised. The summons to which you so impatiently awaited an answer, was not noticed, simply because the home is not now furnished with attendants. It is no longer the house of Sir Frederick Lansdale:—it has been now nearly a month since he embarked with his daughter for the western world.”

The expression of astonishment, which had at first marked the brow of the stranger, was now transferred to that of Medwyn. He looked at the speaker, as if doubting the evidence of his senses.

“It pleased his majesty,” continued the stranger, “to bestow on him large transatlantic possessions, which, in process of time, if he fulfils his determination of passing the rest of his life there, will make him even a wealthier man than he was while in his own country. His design was to have delayed his departure some months longer, but a sea voyage was recommended for his daughter’s declining health, and this was his chief inducement for departing so abruptly. His possessions here are in the hands of agents, of whom I am one, awaiting the claim of the rightful heir, who is now on the continent.”

The doubt with which Medwyn at first felt disposed to regard the communication of the stranger, was banished by this simple explanation. It was a tale so “round and unvarnished” that it was impossible to discredit it, and the open honest countenance of the speaker gave the impress of truth to his words, each one of which struck like a dagger to the young and high throbbing heart he was unconsciously wounding. For an instant, Medwyn stood speechless,—bewildered;—a conviction of the truth then flashed on his mind,—his brain reeled, and he fell almost without

reason as without sense on the sofa from which he had arisen.

The stranger hastily approached him, and for a moment, his fears lest a madman should have found his way into the house were renewed. He was too humane, however, to follow the dictates of his inclination, and make his escape. He threw open the window, and the fresh breeze soon restored the scattered senses of his visitor. He rose, and unable longer to bear the influence of a scene which overpowered him, uttered a few incoherent words of adieu, and instantly quitted this once loved spot.

THE CHIEFTAIN.

“ Yet deem not goodness on the savage stock
Of Outalissi's heart disdain'd to grow.”

GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.

“ I sit in my tears in the cave—
Nor do I sit alone—the dark chief of Cuthel is there.”

OSSIAN.

It was in the early part of the month of June,—that lovely season, when all nature, arousing from the benumbing influence of winter, is bursting forth in fresh luxuriance and beauty, that two travellers were seen wending their way over the wild and unfrequented road that led toward the Allegheny mountains. They were both well mounted, and the gallant steeds seemed to partake of the spirit of enterprise which evidently characterized their riders; for the proudly arching neck and glancing eye, showed them still unwearied by the exertion of many previous days travel. The horsemen appeared intently engaged in looking at the various objects of interest and curiosity that attracted their observation, and occasionally dismounted, as some wild flower, more beautiful than the rest of those which had been so profusely scattered in this garden of nature, or some fossil, hitherto, perhaps, unknown, invited their examination. The route itself, to those unaccustomed to its wild romantic loveliness, was full of interest, and the moss-covered rocks, crowned with *arbor vitæ*, and that splendid

species of the *Kalmia*, known in this region by the name of the mountain laurel,—the gigantic sons of the forest sometimes enclasped in the twining folds of a huge vine, while the graceful tendrils formed a canopy over some humbler trees near their majestic supporters,—or descending still lower, in festoons of more fantastic drapery, swept the pure current of a bright stream that was leaping on in joyous freedom through the lovely wilderness;—the deep blue of the cloudless arch reflected from the bosom of the waters, where their depth stilled the dashing current,—all seemed to strike the travellers with the force and the charms of novelty.

“There is something of marvellous interest in this primeval forest,” said one of these wayfarers to his companion, who was, apparently, some years younger than himself; “yet methinks it would lose none of its attraction by a road more distinctly traced. I have rather more experience in these wild regions than yourself, and yet I begin to doubt, whether we may not have mistaken the directions of our good old friend and guide, who promised to join us again, in half an hour. The time has already passed,” he continued, looking at his watch, “and yet he returns not. It would, perhaps, be as well to repose a few moments beneath the leafy canopy of this superb wild vine, and await his return.”

To this proposition his companion made no objection, and they descended, and easily found a shelter from the increasing warmth of the summer sun, amid the shades of the forest.

“Those who are accustomed to more luxurious indulgence,” said the younger traveller, after quenching his thirst in the pure stream, “can hardly imagine the pleasure, even of a draught of cool water in the wilderness; though

we have here rare opportunities of feasting more senses than one," he added, gathering some of the blossoms of the vine and of the azalea that bloomed in rich luxuriance beneath his hand.

"You are disposed to be philosophical, this morning," said his companion, with a smile. "It would be rather difficult to persuade the society with which you have been connected within the last year, that you can content yourself with such humble pleasures. What would the court circle of Versailles, for instance, think of your taste, if they were to hear you expatiating on the charms of a wilderness in the western hemisphere?"

"They would probably say, '*quand on n'a pas ce que l'on aime, il faut aimer ce que l'on a,*'" replied Medwyn,—for, as may have perhaps, been surmised, he was our young traveller,—“though I believe I should find little difficulty in transferring my affections from scenes so heartless as those to which you allude, to a *home* even in this lonely desert, if it boasted all the charms that attach to that sweet name, though a more civilized place may be found, possessing many of its wild beauties, if I should determine on making this country my permanent abode.”

“The example of Sir Walter Raleigh will sustain us in our choice,” said the elder traveller, “and the circumstance of other friends having selected the grants of land bestowed by his majesty, in various parts of this region of country, offers us an additional inducement to cast our lot somewhere among them. I understand, that Sir Frederick Lansdale, who has recently arrived, has determined to make a selection hardly more than a hundred miles from the sea-coast, and yet in view, though distant, of those blue and beautiful mountains which surround us. He has, however, gone a few days farther westward than we now are, to take a satis-

factory view of the whole ground. Strange to tell, his lovely daughter insisted on accompanying him, notwithstanding the fatigues of the route. Her health, which he fondly urged as a reason why she should remain in a more civilized part of the country, she found means to persuade him would be greatly ameliorated by the bracing air of the mountains, and accustomed as he is to indulge her in every wish, and perhaps desirous at the same time to gratify his paternal feelings, he permitted her to accompany him. We shall probably see them in a few days."

Medwyn made no reply, for he was too ingenuous to speak of the sole object of his visit as if it were merely incidental, and his feelings did not permit him to make a theme, to him so sacred, the subject of ordinary conversation. The words of the traveller awoke a train of painful thought in his mind, for he heard the delicate state of his Ellen's health now for the second time alluded to. And why had the rose forsaken that lovely cheek, and why was the vermeil lip no longer wreathed in sunny smiles?—She believed, alas! with too much cause for her suspicion, that she had been neglected and forsaken;—that the heart, in which she had fondly trusted, had been estranged by the world's honours and vanities, and perhaps she was sustained, —but the thought was too painful for endurance,—only by the reflection that he was unworthy the deep and pure affection she had once confessed she felt for him. How ardently he longed to dissipate this fatal illusion, which in an hour, nay, a moment, he was persuaded would vanish! but in the mean time, the fell destroyer might have marked her for his own, and she might be already preparing to join the loved group, of which she was the last survivor, in that heavenly dwelling-place, where her young heart would no longer be the prey of withered hopes and blighted affections.

The thought fell in all its chilling darkness on his mind, and he arose impatiently from his resting place.

“It is in vain, I believe,” he said to his companion, “to wait longer for our old guide. The road is tolerably plain, and I think, from the directions he gave us, that we run no risk in continuing our route.” And he was preparing to remount his horse.

His companion shook his head. “This is not the first time that I have been among these wilds,” he said. “If you will take my advice, you will wait at least half an hour longer.”

“There will be some danger in that experiment,” replied Medwyn, “for even if our guide should return in that space of time, I perceive, above the tops of these lofty trees, a brilliant sheet of white, mingled with the deep azure we were just now contemplating with such admiration, and my past observation warns me that there is something darker and more threatening behind it. There is our monitor!” he continued, as the faint sound of a peal of distant thunder fell on his ear. “We shall probably have only a drenching for our pains, if we stay here longer.”

His companion rose from his recumbent posture, and advanced a few paces into the route they had quitted. He was evidently uncertain and perplexed, and hesitated, as if at a loss what course to take.

“I am apprehensive,” he said, “that we must have made some mistake in the direction of our guide, who has hitherto been so faithful, that I cannot mistrust him. Our safest course will be for me to return to the point from which we set out half an hour ago, where I can be assured of the proper direction. It is needless for you to accompany me; I will return immediately.”

He threw himself into the saddle without awaiting Med-

wyn's reply, and putting spurs to his horse, was instantly out of sight.

The reflections in which Medwyn had a moment before been indulging, did not dispose him to exercise an extraordinary degree of patience, and he felt rather vexed at the sudden departure of his companion. The continued muttering of the distant thunder, too, gave him warning of an approaching storm, and he determined to retrace his way, and secure a shelter in the house they had left half an hour before. He rode on, and, as he believed, in the road by which they had reached the spot he had just quitted; but he soon found himself perplexed by perceiving that it led in a different direction. He turned, and endeavoured to regain the route he had lost, but his perplexity increased, and the obscurity of the path-way increased with it. He could no longer doubt that he was lost in the intricate mazes of the forest, and his embarrassment was heightened by the aspect of the approaching storm, which was announced by fitful gusts which souged through the waving branches of the trees above and around him.

Still, however, he pursued his uncertain way, when suddenly his horse sprang aside, as if startled by some unexpected obstacle. Medwyn leaned forward to see what had excited his alarm, and observed a silken scarf of brilliant red fluttering in the wind, its hue rendered yet more conspicuous from the dark outline of the tree, behind which the wearer was partially concealed, and the masses of green above, that gave it additional relief. With some difficulty he urged his unwilling steed forward, and another bound gave him a full view of a slight female form, retreating as if with the hope of being still concealed by the trunk of the gigantic oak, behind which she had taken refuge. Impelled by his wish to take a nearer view of the stranger, Medwyn

threw himself from the saddle, and with the rein on his arm gently approached the place where she stood.

Had the form possessed less attraction, it could not have failed to awaken some interest in so wild and secluded a spot; but the one, which now presented itself to his wondering eye, would, at any time, and in any other place, have engaged his full attention. The figure was slight, but beautifully proportioned, and the erect stature, and finely turned neck might have graced a queen. The taper hands, and full arms, which even their singular colour could not deprive of their beauty, were bare, and an exquisitely symmetrical foot and ankle were displayed to the greatest advantage by delicate moccasins, curiously inwrought in brilliant colours with the quills of the porcupine. Her ebony hair fell loose on her shoulders, which were partially concealed by the scarf that had first betrayed her place of concealment, and gave an air of yet more singular wildness to the dress, which, partly European, and still characterized by the fantastic taste of the children of the forest, well became the elastic form before him. She raised her dark and brilliant eyes as Medwyn approached and accosted her, and bestowed on him a glance, such as the gazelle, when about to fly to the deep recesses of the forest, might have thrown on her pursuer. Reassured, however, by the gentleness of his address, her purpose was apparently changed, and to his surprise, Medwyn found his inquiries answered in his own language,—imperfectly it is true, but still with sufficient accuracy to be well understood. With that pride, however, which finds a place even in the hearts of these children of nature, she seemed unwilling to converse in a foreign tongue, and he was able to understand her more by the gestures with which she explained her meaning, than by the few words she spoke.

“The storm is near,” said the maiden, as a heavy blast swept through the forest, and the forked lightning quivered around them; “follow me and I will find you shelter.”

The deep roar of the thunder drowned the words she apparently added, but following the motion of her hand, he perceived, near the spot where she stood, a canopy formed by the interlacing branches of the trees, so thick as to be almost impenetrable to the threatened rain. She motioned him to advance, and to secure his horse beneath its covert. Medwyn in silence followed her direction, and she seemed impatiently awaiting his movements, as, with the humanity and foresight of a practised horseman, he removed the saddle. She again beckoned him onward, and he followed her as she ascended a slight acclivity. For a moment she paused, and stooped as if to find something concealed in a crevice of a mossy rock near them. A flint and steel instantly ignited two torches which she had taken from their place of security, and presenting one to Medwyn, while she held the other, with some difficulty he followed her through an opening in the rock. The passage through which they proceeded gradually widened, and Medwyn paused as he found that he was entering a subterranean grotto. For the first time, the idea flashed on his mind, that he was about to encounter some unseen dangers. True it was, that the native sons of the forest had, at this epoch, retreated to a land far distant from the region in which he now found himself; but some individuals remained, and though they had become reconciled to the manners and customs of their European successors, the nations had never, “like kindred drops been melted into one,” and there might yet be a feeling of hostility on their part, especially toward a stranger. They were often stigmatized with treachery as well as cruelty, and was it not possible that he might be now entering

a tomb that was to shut the light of day, which was fast vanishing in the increasing gloom behind him, from his view for ever? The thought arrested his steps, and he paused. His conductress looked toward him, and the air of surprise and of good faith, which marked the expression of her features, reassured him.

“Enter,” she said, “and fear not;—the storm cannot beat here, and here even the voice of the thunder is lost?”

Medwyn advanced, and to his astonishment found, that they were now emerging from a small apartment that appeared only an ante-chamber, to a long suite of rooms, leading in various directions, whose almost interminable height and magnificent size were undistinguishable by the imperfect lights carried by his conductress and himself. The blaze of the torches threw their fitful beams upon the walls, which sparkled as if tapestried with cloth of gold inwrought with myriads of costly gems, while lustres that depended from the ceiling glowed with the prismatic brilliancy of diamonds. The superb columns,—the gleaming white of groups of colossal statuary,—of vases of alabaster,—of candelabras,—of girandoles,—of curtains sweeping with heavy and graceful folds,—even the outlines of a throne,—all flitted in shadowy forms before him, but more like the unearthly phantoms of departed grandeur than the real accompaniments of a kingly palace, and seemed sadly mingled with funereal monuments, which arose in the vast space, with ghost-like whiteness, as the distant light fell on them, and whose dark shadows seemed to reproach them with permitting even that faint smile to illumine their obscurity.

As they continued to advance, Medwyn perceived lights glimmering in the distance. His first suspicions began to return, and arose with renewed force, when he perceived that his companion and himself were not the only occu-

pants of this subterranean abode. The outlines of a tall majestic form were gradually revealed to their view, and Medwyn now distinctly saw the figure of a man seated on one of the stalagmites which his imagination had moulded into such a variety of images. A torch was burning on either side of him, and threw a ruddy glare on his swarthy features, which, though slightly marked by the hand of time, yet bore a grave and noble expression; and the broad sinewy chest, and erect port,—the well turned and athletic limbs,—and above all the upward glance of the eagle eye, and the proudly elevated head, displayed at once a monarch of the forest.

Never had Medwyn approached the presence of royalty with the feeling of mingled reverence and awe, which now arose in his mind as he advanced toward the chieftain, for such the superiority of his air, and the wampum belt and eagle plumes denoted him. It was not that any emotion of alarm for his safety mingled itself with those feelings, but there was something in the grave, nay, deeply sad expression of the noble brow,—in that majestic form,—seated, as it were, amid the tombs of his exiled race,—that accorded well with the grandeur and sublimity of the scene around him, and awakened a feeling of reverence which the courtly splendour of a monarch, surrounded by all the *prestige* of royalty, would in vain have sought to arrogate to itself:

He remained motionless as a statue, while Medwyn and his conductress advanced toward him, until the maiden reached the spot where he sat, and uttered a few words in a low voice. They were apparently explanatory, for he slightly moved his head, as if satisfied with her communication, and motioned to Medwyn to be seated near him.

Medwyn was again surprised to find himself addressed in his own language; and though the expressions of the

chieftain, as he occasionally uttered them, were mingled with words of his native tongue, he found no difficulty in comprehending them, and following the train of thought that was passing through his mind.

“Thou hast then sought a refuge from the storm beneath the wing of the old Eagle?” he said. “It is well;—thou art welcome.”

Medwyn respectfully acknowledged the courtesy, and looked with increasing admiration at the magnificence and sublimity of the scene around him, which the sudden transition from the light of day had before rendered undistinguishable.

“Thou hast no cause for fear,” continued the chieftain. “Logan hath been branded by his tribe as the friend of thy race. They have ere now sought shelter at my own door, which is far hence. When faint, and weary, they have found strength; when oppressed, they have found succour at my hand. They rewarded me evil;—the flame and the sword devoured all that were mine,—there runs not one drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature.”

The chieftain paused, and his features were marked by the strong emotion that heaved his broad chest. A tear gathered in his eye, and fell on his swarthy cheek. He dashed it away, as if ashamed of betraying a weakness almost unknown to “the stoic of the woods,” and resumed,—as if soliloquizing.

“This is not my dwelling place, though I have sought it in my return to my desolate home, rather than owe obligation to those who have wronged me. These echoing vaults are dear to my soul—they awake the voice of years that are gone,—I pour forth my song of grief, and none may answer but the echo. The ashes of my lone hearth have been quenched in the blood of all I loved:—Logan must fall

like the leafless oak, that hath been blasted by the lightning, and that the wind hath felled where it stood.—None will mourn for him,—he is alone.”

Again, the tear gathered in the dark eye of the chieftain, and again he dashed it off. His glance kindled, and a stern and almost ferocious expression succeeded that of deep sadness, which had marked his brow.

“It is not for the eye of the eagle to weep,” he said. “He that can gaze on the sun, may look unmoved on blood. And I too, like the eagle, have marked the blood of the slain, and rejoiced in my prey. Yes! I have been avenged!—But the tree of peace hath been planted over the bones of my kindred, and thus my enmity shall die!”

His voice fell, as he spoke, and as he uttered the last words, he threw from his hand a tomahawk, which in the excitement of the moment he had raised from his side where it rested. The murderous steel struck with force against a stalactite that resembled the drapery of a broad curtain, and instantly awoke a thousand echoes amid the vaulted apartments, which reverberated with peals of thundering sound throughout the mighty void. The echo apparently had its influence on other presiding spirits, for Medwyn now beheld, by the dim light, another figure advancing toward them. As he approached the glare of the torches, his face and form were yet more plainly given to view, and those of the young warrior who approached might have offered models for a Hercules. Tall, majestic, and erect as the proud oak of his native forest, his step was light and free as the mountain wind, yet the gigantic strength, indicated by his muscular limbs, partially exposed to view by his wild and savage costume, and the firm expression of the dark and brilliant eye, showed one accustomed to rely on the prowess of his arm, and that the agile lightness of his

step had never been tested, unless in pursuit of a flying foe.

He advanced rapidly, bending a look of dark and stern inquiry on Medwyn, as he approached the place where he stood; but a word from the chieftain arrested him.

“It was I who awoke the echoes, Allanawissca,” he said: “the stranger means no evil,—he is sheltered from the storm beneath the eagle’s wing.”

This explanation seemed satisfactory to the young warrior, for he seated himself near, and drew together the dying embers of a small fire, which had been kindled on the earth, without manifesting farther displeasure at the presence of one, who, at first, he had evidently regarded as an intruder.

“The stranger is wearied,” continued the chieftain. “It is not the first time, that the children of his race have sought hospitality from my hand. Let Nimawha offer him food.”

The Indian maiden, who had retreated into the shadowy obscurity, advanced, and brought from a recess, which had served her purpose, the materials of a sylvan feast. Dried venison, wild honey, and a rude preparation of maize, formed its whole variety. To these, which she spread before them, she added a small flask, containing, apparently, some spirituous liquor. The eye of the chieftain followed her movements, and a glance of indignation was kindled as it rested on the flask. He stretched forth his hand and seized it, while he bestowed a reproachful look on the maiden.

“And hath Nimawha then forgotten my charge,” he said, “and is the fire-king again brought before my eyes? He that hath deprived our race of our senses,—our reason,—our country?—Let it not be said that Logan, too, hath been his victim.”

As he spoke, he poured the whole contents of the flask

on the embers, which had been rekindled by the hand and the breath of Allanawissca. The lurid flame blazed up with meteor-like brilliancy, and threw a momentary glare around, which illuminated the arched vault, and the deep recesses, disclosing them in all their dazzling magnificence.

Their slight repast was silently despatched, and the young warrior seemed preparing to depart. The Indian maiden glided from the apartment, and after a short absence returned, and addressed a few words to the chieftain:

“The storm is past,” he said to Medwyn, “and I will yet show thee farther kindness. Thou hast been bewildered in the forest; Allanawissca will guide thee on thy way.”

Medwyn unhesitatingly accepted the offer. He again resumed the torch with which he had been furnished on his entrance, and followed the light and rapid steps of his conductor through the dark windings by which he had first passed, until he found himself at the threshold of this wild and splendid temple of nature.

The sun was again beaming brightly on the blue mountains, and each shrub and spray shook a thousand spangles from their dewy branches, as he followed the young warrior to the spot where he had left his horse. With a gesture, which words could not have expressed more perfectly, he motioned to Medwyn to mount and follow him. The signal was instantly understood, and with the firm, rapid, undeviating pace which distinguishes the Indian warrior, he led the way. They passed for several miles through the mazes of the forest, until the smoke of a chimney appeared. His conductor pointed to it, and then looked fixedly at Medwyn. Perceiving that his gesture was understood, he paused for a moment to let the horseman pass, and then, plunging into the depths of the forest, was instantly lost to view.

PENSÉES.

“ Ere his leisure pace
 Amid the brown leaves could her ear alarm,
 Close he had come,—and worshipp'd for a space
 Those downcast features,—she her lovely face
 Uplift on one whose lineaments and frame
 Were youth and manhood's intermingled grace.”

GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.

A FEW more days passed, and Medwyn found himself near the spot which had been indicated as that where his wanderings were for a short space to terminate;—where he might hope to behold the bright reality of that blest vision which was ever present to his view.

The day had been one of cloudless brilliancy, but the sun was sinking in the western sky, and his last rays gilded the tops of the mountains, as Medwyn and his companion, preceded by their guide, emerged from the forest, and came suddenly on the banks of a stream, broad and rapid, yet clear and bright as crystal. Above the spot where they were about to enter it, the dark-blue colour, and the stillness of the current, marked its depth; below, the rapid and noisy stream dashed in foaming torrents over the rocks that at intervals interrupted its progress, and the sound broke on the ear with a wild but musical effect.

As they crossed the river, the huge parapets of rock which bounded it above, became more distinctly visible, and on one side resembled some mighty fortification, while

on the other, the projecting rocks, which corresponded with cavities visible at intervals throughout its vast height, gave the impression that some tremendous convulsion of nature had separated them, and thus left a space for the river to pursue its onward way. Below, lay a narrow but lovely valley, already bearing some traces of the fostering hand of man in the rich and verdant meadows that sloped to the water's edge; and in a low but comfortable looking dwelling, which apparently was the homestead of their proprietor, while stretching off in the distance, and as if seen through a vista, appeared the soft blue outline of the distant mountains.

This lovely and romantic valley, now known by the name of "Clifton," has lost many of its charms from the inroads of utilitarian hands; but enough of its wild beauties remain to show those of which it boasted at the epoch referred to.

Medwyn with some difficulty breasted the stream, as he urged his horse through its rapid current. His guide, however, plunged fearlessly in, and he unhesitatingly followed. A few minutes were sufficient to bring them in safety to the opposite bank, and they now approached the dwelling where he was certain of finding his revered friend, and the loved being whose presence would have power to convert this wilderness into an Eden.

What were not his feelings as he crossed that threshold! It was a relief, and he breathed more freely when the good-natured host alone appeared, and directed him to a pathway on the river's bank, where he was informed that his guests took their evening walk.

With a throbbing heart he followed its mazy windings, until he reached a bower, formed, by the fantastic hand of nature, of the wild vine, whose rich blossoms perfumed the

evening air, and something whispered that this was the spot that was to be consecrated by the renewal of his vows.

He gently approached, and looked through the sweeping tendrils. Ellen was there,—and alone. Her beautiful form had lost some of its roundness, and the soft cheek was pale,—but she was lovely,—oh how lovely! One hand, as she stood, held a small volume half opened,—in the other were some wild flowers, on which her downcast eyes, concealed by their long fringes, were steadfastly fixed.

“Pensées!” she murmured, as she looked more nearly at the wild flowers in her hand, “yes! they are well named. This splendid texture of purple velvet with its embroidery of gold may, indeed, vie with regal magnificence, and remind us that ‘Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.’ Well may they merit their name, if they bring to mind the hand that created them. And yet earthly thoughts will sometimes mingle with those that should perhaps belong alone to heaven. How fondly do these pensées recall the remembrance of days past, which ought to be forgotten, and yet to which memory must cling, while life remains!”

The voice ceased,—and she raised those blue eyes, suffused with tears. Was it a vision of the past that swam before them, or was it, indeed reality? Yes!—she could doubt no longer;—days,—weeks,—months of suffering were forgotten,—suspicion vanished as she met that love-speaking glance,—the pale cheek grew paler, and she sank almost insensible in his arms.

“Ellen!—dearest—fairest—loveliest!” murmured the gentle and well remembered accents, as he pressed his lips on the pure cheek and snowy brow, “have I then, notwithstanding my apparent sins, of all which I am guiltless, been remembered?”

“Oh Percy!” she replied, as a deep sigh relieved her full heart, while the rose brightly tinged her cheek, and as with sweet bashfulness she in vain endeavoured to disengage herself from the supporting arm, “you know not what I have suffered since we last met. I fear,—I ought not to believe you, and yet,—how can I help it?”

She raised her eyes to his noble and ingenuous face as she spoke, and they again sank beneath the glance they encountered. The playful smile that was wont to wreath her lip once more rested on it.

“There,—there,” she whispered, “you *must* listen to reason now;—that is my father’s step. See! he is approaching us!”

The surprise of Sir Frederick Lansdale was equal to that of his daughter at his sudden and unexpected meeting with his young friend. A few words of explanation sufficed to banish every feeling of suspicion that might have found a resting-place in his mind, and their short walk to the dwelling of their host afforded them ample time to place their relations on their ancient footing. His generous heart felt a pang of regret when he heard of the fate of Lord Belmore, and a silent tear fell in sympathy with that shed by his youthful friend.

“There is one part of your narrative, Percy,” said Sir Frederick, after listening attentively to the adventures, of which he had requested a minute detail, and in which he felt, as may be presumed, a lively interest, “that seems still involved in mystery, but on which I can throw some light. This daring adventurer, de Gourville, for I am happy to learn that he is now deprived of the assumed name of my brother’s adopted son, is actually in this country. He was doubtless compelled to fly from the pursuit of justice, after

his atrocious attempt upon the life of de Vaudemont. I suppose he imagines himself safe here, not only from incarceration in a dungeon, or the hand of the executioner, but even from the infamous reputation of an assassin, which must follow him wherever his dark deeds are known. You are, perhaps, the only witness against him, and he has not much reason to regard you with special favour. It would be as well to be on your guard, for he has actually been prowling about in these wilds, and one evening alarmed my daughter by way-laying her path in one of her evening rambles, and making a passionate declaration of love to her. I believe he might have saved himself the trouble," continued Sir Frederick, with an arch glance at Ellen, which raised a blush on her cheek, "for she fled to the house with the speed of a frightened fawn, and I could not persuade her to resume her walks until this evening, when she met with another adventure not quite so alarming."

The bright blush grew brighter as he concluded the sentence.

"If his object is to pursue this vain hope," continued Sir Frederick, "a knowledge of your arrival, which must inevitably have reached him ere this, (for the visit of a stranger to these regions forms quite an event,) we shall probably be relieved from his unwelcome presence. My present design is to return in a few days to a more civilized part of the country, as I am satisfied with regard to the place where I shall avail myself of his majesty's permission to take up my residence.

"But you have not yet told us of many of your adventures, in all of which, we naturally feel the deepest interest."

The events which have occupied many previous pages

of our narrative, formed the topics of their conversation, and the night was far advanced, when Sir Frederick Lansdale and his youthful companions bade each other a temporary adieu.

A CATASTROPHE.

“ Ton œil comme Satan a mesuré l'abymé,
Et ton âme y plongeant loin du jour et de Dieu,
A dit à l'espérance un éternel adieu!”

LAMARTINE.

GENTLY and sweetly did the few remaining days of the sojourn of our visitors in this lovely valley, glide away. The slight inconveniences of a mode of life to which they had been unaccustomed, now only offered subjects of diversion, and the good-nature of their host compensated for many defects in his establishment. There was such pleasure in rambling among these romantic wilds! in seeking the variety of beautiful wild flowers which the season had scattered in rich luxuriance in their path—in climbing the neighbouring heights, from which a more perfect view of the windings of the bright river, and the graceful outline of the blue mountains, might be obtained. The novelty of seeing

“ The wild deer arch his neck from glades, and then
Unhunted seek his wilderness again,”

was to them full of romantic interest, and it was with some difficulty that Ellen could prevail on herself to part with a young fawn, which their host had found in his rambles, and with which he had presented her. The gentle creature looked so meek and affectionate as it fed from her hand.

Often she determined to take it with her; but the inconveniences of such a *compagne de voyage* were represented in too strong a light to be disregarded, and little Fidèle would, after her departure, probably find his way back to his native forest, though their host promised to cherish and keep him for her sake, until she should return at some future day to pay him another visit.

The salutary influence of these scenes, and the fresh breezes of the mountains, but still more the reviving power of renewed happiness, soon restored the rose to the cheek of Ellen, and her step regained its wonted elasticity. A few days sufficed to banish all traces of the indisposition which had awakened so many tender anxieties, and the light of her sunny smile once more imparted hope and joy to the hearts that delighted in its radiance.

The evening that preceded their departure from the valley, was one of peculiar loveliness. A recent fall of rain had raised the river beyond its usual fulness, but it was still bright and pure as ever, and the rich green of the flowering shrubs, that dipped their sweeping branches into its waves, assumed a deeper tint. The moon was just rising "in cloudless blue," and threw her silvery light on the foaming spray that fell over the rocks, while above, the deep current reflected back her beams as from a mirror. The shadows of evening advanced, but the day had been warm, and the balmy air offered a temptation to an indulgence, which even Sir Frederick Lansdale, notwithstanding his scrupulous care of his health, found himself unable to resist. They rambled slowly along their favourite pathway, remarking the beauty of the different objects in view, until a rustic seat, contrived by the ingenuity of their kind host, invited to a moment's repose.

"How tranquilly the moonlight sleeps upon that mirror-

like sheet of water," said Ellen, pointing to the river almost at their feet. "It is beautiful and transparent enough to imagine it the abode of the water-spirits so charmingly described in the legends of Germany. I could almost imagine some lovely sprite beneath its waves."

"It would be strange," returned Sir Frederick with a smile, "if you should have power to conjure one up, for during the few moments of silence that succeeded our arrival in this spot, I imagined that I perceived some agitation in the water beyond, and a faint noise arrested my attention, though almost lost in the dashing of the falls below. There!—listen!"—he continued.

Medwyn advanced more nearly to the water's edge; the waves became more agitated, and sparkled with yet greater brilliancy in the moon-beams. The wild legends of Germany seemed about to be realized, for a light female figure emerged from the waves, and presented itself to their astonished view. The long ebony tresses were saturated with water, and the clinging garments displayed in statue-like grace the symmetrical proportions of a perfect form. Medwyn recognised, at a glance, his companion of the subterranean grotto. Nimawha, the Indian maiden, stood before him.

"There is evil awaiting thee," she said to Medwyn, "and I come to warn thee. A dark stranger is near, who loves thee not. The vulture hath preyed on the warrior ere now, and yonder white dove might mourn if thou wert his victim. He hath offered gold to Allanawissca for thy life,—but the warrior scorned his bribe, even as the dark stranger scorned the poor Indian maiden. Yet his own evil eye is upon thee—I have warned thee,—remember!"

She was about to plunge again into the waves, when

Medwyn arrested her, and addressing her in her own wild manner, he said,

“Why is Nimawha here, so far from the Eagle’s nest? hath she left his abode?”

“The Eagle dwells not in caves,” returned the Indian maiden. “Logan is near. He returns to his desolate home. He has none now to love him but poor Nimawha, whom he sheltered when she had none to pity her. When he is old, Nimawha will comfort him, and Allanawissca will protect him.” As she said this her brilliant eyes were cast down. “Forget not,”—she resumed, “the warning I give thee;—there is danger near.”

As she spoke the last words, she plunged into the silvery stream, and at that moment a cloud passed over the face of the moon. The breeze swept it on, and the planet reappeared in all her glory, but the form of the Indian maiden had vanished.

Ellen listened with a shudder to the words of warning which Medwyn repeated, and even Sir Frederick Lansdale, whose nerves were not so easily agitated, acknowledged that there was some cause for alarm, when they considered the desperate character of the “dark stranger,” by whom they naturally conjectured Nimawha signified de Gourville.

But amid the novelty of the scenes which succeeded their sojourn in the valley, the circumstance just narrated faded away. They left their kind host, who parted with his visitors with unfeigned regret, and returned toward a more cultivated region. A continued rain arrested the little *cortège*, when they had accomplished only a part of their journey. It was tantalizing; for in those wilds, even when all around was restored to its usual brightness, the mountain streams did not admit of a passage.

“I can find something to pass away the time,” said the

host of the humble habitation in which they had found shelter for two days, and who seemed to congratulate himself, as a bright thought entered his usually obtuse understanding. "The moon is full to-night, and if you will trust to my guidance, I believe I can show you something that will be better worth looking at than the walls of my poor cottage."

The offer of variety under such circumstances was too tempting to be refused, and with some anxiety they watched the aspect of the heavens, on which the promises of their host seemed partly to depend. The sun set in "the clouds of purple and gold that on his western throne attend," but the full moon rose in cloudless splendour, and the dazzling refulgence gave them almost the light of day.

Their host appeared with a smile of satisfaction on his rugged features.

"It is a glorious night for our purpose," he said, "I am ready to fulfil my promise."

His guests followed him as he silently strode before them over a rough pathway that led down a gradual descent. They walked on for some distance, when the rushing sound of water was heard.

"The stream shows the effect of the recent rain," said their host, as he pointed to a brawling torrent just below the descent. "It is not often as full as you see it now. The path-way is steep and rough just here," he continued, "but pause a moment, and look up,—perhaps you will be rewarded for your pains."

His guests had hitherto been so closely engaged in surmounting the difficulties of the path-way, that they had bestowed but little thought on any other objects. Their attention was now, however, awakened, and as they simultaneously obeyed the injunction of their guide, exclamations of wonder and admiration burst from each lip.

A dark, cavernous ravine lay below, in complete shade, leaving the imagination to picture whatever objects it might fancy amid its obscurity. Masses of foliage on either side of its inaccessible heights were partially illuminated by the light of the moon, and their shadows varying with every breath of the summer breeze that played gently through them. Then uprose the enormous battlements of solid rock, and the mighty arch, resembling the gigantic portal of some grand ruined castle, gleaming brightly in the placid moon-light, while the pale blue sky with its countless gems, sparkled through the opening above. The stream that by day-light is almost invisible, descending from the vast height, and by this magic light shining like silver,—the awful stillness, unbroken by naught but the dashing of the torrent that swept through the valley below,—the faint outline of the distant mountains, all conspired to strike our travellers with mingled wonder and awe. They gazed in speechless admiration at the magnificent object before them, and almost started at the voice of their guide, who first broke the silence that reigned throughout the scene.

“It is strange,” he said, as a smile, mingled with a glance of triumph at the astonishment he had occasioned, passed over his face. “It is very strange, that with such bridges, travellers should be detained in this country by the swelling of a mountain stream.”

His guests acknowledged the justice of his facetious remark, and offered him their united thanks for the delightful surprise he had prepared them. He waited with exemplary patience until they had viewed the glorious arch in all its different aspects, and until warned at last, by the freshening breeze, of the expediency of a retreat, they slowly retraced their steps, casting, as they ascended the steep, many a “lingering look behind.”

An irresistible impulse led Medwyn to take another view of this splendid arch after parting with his loved companions for the night. A guide was unnecessary, for the path-way was traced with sufficient distinctness to prevent any fear of being lost in the mazes of the forest. He found his way with ease back to the spot from which their host had first awakened their attention to the magnificent scene before them, and leaned against a projecting rock, to survey it more at leisure.

While he was thus contemplating this wonder of nature, and while his thoughts were rising in grateful adoration to that Almighty Being whose majesty and grandeur are equalled only by his love, what was passing through the dark spirit that was hovering near him? On the summit of that superb arch stood de Gourville, revolving in his mind the portentous thoughts of ambition,—of hatred,—of revenge,—that chased each other through it like the demons of a region of despair.

“I was bereft of reason,” he muttered to himself, “to seek to entrust to such hands a deed which my own should alone perform. Yet it would have been a source of stern satisfaction to know that he died by the hand of a savage. The fool glared on me with his dark eye, as if I had proposed the deed to one who could have lost caste by its execution, or perchance his ire was kindled by the contempt with which I spoke of Nimawha. But why should I waste my thoughts on such beings?—time presses,—the deed must be done. Rash, haughty youth,—thou that hast crossed my path at every turn,—on this spot do I renew my vow of vengeance against thee! Thou shalt die!”

A flush of rage rose to his brow, as he grasped the instrument of death concealed in his breast. He turned on his heel to leave the spot, when suddenly he found himself

arrested by a grasp like that of a giant, and the dark eye of Allanawissca glared on his own. An echo of his last words rang in his ear, "*vengeance against thee! Thou shalt die!*" With all the strength of desperation he struggled to free himself from that deadly embrace.—It was in vain,—he felt himself borne as if by Herculean strength to the brow of the tremendous precipice. Nearer, and nearer, he approached the place of death;—his own words again rang in his ear,—“on this spot do I renew my vow of vengeance against thee!—Thou shalt die!”

A loud crashing sound, as if from the falling of some weight from above the arch he was contemplating, awoke the echoes, and fell with startling force on Medwyn's ear. A moment passed, and the torrent swept by, bearing on its troubled waters a human body. The bright moonlight shone for an instant on the features, and Medwyn recognised the retributive justice of offended Heaven, as that momentary gleam revealed the dark brow of de Gourville!

CONCLUSION.

— — — “What is the world to them?
Its pomp, its pleasure, and its nonsense all,
Who in each other clasp whatever fair
High fancy forms, or lavish hearts can wish.”

SEASONS.

A FEW words will suffice for the remaining events of our narrative, which may be easily anticipated. Sir Frederick Lansdale, his lovely daughter, and his son, (for he was soon permitted to claim by the holiest and most tender ties, that love and confidence which had for many previous years been his,) found a resting place from all their wanderings in the country of their adoption; and though they revisited their native land, where Medwyn found his friend, de Vaudemont, in possession of all that wealth and affection could bestow, they considered the place where their happiest hours had been passed, their home. In view of those beautiful mountains which they loved for the sweet associations connected with them, as well as for their own charms,—though but little more than a hundred miles from the sea-coast, they selected their place of residence. Beneath their fostering care, “the wilderness and the solitary place was glad,” and “the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose.” Sir Frederick Lansdale found his youth renewed in the joyous light that illumined the sweet evening of his well spent life, and long participated in the happiness and prosperity of his

children; and in that part of the still comparatively wild but lovely region, named in honour of the virgin queen, which they made the place of their abode, its inhabitants yet fondly trace the manly virtues that distinguished the character of Percy Medwyn, and the gentle graces of Ellen Lansdale.



FRAGMENTS OF A JOURNAL.

CHAMOUNI.

EXCURSION TO THE VALLEY OF CHAMOUNI.—ALPINE SCENERY.—MT. BLANC SEEN FROM ST. MARTIN.—LAC DE CHEDE.—GLACIERS.—MER DE GLACE.

OUR anticipated travels have already begun, and our course has been directed first to the valley of Chamouni, which offers so many attractions, or rather so many wonders, that it has become quite a fashionable place of resort.

We left Geneva yesterday, and there with our kind hostess left our *petits compagnons* with the exception of the eldest, who is now very well able to take care of himself, even in these mountain adventures, where we were often warned that we must remember the selfish motto of "*chacun pour soi.*"

During the first eight leagues of our route, we found nothing worthy of remark, as the country in the immediate neighbourhood of Geneva was bereft of all interest when we lost sight of the town and the lake. It was then characterized by the same wild features which distinguish the mountains of Jura, and the inhabitants were as uninteresting as their country. The few Savoyards we encountered in this barren region, appeared, for the most part, to belong to the unfortunate race of *crétins*, who, notwithstanding their

idiocy, supposed to be occasioned by the enormous size of the goitre, are superstitiously believed, by the ignorant inhabitants of these mountains, to be the peculiar favourites of heaven.

As we approached the little village of Cluse, it became a problem rather difficult of solution, how we were to escape from the prison of mountains, whose dark, craggy sides surrounded us on every side, for in sailor's phrase, we seemed to be completely *land-locked*. The mystery, however, cleared up as we crossed the Arve, a rapid and brawling stream, which wound its way among the innumerable chains of mountains. The houses on one side of the principal street of this small village, are actually built against the mountain's side, and after issuing through a little arch from its damp and dark windings, we found ourselves among some of the wonders of Alpine scenery.

Although I agree perfectly with the British traveller, who says it is impossible to represent the wonders and beauties of natural scenery even in painting, and an attempt at description must always convey but a vague idea of the objects it would endeavour to present to the mind; I do not find this a sufficient reason for declining it altogether, especially as I have the assurance that my sketches will give you pleasure, even if they are not so interesting as they might be. He was writing for the world,—I, for my sister.

To continue, after this little digression. The route passed through the village of Cluse, and then led us along the banks of the Arve, sometimes so close to its brink, that the wheels of the carriage were almost in the water, while on the other side rose the bare and rugged sides of the mountains, whose tops occasionally shot up into sharp peaks, cleaving the clouds that gathered around us. Some-

times enormous projections from their sides seemed to threaten the traveller below, and an idea of their vast height was appropriately conveyed by the masses of snow in the clefts of the rocks.

Amid this wild scenery, we continued until we reached the valley of Maglan, whose small but fertile and smiling fields were beautifully contrasted with the frowning rocks above and opposite to it. Among these we discovered the entrance to a grotto, which is said to be very extensive, and is generally visited by travellers; but the ascent to it is fatiguing, and our curiosity was not a sufficient stimulus for such an enterprise.

The next wonder we met with was a cascade, (the Arpe-naz,) which falls from a height of eight hundred feet above the road. A cascade, from such a height, among the Alps, is nothing remarkable, for we met with them at every turn; but this one owes its peculiar beauty to its situation,—coming, apparently, from the very summit of the mountain, and falling down a perpendicular wall of rock; it is broken into a cloud of white and fleecy mist, and on reaching a projection about half-way down the mountain's side, the waters again unite, and form a brawling torrent for the rest of its descent.

This variety of mountains, rocks and streams, continued to draw exclamations of surprise and pleasure from each of our little party, until we reached the village of St. Martin, where we were to spend the night. So often had we heard of the view of Mont Blanc from this spot, that we were not a little disappointed to find everything enveloped in clouds on our arrival. Our only resource was to retire to rest, hoping for a more favourable view in the morning. Happily, our deferred hopes were realized, for on sallying out to the bridge which crosses the Arve at this place, at a very early

hour the next day, we were rewarded for our trouble and our patience, by a scene, to whose beauties no pen or pencil, however accomplished, could do justice.

The bridge on which we stood, appeared to be exactly in the centre of an amphitheatre of mountains, and the complete circle they formed looked so small, that we might almost have imagined that we were surveying a panoramic painting. This idea, however, was soon dissipated by the grandeur of the objects in view, especially the principal feature in the scene, the lofty and snow-crowned Mont Blanc, whose outline of dazzling white, rendered still more brilliant by the rays of the rising sun, was in complete relief upon the ethereal blue of a cloudless sky. Just opposite these eternal snows, at the base of the mountains, were the same bright foliage and smiling verdure that had before called forth our admiration in the valley of Maglan, presenting in vivid contrast the terrors of winter and the charms of summer, in the same scene. The cottages of the peasants in the valley, and the spires of the village churches relieved the landscape from the effect of its wilder and more savage features. The rapid and foaming river beneath us wound its way through the valley, until it was lost to the eye amid the surrounding mountains, and, falling occasionally in cascades over the rocks in its bed, completed the variety and beauty of the picture.

It was with some difficulty that we tore ourselves from the contemplation of this charming scene, to return to the inn, where everything was prepared for our journey. The carriage which was awaiting us, excited not a little merriment among our party, being a *char-a-banc*, one of those little vehicles you have seen represented in pictures of the Alps, where the persons within sit sideways, with their feet resting on a bench on the outside. On inquiring the motive for

making them in this manner, we were told that it was on account of the extreme narrowness of the roads, as this form allowed the wheels to be closer together than any other. They are built entirely without springs, so that you may imagine the roughness of their motion, but our spirits were elevated by the pure and exhilarating air of the mountains to such a degree, that trifling inconveniences were quite unheeded, and the beautiful variety of scenery on our route, contributed to banish all sense of personal *desagrémens*.

The finest view of Mont Blanc which we had during the day was from the brink of the small *Lac de Chède*, where its summit rises in dazzling magnificence above the dark green of the fir-clad mountains below it. A fine cascade in the vicinity of this splendid scene, closed the charms of the route, for it began gradually to change, as we approached more nearly to Mont Blanc, and we realized, on our arrival in the neighbourhood of this mighty mountain, in all its force, the poet's idea, that "distance lends enchantment to the view." The beauties, one by one, disappeared, or were rather lost in their exaggerated proportions, like objects in a fearful dream. The soft and cloud-like masses, which had appeared so graceful and lovely in the distance, changed to frightful and barren rocks, and the *needles* of Mont Blanc, those beautiful cones, which had so often challenged our admiration during our journey, we found composed of hundreds of flinty spires, bristling upon the sides of the mountain, and terminating in one enormous peak that seemed to cleave the very heavens.

We are near enough to see the glaciers, those wonders of which we read and hear so much, and have already passed quite close to the glacier de Bossons, esteemed one of the finest of them all, though not very large. We had not formed any distinct idea of their appearance, and as it may

be the same case with yourself, I will give you the result of our observation.

The valley in which we are at present, runs between two ranges of mountains, rising in a succession of lofty peaks, indented rather than separated by immense ravines, which are filled with these masses of ice. The largest of the glaciers are supposed to be formed from the streams beneath them, and from which some of the principal rivers of Europe derive their source. I am not philosopher enough to explain the process by which these streams produce the enormous masses of ice above them, or to say whether those masses have not rather been formed by the congelation of the melted snow on the sides of the mountains. All this must be left for wiser heads to settle;—the appearance is all I can speak of, and this is so very extraordinary, that any attempt to portray it will give but a faint idea of the reality.

The glacier de Bossons, which we passed on our way hither, resembles a *white hoar frost*, on the grandest imaginable scale; for some of the flakes, or spires of ice, are more than a hundred feet high. Those of this glacier appeared beautifully white, though they are often mingled with earth and stones, which are gradually forced up by the expansion of the ice, and it is not unusual to see rocks of a large size upon the tops of the spires.

MER DE GLACE.

Some idea of the enormous size of these frozen masses, is afforded us, by the fact of their undergoing no sensible diminution by the summer's sun, which we found warm enough to be very uncomfortable to our feelings.

The most splendid of these glaciers is the *Mer de Glace*,

so called both from its immense size and peculiar appearance, and it can be seen only by ascending the Mont Anvert in its vicinity. This we determined to do immediately after our arrival in the valley, and mules and guides were, accordingly, soon ready for the expedition. Behold us then, mounted on these long-eared steeds, with a man at the bridle rein to guide and direct their course, that is, of mine and a younger member of the party, for the gentlemen disdained such aid.

The best mule, and the most experienced guide being accorded, as a matter of course, to me, I had the honour of leading the van; and we began the toilsome ascent of a mountain six thousand feet high. Whether I should have had the courage to venture on such an expedition, if all its difficulties and fatigues had been distinctly foreseen, is rather a matter of doubt; though after it is happily accomplished, a visit to the *Mer de Glace*, certainly leaves nothing to regret.

The narrow and rugged path which we slowly pursued, wound in a zig-zag course up the mountain's side, and was so rocky and steep, that the mules were compelled to have recourse to a climbing attitude and motion, that was far from being agreeable. In addition to this, the pathway became narrower and narrower as we ascended, until there was barely room for the animal to tread, and while the almost interminable mass of rocks above seemed to be threatening us on one side, a fearful precipice yawned at our feet on the other.

Just on the brink of one of those precipices, whence the base of the mountain, several thousand feet below, was visible, the path had been washed by a recent shower, and a few inches more of earth on one side, or less on the other, would have rendered it impassable. While the guides were

exerting their skill to get us safely over it, the tinkling of bells was heard, and four cows suddenly made their appearance, walking very sedately one after the other, on the narrow and shelving ledge. At this rencontre there was a dead pause, for the cows seemed quite as unwilling to risk their necks as the mules, and there was no retreat for either. The matter was decided by my guide, who obliged the cows to yield in the only practicable way, which was to scramble a few feet up the side of the mountain, as just on that spot there was fortunately a little earth and grass, and there they contrived to remain, almost erect upon their hind legs, with their horns in the air, offering the agreeable probability of tumbling down upon us, with all the consequences of such a feat, while we were passing them.

After climbing up in this manner for three hours, we attained a small Hospice on the summit of the mountain, from which we had a full view of the *Mer de Glace*. The path leading to it presented more difficulties than any we had encountered in our ascent, but such an opportunity was too tempting to be declined, and being provided with the long iron-shod staves used by Alpine travellers on these occasions, we descended, and soon found ourselves amid these "thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice."

This glacier differs from that of the Bossons in the broader undulations of its surface, which are here blended into one common mass. The part which we visited, and as far as we could see it, (for it is eighteen miles in length, and a mile wide,) resembled immense waves of the ocean suddenly arrested in the midst of a violent storm, and converted into ice; and it is this resemblance which has given it its name of the *Mer de Glace*. A beautiful stream was shown us in the midst of the glacier, flowing rapidly in its

crystal bed, until it was lost in a chasm of the ice, which our guides told us was three hundred feet deep.

We walked about on this magnificent glacier, until the chilling effect warned us of the expediency of a retreat, and after resting half an hour at the Hospice, descended the mountain on foot, which, though very fatiguing from the rugged steepness of the path, was less disagreeable, and certainly less dangerous, than betaking ourselves again to the mules would have been.

THE COL DE BALM.

ADVENTURES IN THE VALLEY OF CHAMOUNI.—ROUTE OF THE COL DE BALM.—SPLENDID PROSPECT.—PLEASANT PROMENADE.

Martigny, August 4th.

We are now in the village of Martigny, which we reached last evening, after a few adventures that were not particularly agreeable.

Having decided to cross the mountains at the *Col de Balm*, in preference to the other road called the *Tête Noire*, though the latter had greatly the advantage in the smoothness of the ascent, we willingly made the sacrifice of our comfort for the sake of the superb view which was promised us from the summit of the *Col de Balm*, and began our march yesterday morning. The road admits the passage of a small *char-a-banc* only a short distance, and we were soon obliged to mount the mules as we had done on the Mont Anvert. The route, however, was less unpleasant, as it led up the side of a mountain; barren enough, it is true, but covered with a scanty coat of short grass, which rendered the motion of our little steeds less fatiguing than the scrambling gait of the former adventure; but this advantage we were not long to enjoy, for the path became steeper as we mounted higher, and to increase the difficulties of the ascent, the vapour-like clouds of which had been threatening us from the beginning of our journey, began to descend in

rain, which increased to a heavy shower before we reached the châlet on the summit of the *Col de Balm*.

It was happy for us that we had not the precipices of the route to the *Mer de Glace* to encounter, for a gust of wind came sweeping up from the valley below us with tornado-like violence, just before we attained the summit of the mountain. Finding it impossible to keep my seat on the mule, I descended and endeavoured to walk, but the soft earth yielded at every step, and the fatigue occasioned by our former excursion, in addition to the wind and rain, increasing every moment, convinced me that this too was entirely impracticable. In a sort of despair, I sat down on the grass, until the good old patient guide wrapped me in a cloak, and put me again on the mule, with an umbrella in my hand:—a most useless precaution, this last, for the wind instantly deprived me of it, and away it went whirling over and over, until it was fairly lodged on a bed of snow, in a ravine two miles distant on the other side of the mountain, where we found it afterwards in descending. Certain it is, that no palace was ever entered with more satisfaction than was the miserable hut on the summit of the *Col de Balm* on this occasion.

While we were drying our garments by a blazing fire, and partaking of the rude fare afforded by the châlet, the clouds gradually rose above the mountains, and left us a splendid view of the chain of Alps on each side of us. The valleys descending on either side of the *Col de Balm* wind like a river in its banks through these enormous heights, presenting in savage grandeur, and wild magnificence, a scene, of which any effort at description would be utterly fruitless. The snow-clad mountains of the interior of Switzerland, are its softest and most beautiful features, being the most *distant*; and in truth, this is a charm, which

for the future we shall, most probably, always associate with these awful regions.

Having been warned by our guides, that we should be obliged to walk a part of the way down the mountain on this side, we began our journey on foot, and soon found the reasonableness of their requisition in the steepness and difficulty of the path, as it was infinitely worse than anything we had heretofore encountered. With a staff in one hand, and the other resting on the arm of the good old guide, who told me, by way of encouragement, that I walked like a chamois, I trudged along. The gentlemen most probably found it little less laborious, though they (of course) scorned to complain, and we endeavoured to beguile the fatigue of the route by amusing ourselves with the wonderful tales of the guides about the hunters of the Alps, and making them again and again repeat the shrill and peculiar whistle of the mountains, which may be heard at a great distance, echoed from rock to rock. It reminded us of some of Sir Walter's scenes of the Highlands of Scotland, and we could almost have imagined the bands of Roderick Dhu springing up from the surrounding rocks and shrubs.

A flash of lightning warned us, when half our journey was accomplished, that the rain was not over; and the roar of the thunder, reverberating among the mountains, though grand and sublime, was far from producing a pleasing effect, when we considered the prospect before us. The rain soon again began to descend, and increased to such a torrent, that we took refuge in a little barn on the road side, where the newly gathered hay offered us a most welcome seat. Night was, however, approaching, and as the guides told us it would rather grow worse than better, we continued our toilsome march, and arrived at Martigny, drenched

with rain, after an agreeable little promenade of nearly four leagues, upon a road over which an English or a Virginia sportsman would hardly have trusted his favourite dog, and certainly not his horse.

To-day we are reposing after our adventures, but our design is to reach the top of the grand Mont St. Bernard to-morrow, where the hospice and all its wonders will afford a good excuse for the continuation of my journal.

MONT ST. BERNARD.

ASCENT OF THE GREAT ST. BERNARD.—PICTURE OF A CARAVAN ON THE ROUTE TO THE PROPHET'S TOMB.—KIND RECEPTION BY THE FATHERS OF THE HOSPICE.—THE DOGS OF ST. BERNARD.—THE CHAPEL.—THE MORGUE.—CHIEF PLEASURE OF THE VISIT.

WE left the little town of Martigny early on the fifth, and began our pilgrimage to the celebrated Mont St. Bernard. The ascent of the Alps commences near the town, but the road is wide enough to admit of a small *char-a-banc* for more than half the distance to the Hospice. The mules, with their saddles on, were, accordingly attached to the little vehicle, and slowly drew us up the mountain. Everything around us looked dark, gloomy and barren, and the few inhabitants of the mountains we encountered, were proportionally miserable;—frequently deformed by the *goître*, and occasionally presenting the idiotic countenance of the unfortunate *Crétins*. This continued until more than half the ascent was accomplished, when we reached the auberge, where it was necessary to refresh the mules and dismiss the *char-a-banc*.

At this little inn, we found a number of travellers, French and English, who were, as well as ourselves, going to the Hospice, and we all took our departure at the same moment, mounted upon the mules. The size of the party made it more agreeable, and there were some persons present, who afforded not a little merriment to the rest, particularly a

certain baroness of our acquaintance, who never having mounted a horse in her life, was then upon her first equestrian expedition; and with one guide to hold her on the saddle, and another at her bridle rein, she rode with all the grace of—a sack of corn on a voyage to the mill.

The part of the route we were then traversing was really beautiful and very highly cultivated;—steep and mountainous always,—but walled up in a succession of terraces, that at a distance looked almost like stair steps. The peasants, who, just in this smiling spot appeared far happier, healthier, and superior in every respect to those we had met with before, were just gathering in a rich golden harvest; and though we were interested in this appearance of industry and comfort, so rare in these barren regions, it was rather inconvenient for us, as the huge loads of wheat and rye upon the little donkeys, who were as effectually concealed by them as Macduff's army by the forest boughs of Dunsinane, interrupted our progress every moment.

We slowly continued our journey for one or two leagues, when the aspect of the mountains gradually changed, and at last became awfully gloomy. For several miles before we reached the Hospice, a barren and frightful wilderness was all in view. High and enormous mountains lifted their craggy and peaked summits, covered with snow, above the clouds, and nearer their base, where we were pursuing our toilsome and rugged pathway, we saw nothing but arid rocks, and occasionally a brawling torrent, rushing down their steep sides across the road. Not a vestige of human habitation, or cultivation was in sight,—not a tree or a shrub to be seen,—not even a tuft of the *Rhododendron* or Alpine rose, which flourishes best among the rocks of the high Alps.

Amid this scene of desolation our party slowly wandered,

one after another, and as it was composed, altogether, of about twenty persons, with baggage mules, and a large supply of provender, we might have formed no unapt representation of the worshippers of Mahomet, going on a pilgrimage to the tomb of the prophet.

When we arrived within half a league of the Hospice, our attention was drawn toward a small stone building, the first we had seen for a long time, and we were informed that it was one of the hospitals of St. Bernard. On looking into it, the only object within was far from contributing to soften the feeling of awe inspired by our route;—the dead body of an unfortunate traveller met our startled view. Seated in an attitude of listlessness and despair, the mournful appearance of this poor tenement of clay, whose spirit had long since sought another home, sufficiently indicated the manner in which he had encountered the great destroyer. The body was in the same dress and attitude in which it was discovered in the snow of the wilderness, and placed in this manner to be recognised by the friends and relatives of the deceased.

Turning away from this melancholy spectacle, which effectually banished the few traces of gaiety left during our pilgrimage, we continued to proceed; passing still over rocks and among mountains, through snow banks of several feet in depth, until we arrived at the celebrated Hospice of St. Bernard.

Two huge dogs first welcomed our arrival, followed by a comely, well dressed, amiable looking priest, who invited us to enter without any ceremony, and very kindly made all the necessary arrangements for our accommodation. It was late in the evening when we arrived, and though the first part of the day had been uncomfortably warm at the foot of the mountain,—in this region of eternal snows, we

were chilled through. It was really bitter cold, and all the party flocked around the fire as eagerly as we should do in the month of December, for the transition made it much more severe.

Brilliant anticipations of the luxurious fare of the monks of the Hospice had been indulged and expressed by several of our travellers, and there was a laughable elongation of faces among them, when an apology was made for the frugal meal to which we were conducted,—it happened to be a *fast day*. The slight repast offered us was, indeed, hardly sufficient for wearied travellers, and salad and dried prunes were not exactly the sort of fare calculated to repel the searching cold. We soon retired to our allotted apartments, where, notwithstanding the want of fire-places, and the stony hardness of the beds, we managed to sleep profoundly.

Early in the morning we were roused by the chant of the priests, who were saying mass in the church, which was under the same roof and quite near our rooms. Having made a hasty toilette, we sallied out, and a few steps led us into the midst of them. We found it quite a respectable church, and considering the situation, handsomely arranged, and apparently kept in the neatest order. The most remarkable thing within it is a fine marble monument to the memory of Dessaix, ornamented with several superb bas-reliefs, one of which represents him in his last moments at the battle of Marengo.

After putting our contribution in the *tronc*, which is a ceremony of some consequence in this establishment, where entertainment is *nominally* offered gratuitously, we made our retreat, and while the rest of the party visited the *Morgue* I employed myself in making a collection of the delicate little flowers which grow in great numbers around the lake,—for there is a lake about a hundred yards long in this ele-

vated spot, though it is frozen nine months in the year. These little flowers are peculiarly delicate and beautiful, and I found about twenty different sorts in as many minutes. While I was occupied in putting them between the leaves of a *guide du voyageur*, which served for a temporary herbarium, the party, who had finished their visit to the *Morgue*, returned with dejected looks from this repository of the dead. Within it are always a number of human bodies, found in this bleak and houseless region, which after having undergone every means of restoration to life without effect, are placed in the garments and attitude in which they are first discovered by the servants and dogs of the Hospice, who are daily employed during the winter in looking for them. The dogs are immensely large, gentle, and very sagacious, and remarkable for the acuteness of their scent. These qualities render them such useful auxiliaries of the *maronniers*, or men who seek for the travellers, as instances have sometimes occurred when persons have been restored to life, after being actually disinterred by these faithful animals from the snow drifts beneath which they were buried.

We did not think it worth while to waste our time by looking over the books which are kept in the principal *salon* for the effusions of travellers. Our researches were limited to the scrap of Madame de Stael, which has been so often criticised by tourists, and which seemed to us remarkable only for being an odd mixture of fine words, without beginning or end.

But though we did not trouble ourselves to read what other people had written, we could not resist the temptation of adding a little to the nonsense annually scribbled here, and if any one should ever take the trouble to decypher my contribution, it will most probably bring to mind the droll exclamation of the good gentleman who left a book at

the house on the Montanvert, near the *Mer de Glace*, to receive the brilliant thoughts of the visitors he supposed would succeed him. He says, “*J’ai pensé que les grandes impressions que l’on recoit ici, donneraient de grandes pensées; que la pureté la légèreté de l’air qu’on y respire, les ferait rendre avec netteté: par suite j’ai donné un registre au Montanvert, pour que les voyageurs y consignassent leurs réflexions. Je m’en repens—ce que j’ai lu,—ce que je lis ici, me désespère. On a du bon sens quand on se détermine à voir la vallée de Chamouni, mais je vois qu’on le perd en y arrivant.*” The laughable despair of this worthy personage would be perhaps heightened if he were to see the scrap I perpetrated, but happily it will not offend his eye, and you have a claim to it, as I promised you all my thoughts during the journey.

In distance seen, thou Alpine height,
 How soft thy azure tints appear,
 And when in sun-set’s roseate light
 How brightly pure, how calmly fair!

Thus to the ravish’d eye of youth
 Appears the world in colours bright,
 Eager he flies to know the truth
 And snatch the bliss that charms his sight.

Thou Alpine height! how chang’d thy form,
 As thy tremendous base we near,
 Thy awful peaks amid the storm
 In dread sublimity appear!

Alas! poor youth! couldst thou have known
 That world thou hast so gaily sought,
 Its wearying cares,—its chilling frown,—
 And e’en its joys,—how dearly bought!

Yet if in virtue's rugged path,
To thee "to overcome" is given,
Receive the sacred staff of faith,
Ascend!—Ascend!—and mount to Heaven!

It would be difficult to say what gave rise to such a comparison at such a moment, for it is certain that none of us ever felt less disposed to quarrel with the world, than when we found ourselves, as it were, completely out of it.

With unusual alacrity we mounted our steeds to descend the mountain, and all of us heartily agreed to the suggestion of one of our party, that "it was really worth the trouble of paying a visit to the grand Mont St. Bernard, *for the pleasure of getting away.*"

THE CITÉ D'AOST.

DESCENT ON THE ITALIAN SIDE OF THE ALPS.—ROMAN ANTIQUITIES, CASTLES OF THE MIDDLE AGES.—THE HAUNTED TOWER.—PIEDMONT.—FORT DE BARD.—IVREE.—A WARNING.—AN ALPINE STORM.—PIVARONE.—THE CHEVALIER LEONE.—OUR HOST'S STORY.—THE SOLDIER'S BRIDE.

THE descent of the St. Bernard, on the southern side, resembles the ascent on the other for some distance;—always wild and savage, and for the first three leagues, which we were compelled to descend upon the mules, the same naked and barren rocks, the same huge mountains, appropriately called *Montagnes Mortes*, destitute of trees or human habitations, presented themselves on every side.

It was with no small satisfaction that we reached the little village of St. Remy, whence a small *char-a-banc* was practicable to the Cité D'Aost, at the foot of the mountain. The descent from this place was comparatively easy, though the road runs during the whole distance upon the edge of a precipice so frightful, that it appears wonderful how Napoleon with his sixty thousand men and artillery could have passed it in safety, especially at that season of the year, for in many parts of the road we remarked poles of twenty and thirty feet in height, planted to mark its course when buried in snow. A place on the edge of the ravine was shown us, where the first consul's horse slipped, and he was saved only by the presence of a man near

him, who is still living to boast of having preserved this life, then so precious to all around him.

As we approached the Cité D'Aost, our attention was particularly attracted by the picturesque vineyards in its vicinity. A number of terraces are walled up against the side of the mountain, all of which are surmounted with columns; and the vines being planted several feet behind them, and trained on frames supported by these columns, they resemble a succession of porticos, covered with vines. Here, as well as throughout the Vallée D'Aost, the peculiar and graceful appearance of the vineyards cannot fail to attract and refresh the eye of the traveller. In some places the vines are trained to hang in rich festoons, and the fruit is particularly fine, as its depending position affords it the full benefit of the sun, unimpeded by the foliage above.

A few hours delay in the Cité D'Aost were not unwelcome, after our adventures amid the mountains, and while arrangements for the continuation of our journey, which we left to the good judgment of our obliging *compagnon de voyage*, were going on, we took the opportunity of seeking out some of the antiquities of the town. These, notwithstanding the frequent notice of them by travellers, we found "few and far between," but they are, nevertheless, interesting.

Our attention was first attracted by a fine old Roman relique, a triumphal arch, which is in a wonderful state of preservation, considering that it was, as is testified by inscriptions upon it, built thirty years before the Christian era. The Corinthian capitals, with which it is adorned are still beautiful, though the stone has, as it were, melted beneath the touch of time, until they are half worn away.

The remains of an amphitheatre of immense magnitude were likewise pointed out, and these, with a bridge, and

part of the ancient walls of the city, were all that we saw of Roman antiquities. The most remarkable characteristic of these remnants of by-gone days is the immense size of the stones of which they are composed, by which the works of the ancients may always be distinguished from those of the middle ages.

Among the curiosities of the Cité D'Aost, the remains of a feudal castle were shown us, and one of its ruined towers is regarded with superstitious awe by the inhabitants, who devoutly believe it to be the abode of a spirit. The unhappy lady, who they say appears nightly on its walls, was starved to death by a jealous husband; and the plaintive cries of this poor famished ghost, have given to the tower the name of *cris-de-faim*, which has been changed by the rough *patois* of the peasants into *Bramafam*, by which title it is recognized.

The house of the leprous man, who has been made the hero of a pretty little tale, was likewise displayed, though it is much more interesting in the romance than in reality.

While we were examining these antiquities, the preparations for the continuation of our journey were completed, though we were much disappointed to learn that one of the three queens of Sardinia was then on a visit in this part of the country, and that in anticipation of her return, all the post horses had been ordered into her service. As it required relays of nearly five hundred horses for her majesty and suite, we were obliged to forego the pleasure of travelling post from the Cité D'Aost, and our last resource was to take possession of the only carriage and pair left in the town, and which, as may be supposed, afforded rather a blank prospect for either comfort or speed.

We were, however, consoled for the slowness of our progress by the beauty of the scenery in the Vallée D'Aost,

enlivened as it is by the rapid and romantic Doria, which winds its way through every variety of cultivated fields, and woods almost deserving the name of forests. You may well imagine that the contrast of all these with the arid and frightful desert we had so recently left, enhanced their charms in our eyes.

This beautiful valley must doubtless be rich in "legendary lore," for at the base of the mountains, on picturesque heights throughout its whole length, are a number of fine old castles, with all their accompaniments of walls, and towers, and loop-holes, and donjon keeps, and battlements. We were told that none of them were inhabited, and that the fertile fields, over which they domineered, were all the property of a certain countess, some relative of the existing royal family. The romance, however, if there was any, must have been confined to the inhabitants of the castles, who were probably as far elevated above the people in the plain in personal advantages and education, as their towering habitations were superior to the wretched huts of the peasants below. It would be impossible to exaggerate the miserable appearance of these poor creatures, for hardly one of those we met among them presented the ordinary proportions of humanity. In some of them, the goitre was frightfully conspicuous, in others the features and limbs distorted, and frequently the countenance denoting perfect idiocy. Even the children that we saw seemed to have inherited the misfortunes of their unhappy parents.

The most interesting object in our second day's ride through this valley was the Fort de Bard, which being built on a high promontory of rock, projecting from the enormous mountain on one side, leaves barely room for the river to pass between it and the opposing mountain on the other side. The road runs through the principal street in the

small town, the houses of which on one side are built against the mountain, and the other against the rock on which stands the fort; and in many places there are bridges which pass from the top of the houses in the town to the fort. It therefore excites no little surprise, and requires no small effort of the imagination to conceive how Napoleon could have passed his artillery through this difficult and dangerous defile, then defended by the Austrians, who had given solemn assurance that such an *impossibility* could not, and should never be achieved. It is a sufficient monument in itself of the talent, courage and perseverance of this wonderful man.

We stopped at the town of Ivree at the termination of the Valleé D'Aost, in the hope again of being able to procure post-horses; but the same reason still existed why we could not have them, and we were obliged again to engage our old *voiturier* with his poor jaded horses. While we were waiting for them to take a little refreshment, a lady, apparently of some rank and consequence, having stopped at the same house, and breakfasted in the same room with us, entered into conversation, and talking volubly on many subjects, told us that she lived very near. She described her country as one of peculiar loveliness, (to which we willingly added our testimony,) and bewailed the miserable condition of its population, which she said were as unprincipled and vicious, as they were hideous and deformed; that their characters were in exact accordance with their appearance. The ideas of robbery and murder, if they had never entered my head before, might have intruded themselves after her account, which was expressed in the glowing style of her country. Seeing us preparing to depart, she advised us strongly, if we had any regard for our safety or comfort, to take warning by the clouds that were hovering over the

river, and the muttered threats of the distant thunder, and to postpone our departure a few hours, telling us that the storms in that part of Piedmont were extremely violent, and that we might probably repent of our experiment when it was too late. We, however, paid but little attention to her suggestions, and continued our journey.

When we had proceeded a few leagues, the heavens became darker and darker until everything was involved in a portentous gloom: the wind blew in fitful gusts, and everything announced the approach of the tempest, which at length broke forth with unparalleled fury. For two hours and a half it raged with unremitting violence. The sharp and vivid flashes of lightning came in quick succession, followed by the deafening roar of the thunder, and the rain, mingled with a "pelting, pitiless" hail, poured like a deluge. The road was soon flooded with water in such a manner that it was impossible to distinguish it, and the little rivulets that crossed it at intervals were swollen to torrents.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, we continued to proceed, hoping to reach a place of shelter, until a tree, felled by the wind across the road, impeded our progress. A man, who happened to be running in the same direction, with an axe in his hand, aided the coachman in taking it out of the way, as the smaller branches only, of the tree, were lying in the road, and told us that a quarter of an hour more would bring us to the village to which he was hastening.

Just as we came in view of the wished for village, and as the alarmed coachman was considering the aspect of a torrent which impeded his progress, a large tree fell immediately before the horses' heads, while another came down with a crash behind, and thus left us almost in the bed of a roaring flood, increasing every instant. At this new obstacle, the poor old coachman, who had been gradually losing the

few ideas he possessed, completely lost all presence of mind, and letting the reins fall in an agony of despair, he jumped from his seat, and with his hands clasped, and upturned eyes, began an "*ave Maria*."

It was not to the influence of Latin prayers that I attributed the merciful interposition of that divine hand which watched over and protected us during this scene of peril; but it was by that Providence that we were forcibly, as it were, detained just in the spot where we had been blocked up, for it was comparatively sheltered, and there we were compelled to remain until the subsiding rain permitted some of the villagers to see us. In the course of half an hour the torrent, which had been chiefly formed by the deluge of rain during the storm, began to diminish. As it subsided, the villagers flocked out, and, provided with poles to feel their way, several of them undertook to come to our assistance. The tree was soon cut out of the way, and with the aid of a coachman, who appeared to have rather more skill and presence of mind than our own, we passed the torrent, and arrived in a few minutes in the village, with which we had been so long tantalized.

A respectable looking old man with a bottle of wine in his hand, came to the carriage, and insisted on our partaking of it as an antidote to the cold and wet, and his cordial manner, in addition to the disinterestedness of the men who had aided us to reach the village, and who positively refused to receive any compensation for the valuable service they had rendered us, convinced us that our acquaintance at the inn knew but little of the characters of those people she despised and feared. It effectually proved the justice of the old rule to "believe only half what we hear," for though her account of the storm was fully verified, she was certainly not correct in her judgment of the characters of her coun-

trymen. We may, however, say in her justification, that we had observed a marked difference in the country as well as the population, from the time we emerged from the Valleé D'Aost, and her account was perhaps not intended to apply to the village of Pivaroné, in which we then were.

A slight examination of the only inn in the village, which presented an aspect of woful desolation and discomfort, together with the kind and cordial manner of the old gentleman, who had accosted us while in the carriage, and still remained near us, induced us to accept his hospitable offer of receiving us for the night.

“My house is but a poor one,” he said, “but you will have, at least, a shelter from the storm, and a kind and hearty welcome.”

Without farther hesitation, we followed him to his house, though in the first glance, there was little else than his frank welcome to recommend it.

A fat rosy little woman, whom he introduced as his wife, though her juvenile appearance would have announced her to be his daughter, took me by the hand at the door, and led me to a seat in the middle of the room, where we entered, and the appearance of which was so very extraordinary, that a slight sketch of it may not be uninteresting to you.

There was just light enough in the apartment to render “darkness visible,” and it was with some difficulty that we groped our way to our allotted seats, over the rough, unpaved floor, unpaved even with bricks or stones, for it was neither more nor less than the naked earth, beaten into a hard and uneven surface. Upon this floor were gambolling whole nests of kittens and cats, dogs and puppies, and little children, who appeared to be the best friends in the world. Two or three stout young men were walking about the room, and a delicate and rather pretty looking woman,

who was called a sister-in-law of the family, was seated upon a sort of sofa, with a fan and snuff-box, evidently playing the fine lady. The man, who had conducted us over the torrent, was in attendance behind her chair, and as we learned, was her servant. Two young Catholic priests, in their black gowns, were likewise present, and from their ease and familiarity, we soon judged formed part of the family. A good-natured, slip-shod woman servant, who appeared to be the only domestic of the house, flourished about, laughing and talking at the highest pitch of her voice, and apparently giving as many orders to her mistress, as she received from her.

All these things we saw by the light of two or three tallow candles, which were soon brought in, for it was quite too dark before, to form any opinion of these good people.

A long consultation between the mistress and the maid, ended in a proposition to conduct us up stairs, where we had the promise of private rooms for a dry toilette, of which we all stood in need after our exposure to the storm, and we were preceded with much ceremony up a sort of ladder which served for a stairway. This appeared the more strange, as there was an ample stairway of stone leading nearly in the same direction, and landing in the same passage where our ladder terminated; but for some reason, best known to themselves, they had preferred the ladder. When we at length arrived on the second floor, we were not a little surprised at being conducted quite in state from one room to another, until we had passed through five large apartments, high pitched and airy, with vaulted ceilings, and enormous windows and doors. The furniture of one of these rooms bore marks of former grandeur, for the walls were tapestried with crimson damask, and the bed curtains were of the same rich material, while on the cornice above,

still waved the white plumes that are seen in the chambers of princes. The walls of all these apartments were hung with old fashioned paintings, and coats of arms and heraldic devices were pointed out with no little pride by the master of the house, who now announced himself as *the chevalier Leone*, and who led the way through the rooms, though every step was accompanied with an apology for having nothing better to offer.

We had hardly time to make the desired change in our garments, and to assemble our little group around a blazing fire in one of the chambers, when all the family, one after another, the priests among the rest, flocked into the room, where they all sat until supper was announced. We then descended to the supper room, which we found to be the same we had first entered. The ample board was spread with excellent fare,—fish, flesh and fowl, vegetables and fruit, cakes and compôtes, and all manner of *et ceterus*, were accompanied with a variety of excellent wines, which all the company appeared to find to their taste, particularly the two young priests, who swallowed glass after glass of the sparkling Malvoisie, until one of them appeared to be considerably inspired, and began in a sort of improvisatore strain, to relate stories, much to the amusement of the company.

We could not enter into the merit of his tales, not at all understanding the barbarous *patois*, and but imperfectly the soft and flowing Italian, in which he alternately spoke, but they seemed highly diverting to the family, particularly the maid servant, who stood behind him, giving him an occasional slap on the shoulder, or a playful and encouraging pull by the ear, as she found the story amusing and agreeable.

Our excellent host was too polite long to permit any diversion to the members of his own family, in which his

guests could not participate. He gently withdrew their attention from the improvisatore stories of the young priest, and related some of his own adventures during the early part of his life, which soon absorbed the attention of his hearers. The flower of his youth, he told us, was spent in the army, and several years in the service of Napoleon. During this period of his eventful history, he had been taken prisoner by the Austrians, and eighteen long and weary years of captivity had been his hard lot. In addition to the outlines of his own history, he gave us a more detailed account of that of a young officer of Napoleon's army, which was so full of romantic interest, that though I may run some risk of mistakes in repeating it, as I cannot undertake to give it in the *patois* French of our host, I must still ask permission to translate for you in my own way.

THE SOLDIER'S BRIDE.

The eighteenth century had just terminated its dark and stormy career, and a new era, illuminated by the "rising sun of Napoleon," began to dawn on the world. Already had that genius and valour been displayed, which had awakened the enthusiasm of his own nation, and had not only aroused the jealousies of all Europe, but even the haughtiness of Oriental Rulers had been humbled before him, and the mysterious and stately monuments of Egyptian pride had witnessed the terror of his arms. The sudden return of the conqueror from his campaign in the east, though unexpected, as undesired, by the *Directoire Français*, was hailed with apparent enthusiasm by all classes of *la grande nation*, and the peals of the merry bells, the brilliancy of the fire works and illuminations, the splendour of the *fêtes* that awaited his appearance in the metropolis,

bore testimony to the delirium of joy that agitated the public mind. But though again, after a long and perilous campaign, restored to his home and friends, an innate contempt of the forms of fashionable society, united to a deep and settled policy, often deprived the brilliant circles of the capital of their eagerly expected guest. Absorbed, apparently, in literary or scientific pursuits, the gay throng in vain awaited his arrival at the theatre, the *salon*, or the ball room. He came not,—nor was any apology or explanation offered to justify his absence. At this period it may be easily imagined that the amiable Josephine was the cynosure of all eyes. Though already anticipating the splendid destiny, which a mysterious prophecy had, in her youth, partly revealed to her, no pride or hauteur was ever awakened by it in her gentle heart;—and, followed, admired, caressed, beloved by all, she received the homage which her august partner so unceremoniously declined. To the charm of a kind and affable deportment, was added the attraction of taste, elegance and luxury, and the salons of the future empress were, even at that time, thronged with the *élite* of the gay, the literary, and the fashionable world.

It was at one of these receptions, more than usually brilliant and crowded, that two young officers, who had made their easy and graceful *entré* exchanged compliments with their numerous acquaintance throughout the rooms. They then retreated behind a group of *savans*, assembled around a collection of rich and curious specimens of oriental art, and antiques that defied even the experienced eye of Volney, and the criticism of the accomplished daughter of Neckar, apparently with the design of conversing together, without the restraint which a large and splendid circle necessarily imposed.

“Thou art apparently a favourite here, de Beaufort,”

said one of these young gallants to his companion, who seemed somewhat his senior in years as well as rank, and whose frank and manly bearing accorded well with his fine person and military dress.

“If I am indeed so fortunate, Alphonse,” he replied with a smile, “it is a happiness easily attained, and one which I am persuaded will sooner or later be the lot of my young friend. It is only necessary to sacrifice in some degree that delicate brilliancy of complexion, which is indeed too effeminate for our bold calling;—with a trusty *toledo* in the land of the Moslem, to return resolutely the blows dealt by the *yataghan* of the Mameluke, and to receive, in the stead of a superior officer, such a mark of courtesy as this.”—As he spoke, he passed his hand slightly through the dark locks that clustered around his noble forehead, (which still retained its original fairness, though the rest of his handsome features had received a tinge from a warmer sun than that which lightens the skies of “la belle France”) and revealed on the temple a small but deep scar. “Did it not savour too much of boasting,” he continued, “I might recommend to your notice, too, the crooked blade which bestowed the favour on me, and which is now passing from hand to hand, among these *savans* near us, who seem to have forgotten the levity with which they were treated among the pyramids, when, as soon as an attack was threatened, the exclamation was, ‘Put the asses and the *savans* in the middle.’ But let us turn to a more congenial theme,” he added gaily, “I have a thousand questions to ask about old friends and”—

“And young ones, doubtless, also,” said his youthful companion, laughing as he finished the sentence for him. “The Egyptian campaign cannot surely have banished the recollection of the beautiful Estelle”—A slight glance of re-

proachful warning was the only reply of de Beaufort to his volatile companion, for at this instant a newly arrived group appeared in the apartment, and the two young friends joined the throng, who pressed forward to offer the homage of their respect to the persons of whom this group was composed.

It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast than these persons presented. A tall and gaunt, yet stately looking man, on whose head had already descended the snows of age, and whose rigid features and heavy brow betokened rather more than the firmness they usually indicate, advanced into the apartment, and on his bony arm gently reposed that of a young girl, whose loveliness and grace might well claim for her the title so recently bestowed on her by Alphonse de Montalais, of "the beautiful Estelle." It was not, however, the rare union of a complexion of almost dazzling fairness with the soft dark eyes of a warmer clime, the exquisitely moulded features, the "*vermeil* tintured lip, and tresses like the morn," and the symmetrical loveliness of her person, that imparted to Estelle St. Helene the charm which all who approached her felt and acknowledged. It was to the pure and gentle heart, and the richly cultivated mind, which beamed through her eyes, and heightened the loveliness of her varying cheek with every changing thought, that the fascination might rather be attributed. To the "rose of England," which she inherited from her mother, had been added, both by nature and education, those solid virtues and attainments, which, when united to the brilliant graces of the French capital, are always irresistible.

Close in attendance upon this singularly contrasted pair, and apparently an *attaché* to their party, came a young man, whose face and mien were almost as remarkable as

those of the two personages who immediately preceded him. His bearing and address denoted gentle birth and breeding, yet his person was ungainly; his smile resembled rather the sneer of the "Corsair" than that of the carpet knight; and there was something in the glance of his piercing eye that startled while it riveted the attention of the observer. There was a degree of watchful jealousy in the attentions he from time to time bestowed upon the fair Estelle, which seemed to be a source of as much annoyance to her, as of complacent approbation on the part of her stern companion. The trio made their progress through the apartments, interrupted at every step by the homage of the large and brilliant assembly, and at length approached the group behind which de Beaufort and his friend had retreated before they were withdrawn by this new attraction.

The sabre which he had commended to the notice of de Montalais was now in the hands of a virtuoso, who was so intent on the examination of its embossed and jewelled handle, that he forgot the position of the crooked blade, and by a slight movement of his hand, the keen edge came in contact with the fair arm of the youthful beauty, who was standing near, unconscious of her danger. The exclamations of surprise and terror that echoed round first awakened the virtuoso to a sense of the mischief he had perpetrated, and in despair at the discovery, he expressed a thousand regrets; but the care with which the extent of the injury was instantly concealed by the thick folds of a cachemire, and the gentle smile which responded to his voluble apologies, assured him, more than words could have done, that he was forgiven. De Beaufort, who saw the movement, and sprang forward to arrest the hand of the luckless virtuoso, removed the weapon to a more secure place,—but, lingering for an instant under this pretext, he found an op-

portunity of saying, in a tone so low that none but the most acute observer could have divined the import of his words, "Is it an omen of good or of evil, that what hath been aimed at the heart of de Beaufort, should also have wounded Estelle?" Softly as these words were uttered, they were caught by the listening ear of the watchful *attaché*, though they were noticed only by a basilisk side-glance; but the deep blush, which suffused the cheek of the lovely being to whom they were addressed, and the down-cast expression of her starry eyes, told him that neither the words nor the half suppressed sigh, which accompanied them, had been unheard by her.

The accident, which had occurred, afforded her haughty protector an excuse for abridging a visit seemingly made with reluctance, and in less than an hour after their entrance, they were sought for in vain,—they had left the brilliant scene.

"Beautiful as ever, and gentle as beautiful!" exclaimed de Beaufort, as he threw himself on the coach seat by the side of his youthful companion, after giving the brief order of "à l'hôtel," to his domestics.

"And lovely in character as in person," added de Montalais, as if continuing the train of thought awakened in the mind of his friend. "It were surely a deed of noble daring to rescue this angelic being from the iron grasp of such a guardian as the old Comte Grimaldi, and an action yet more meritorious to redeem her from the frightful thralldom with which she is threatened in falling into the clutches of his detestable nephew. I marvel, that she withers not beneath the glance of d'Arnauld, as a rose of our fair clime would perish in the scorching rays of an Egyptain sun. But women, even the loveliest and the best, have their

caprices, and the world says, that the fair Estelle is ere long to become the bride of d'Arnauld."

"Estelle St. Helène the bride of d'Arnauld!" repeated de Beaufort, who had been roused by the last words of his companion from the deep reverie into which he had fallen. "Never, Alphonso! *never!*" he added yet more energetically. "They may force her into a convent as the only asylum where she can be secure from their persecution,—they may rob her of the fair heritage left her by her noble father,—but orphan, and unprotected as she is, save by those whose courtesies are to her what the breath of the simoom is to the traveller in the eastern desert, she has received an inheritance more precious than the world's gold, in a spirit that would never brook such an indignity, or could not survive it. No!—The hand of Estelle will never be bestowed on mortal man unaccompanied by her heart." De Montalais shook his head and smiled.

"Miracles as great," he said, "have been wrought by hands less skilful, and hearts less daring."—He was interrupted by his friend, who suddenly grasped his arm, while the flashing light of a lamp that streamed for an instant through the coach window, betrayed the emotion which agitated his fine features.

"Forgive me, Alphonse," he said, at length, "if I have interrupted you rather rudely. This is a theme on which the slightest approach to levity offends my ear and wounds my heart. You have often reproached me with the mysterious concealment which marks all my communications on this subject, nor do I feel assured that I am right in speaking with less reserve at present; yet, from a friend so kind and so discreet, I can withhold nothing. Know then, that the troth of Estelle St. Helène has long since been plighted to me, and that her father's blessing sealed the

precious gift. My brain would turn if I were to attempt a relation of all the circumstances which have led to our present estrangement. 'The machinations and artifices, which have been employed for this purpose, have taxed to the utmost the iron inflexibility of Grimaldi, and the subtle ingenuity of d'Arnauld. Yet I fear them not,—and were I convinced that the heart of Estelle is still mine, no human malice, no earthly power should snatch her from me.'

"If there is aught in the testimony of 'a thousand blushing apparitions' that flitted over her fair face as her eye encountered yours," said de Montalais, who had listened with the deepest interest to the communication of his friend, "you would be unjust to doubt it. But why," he continued, "do you not immediately resolve these doubts by explanations that could not fail to be satisfactory? It would be difficult to persuade me that the eloquence of Eugène de Beaufort could fail in such a cause."

"Briefly," replied de Beaufort, "because it is impossible. To-morrow's sun will find me on my way to the Rhine, and though I have, at present, the prospect of a speedy return to the metropolis, I know not what work may be carved out for me when once there, though at present my purpose is merely to deliver the communications with which I am charged, and which could not have been entrusted to other hands."

"True," said de Montalais, musing, "our rude trade affords but small leisure for softer and more pleasing occupations—yet perchance, a letter"—

"In vain," interrupted de Beaufort hastily,—“I know too well from sad experience, the sleepless vigilance that bars all access to so unwelcome a messenger. I must bear my present griefs as I may, until my return, which I trust

will not long be delayed; and then my destiny for good or ill shall be determined, whatever it may cost me."

They passed, as he uttered these words, through the *porte-cochère* of de Beaufort's hotel, and after exchanging affectionate adieus, the two friends separated for the night.

In one of the finest of the ancient hotels of "Le Noble Faubourg," a suite of apartments had been thrown open as if for the reception of visitors. The rich gilding of the vaulted ceilings, the size and magnificence of the mirrors that covered the walls, save where rich specimens of Italian art occupied a portion of the space; the draperies of crimson velvet with their deep fringes of gold, and above all the costly luxury of the superb carpeting and tapestry of the finest Gobelin work, displayed the luxurious taste of the possessor of the mansion. The evening had closed in, and the rich lustres and *or moulu* candelabras threw their brilliant light around,—but the splendid apartments were still unoccupied. At length, a light step approached, and the fairy form of Estelle St. Helène was reflected again and again by the brilliant mirrors around her.

With a slow and uncertain step, she passed through the gorgeous suite of rooms, and paused not until she reached a small apartment at the extremity. Bestowing a slight glance on the delicate tapestry of folds of white satin that draped the walls, and the exquisite gems of art, both in painting and statuary, with which it was adorned, she approached the mosaic table, surmounted by a *Sèvres* vase of the rarest workmanship, filled with exotic flowers, which, even more than the softened moonlight lustre shed through vases of alabaster, marked the *boudoir*. She selected from among them a half blown rose, in which the faint tinge rivalled her own pure cheek, and for some moments ap-

peared absorbed in thought as her downcast eyes rested upon it.

“Sweet rose of Provence!” at length she exclaimed, as a tear fell through her long silken lashes. “How little did I dream, when last I placed thy dewy blossoms in my hair, that when next I saw them, they would be moistened with my tears!” A slight shudder passed over her frame, as the sound of a step on the marble stair-way interrupted her reverie,—but a transient ray of surprise as well as pleasure illumined her features, when, instead of the anticipated intruder, her father’s faithful old steward, Pierre Dubois, stood before her.

“Pardon me, my dear young lady,” he said with a respectful reverence, “for interrupting you at so unseasonable an hour, and when you are probably in expectation of more distinguished visitors, as these illuminated halls would testify;—but my duties in the metropolis are ended, and I am about to return to my native land. I could not, however, resolve to depart, until I had seen, once more, the daughter of my excellent and lamented lord. To-morrow, I propose returning to the land of my fathers.”

“To Switzerland!” exclaimed Estelle. “Oh my kind, I had almost said, my only friend, do not desert me at such a time as this; delay your departure at least a few weeks, for I know not to what desperate extremity I may be driven in that time!” She covered her face with her hands as she spoke, and the tears fell fast through her fair and slender fingers. Pierre stood in respectful silence, until her emotion permitted her again to speak. “You see, Dubois,” she said at length, looking up, “how much less happy I am in this magnificent prison than when, in our old chateau of Provence, I was free as the birds and the flowers. But more than this, I cannot now tell you. Let me, however, conjure

you not to leave me yet; seldom as you can gain admittance to me, it is still a consolation to have you near.—Promise me, then, that you will remain.”

“It was only on condition that I should never again apply for admittance, that an entrance was granted me, this evening,” said Dubois, “and I fear my stay will avail but little, my dear young lady. But I already know, perhaps, more than is suspected, and I, at least, will do nothing to grieve you farther.—I will remain.”

“Thanks! thanks, my kind friend,—and now we must part, lest your present visit should, indeed, for the future, bar all access to me. Yet stay one moment,” she added, taking from her finger a costly ring.—“Present this to your excellent Eleanore, as a token of kind remembrance from me.” The old man received the jewel with respectful courtesy, and kissed with reverence the fair hand that extended it. In a moment more, the lovely Estelle was again contemplating her Provence rose, in silence and alone.

A brief space of time elapsed after the departure of Pierre Dubois, ere another and a more assured footstep was heard on the stairway. The bright flush, that suffused the cheek of Estelle, changed to an almost deadly paleness, as the domestic, with ceremonious courtesy, threw wide the folding doors of the farthest room, and announced the name of “d’Arnauld.” The first movement of the gentle solitaire seemed to indicate a desire of attempting a retreat,—but a glance at the apartment she had left, to follow the faithful Pierre, determined her to remain where she was. Such an apparition was less appalling by the light of a grand salon, than in the shadowy obscurity of the boudoir. Suppressing the mingled feelings of fear and aversion which rose in her heart, she received the approaching guest with

dignity and grace, and the agitation she at first manifested was subdued:—she was composed and calm.

“May I hope,” he said, as he advanced toward her, “that I am not guilty of intrusion? How fortunate I may esteem myself in being admitted to these usually deserted halls, blest as they now are with the presence of the fair Estelle, and still happier am I in finding her thus alone!”

“The commands of the Comte Grimaldi are a guarantee for both,” replied Estelle, with a degree of hauteur foreign to her usually gentle manner, and which was contradicted by the slight tremulousness of her voice. “I possess not the power, if I had the will, to contravene them.”

“Most uncourteously spoken, most fair lady;—am I then to infer that had it depended on the will and pleasure of the beauteous being before me, these apartments would have been still deserted, or their chief attraction absent?”

“It would ill become me,” replied Estelle, with the same grave dignity that had from her first appearance marked her manner, “to be wanting in courtesy to the nephew of my guardian and protector; beneath his roof, the Signor d’Arnauld has always assurance of welcome.”

“Ay, from their august excellencies, the Comte Grimaldi and his interesting consort,” returned d’Arnauld with a sneer. “But the welcome of both I would willingly barter, for one kind glance from the bright eyes of Estelle.”

“The feeble health of the countess, and the unfortunate state of her mind,” said Estelle, with a slight glow of indignation, “might protect her from the shafts of levity and sarcasm. I am here but as her representative: would that she could resume her place in the society, from which she is debarred.”

“That you might resume yours, during the approaching summer, amid the shades and *solitude* of your château of

Provençe?" inquired d'Arnauld, with a penetrating glance. There was an expression in his voice and eye, that accompanied the word *solitude*, which enkindled a crimson blush on the cheek of his lovely auditress. "Happily for me, however," he continued, "so barbarous a plan will not be carried into execution. As soon as the health of the countess will admit of it, which we trust will be in a few days, we shall leave this metropolis for the brighter skies of my native land. The Comte will pass the summer at his Italian villa." As he slowly pronounced the last words, he fixed his keen eyes on the face of the fair listener, as if to watch their effect, though a less penetrating observer might have detected, in the start of surprise and alarm with which they were received, the agitation they awakened. "When once in that witching land of sunshine and of song," he still continued, as if he had not perceived the emotion his former words produced, "what may I not hope? Cannot even the obdurate heart of the beauteous Estelle be softened by such enchanting influences, and this fair hand then be mine?"

"Never! signor," was the prompt response, as the fair being he addressed recoiled from his touch as from a serpent. "A broken heart would be an unworthy gift, and the hand you seek is not mine to bestow. I had hoped that it would not again be necessary to rend aside the veil that conceals the past; to seek reasons for my rejection of your suit."

"Nor does it need, loveliest,—I would rather the past should be for ever buried in oblivion. Reasons! what reasons need be alleged for steeping the past in the waters of Lethe, when the heart is as yet unbroken, and the hand has been—*rejected!*"

A flashing glance from the bright eyes of Estelle, as she sprang from her seat, warned the bold lover that he had

gone beyond the limits of his usual prudence. Recovering herself instantly, however, she said, "this, I presume is to humiliate my pride. The tale has reached my ear ere now:—but why should aught so idle be repeated to me?"

"Who is there to gainsay it, fair lady?" said d'Arnauld with increasing audacity. "Can I not, myself, bear testimony to unanswered messengers from the hand of Estelle to Eugène de Beaufort?—Is not this a proof that the world will readily believe?"

"Beware, signor," said Estelle, speaking with more firmness than she had hitherto been able to assume, "beware how you put the world in possession of such proofs—mirrors sometimes betray what the wily tongue would not willingly reveal. Within the *porte-bouquet* of those flowers, but now sent me from the hand of my young kinsman, Alphonse de Montalais, and which the Signor d'Arnauld took from the hand of his messenger, my eye detected a letter:—it has disappeared, and in its fate I have read that of my own, and of those which have responded to them. May they not be a type of the hapless being for whom they were destined? crushed—destroyed by the hand that might have saved and blest them!" The unbidden tears sprang to her eyes as she spoke, and she turned to leave the apartment.

"Stay!" exclaimed d'Arnauld, on whose dark brow the portentous clouds of rage and shame had contended for mastery while she was speaking;—"stay!" he repeated, grasping her hand, "hear me before you depart, rash girl! It is time to throw aside this idle mask of flattery and deceit.—Ere many days have passed, you will be far from your native land—the sunny clime of Italy will be your home;—there I have friends to aid my will, priests to do my bidding, gold to compass all my wishes,—and hear me swear that

ere the autumn returns, Estelle St. Helène shall be the bride of d'Arnauld! Remember, I am powerful;—thou friendless and unprotected.”

“I do indeed remember it, cruel and hard-hearted man,” said Estelle, with a degree of energy, at which she was herself surprised. “I do indeed remember it,—would that I could ever forget it amid these scenes of treachery and persecution. But friendless and unprotected as I am, I fear thee not. Thou hast wealth and menials, but I have at least one friend, whose goodness is infinite, and whose power will ever guard me from a fate so dreadful!”

She raised her eyes to heaven as she spoke, and such was their seraphic expression, that the guilty d'Arnauld shrunk with superstitious awe from their radiant loveliness, and releasing her hand from his grasp, she instantly disappeared.

“The uncertain glories of an April day” were drawing rapidly to a close, when a party of horsemen, who had been for many previous hours threading the gloomy mazes of the Black Forest, entered the celebrated pass of the *Holenthal* in its vicinity. The dark shadows thrown across their narrow and rugged road, which wound its way on the margin of a brawling stream, swelled almost to a torrent by the floods of the early spring, were deepened by the enormous parapets of rock, which shot up to the distance of nearly a thousand feet above, and almost met over their heads, while the slight glimpse they occasionally caught of the heavens, displayed a dense mass of rising clouds. The rain was already pattering among the wintry leaves that had been swept by the blast across their pathway, and the distant thunder echoed among the surrounding hills and mountains.

The horsemen rode onward at a rapid pace, and in

silence, until they emerged from the awful gloom of the pass, when an exclamation of surprise and pleasure at the beautiful contrast, afforded by the prospect before them, burst from each lip. On one side, the mountains were crowned with the remains of ancient castles, which redeemed their dark and savage appearance, and invested them at once with romantic interest,—on the other, though still mountainous, the country was apparently fertile, and finely cultivated, and their road wound its way through a rich and smiling valley between: just in front, were the distant mountains of Alsace, beautifully relieved against a brilliant though portentous sky, while the spires of Fribourg, particularly that of the cathedral, through the Gothic network of which the sun darted his departing rays, crowned the lovely picture.

The orb soon sank beneath the horizon, and the bright light of his parting smile was soon obscured by the dark and threatening clouds which rose rapidly in the heavens.

Just as the young officer, who was, apparently, the commander of the party, spurred his horse forward, as if to encourage them to yet greater speed, ere the gathering storm should spend its fury on their unsheltered heads, the noble animal received a severe contusion from a sharp angle of rock that projected into the path-way. The rider threw himself from the saddle to examine the extent of the injury, which was even greater than he had anticipated. A closer scrutiny convinced him that the gallant steed could not, without the greatest difficulty and danger, traverse the remaining two leagues of the route.

“Here is, indeed, an unexpected obstacle to our progress,” said de Beaufort, for, as may have been already surmised, the young officer was no other than our hero: “What is to be done under such circumstances? Dubois, my good young friend, you are better acquainted with this wild region

than any one present, can you not recall to your recollection, some auberge between this and Fribourg where we can pass the night?"

The young man, after a moment's thought, shook his head and replied in the negative.

"A shelter we must have," continued de Beaufort, "if we are compelled to dispute it with the owls that are hooting from the battlements of yon ruined castle. Some part of it, at least, may afford protection from the rain, until you can ride forward, and procure me another horse. My own brave charger may perhaps limp as far as the city, unencumbered by a rider; but for the present, I will not be guilty of the inhumanity of adding my weight to the pain he now suffers."

"A brave soldier need have no dread of the ghosts which are believed to inhabit these crumbling walls," said Dubois, "for each of the castles of these regions has its appropriate spirits and legends. I think I have some remembrance of having once played hide and seek in this one, when on a visit with my mother to her parents in Fribourg. Small comfort, indeed, it promises," he continued, as they passed through the court, and entered the ample portal. "I wish it may afford you shelter, until I can execute your commands."

He urged his horse forward as he spoke, and soon was lost to view in the increasing gloom.

At any other moment, de Beaufort would have been deeply interested in contemplating the rude magnificence of the monument of feudal power and wealth which they were now exploring. But he paused not to examine the armorial bearings of the arched entrance, nor the remains of bas reliefs and pilasters that adorned the façade. He passed on from one roofless hall to another, until he perceived that the

thick dank grass no longer waved around his feet, and, looking up, discovered that the roof of this end of the building was still standing, and afforded a tolerable protection from the rain, which now began to fall in torrents.

To a soldier, the accommodation of his horse is always deemed of far more importance than his own, and a large and once magnificent hall, adjoining the one in which de Beaufort and his companions had found shelter, provided theirs with a refuge from the storm. Without even the advantage of a light, which became each moment more desirable, the prospect of awaiting the return of Dubois in this comfortless abode, would have awakened no small degree of impatience in spirits less accustomed to hardship and privation; but amid the gay and buoyant group that had sought shelter within these ruined walls, the very inconveniences of their situation were subjects of merriment, and jests and bon-mots enlivened the obscurity of their resting place. One by one, however, the jocund voices died away, and the drowsy divinity began to spread his influences around: de Beaufort soon followed the example of his young companions, and taking possession of a sort of *dais*, or raised spot on the ruined floor, which they had laughingly awarded him as the place of honour, he drew his soldier's cloak around him, and the cares and fatigues of the day were soon buried in oblivion.

How independent is the dreaming spirit of the rough and harsh realities of corporeal existence! Bright and beautiful were the visions that floated through the imagination of the young soldier, as he pressed his hard and comfortless couch. Can it be doubted, that the fairy form of his loved Estelle gave to his sweet dream its most potent charm?

And still he slept, and longer might have dreamed, but that he was partly aroused to a consciousness of his real

situation, by a singular sensation of insecurity in his position, and as if the earth on which he reposed was rocking beneath him. Ere he had time fully to recover himself, he felt that he was sinking lower and lower, until on awaking, he found, to his astonishment, that the scene around him was entirely changed. His companions had all disappeared, and by the light of a large lamp suspended from the ceiling, which threw its broad glare around, he saw, that instead of the ruined hall in which he had sought repose, he was now in an ample apartment, furnished with the richest profusion. Yet a strange mixture of luxury and barbarous rudeness was displayed in its arrangement. Silken couches were strewed with sabres and cutlasses, and the table, apparently spread for a banquet, and heaped with massive silver plate, was also loaded with pistols and other implements of desperate strife.

Struck with surprise at this strange phenomenon, de Beaufort, now fully aroused, seized the sword, which before he slept he had deposited at his side, and was springing to his feet, when he felt both his arms rudely pinioned by unseen hands from behind.

“Not so fast, my young gallant!” said a rough deep voice close to his ear. “What! is it in this uncourteous manner that the visitors to our lordly castle use their hospitable entertainers?”

“He hath left a goodly company above, that he might the more quickly come into our embrace,” said a voice, hardly less harsh and grating than the first that had spoken. “I would he had brought a few of his attendants with him; our gains might have been better worth the trouble of aiding his descent among us.”

“Villains!” exclaimed de Beaufort, struggling in their grasp, “Let go your hold, or”——

“Ha! ha!” interrupted the first speaker, drowning his voice in a derisive laugh. “How bravely the young captive strives for his liberty! we must have help;—what—ho—Burkhardt!”

The door of an adjoining cell was thrown open, and three men rushed into the apartment. With their assistance, the prisoner was effectually secured.

“And now,” said the facetious host, “thou may’st finish thy sleep upon the silken couch on which thou art for the present laid; but beware lest thou provoke us farther. Thy voice in its utmost pitch cannot penetrate these walls, and beside these goodly weapons, which thou seest strewed around, we have other means of silencing such contumacious guests.”

As he spoke, he threw aside a trap door, within a few feet of de Beaufort, and the sullen roar of a torrent was distinctly heard beneath.

“It were as well,” he continued, “and far wiser, to await our decision on thy fate, as to descend still lower in our abode, where our ears would be as little annoyed by thy appeals to thy sleeping companions, as they are now insensible of their loss.”

He tossed back the trap door as he spoke, and rejoined his companions who were assembling around the table.

The love of life is strong in a youthful breast. Despite the determined bravery of his character, de Beaufort recoiled from the dark and awful abyss that had thus been suddenly revealed to him. He could no longer doubt that he was in the hands of robbers, by whose ingenuity he had been entrapped, as it was most probable, that the very spot selected for him by his young friends, when they laid themselves down to rest, concealed the trap door by which he had descended among these banditti, and it was no less certain

that he was completely in their power. Resistance could only hasten the fate that he anticipated, and some faint glimpse of hope might be cherished from the deep draughts of wine, which his ferocious hosts now began to imbibe. Their wassail was long and loud, and amid the boasts of daring deeds, and hoarse laughter mingled with oaths and execrations, de Beaufort's attention was suddenly arrested by a sound familiar to his ear.

"Thou art a brave boaster, Grunthal," growled the hoarse voice, that had first addressed de Beaufort, and which belonged apparently to the chieftain of the band. "But thy deeds are ignoble in comparison with mine. Thou must have the benefit of distant travel and lordly company, ere thou canst compare with thy commander. What thinkest thou of being employed in matters of state,—in being bearer of despatches from the powerful Comte Grimaldi to the great ones of Austria?"

De Beaufort's startled ear was now completely enchained, and he listened with almost breathless attention to the details of a treasonable correspondence, which, from the revelations of the robber chief, appeared to be passing between the stern guardian of Estelle, and the enemies of his country.

"Yes!" continued the chief, throwing a package of letters on the table, "there is my patent of nobility, and what is better, a bond for a thousand ducats when they are delivered. Let me henceforth hear no more of your vain boasting. I have surpassed ye all."

A chorus of dissonant laughter followed this harangue, and again the conversation reverted to deeds of darkness and of blood. The wine flowed in torrents, and the sound of their revelry echoed through the vaulted roof of the huge apartment.

“A curse light on you, ye roaring wassailers!” yelled the chief, trying to drown the voices of his companions, “the noise ye make would startle the dead from their graves. I marvel ye are not afraid of arousing the white spirit that frightened off the fools who had their abode here ere we came.”

“By the saints!” said Burkhardt, who was rather more overcome by the effects of the wine-cup than the rest of his companions, “I would that brave spirit would now appear among us; right good sport it would be to pledge it in a goblet of this choice Johannisberg!”

As he spoke these words, the attention of the band was suddenly drawn toward their chieftain, who started from his seat. The expression of drunken levity on his face was in an instant changed to one of awe-stricken terror,—the fiery flush of his cheek was blanched to a livid paleness, his grizzled hair arose, and his eyes seemed “starting from their spheres.”

“There!—there!” he exclaimed, in a hoarse whisper, as he pointed to the farther end of the room, “see, caitiff, what thy blasphemous tongue hath conjured up!”

The eyes of the whole band were eagerly turned to a distant corner of the apartment, indicated by the hand and the glance of their chieftain; and to their unspeakable horror, and to de Beaufort's infinite astonishment, they beheld, standing in an arched niche of the wall, a tall attenuated figure, covered with long floating garments of the purest white, as if clad in the vestments of the tomb.

With loud cries of terror the whole band rushed in the opposite direction, stumbling over each other as they fled precipitately from the subterranean apartment, leaving de Beaufort alone with this strange apparition. The voices of the robbers died away in the distance, and the figure emerg-

ing from the recess in which it had previously stood without motion, and apparently without life, advanced toward him.

Though almost a stranger to impressions of nervous terror, yet so great had been the excitement of the last three or four hours, that de Beaufort shrank from the mysterious form which now approached him. Without a word, the singular shade approached the table, grasped eagerly the papers, which had been thrown on it by the chieftain, raised a knife from the banquet table of the wassailers, and drew near him. Could it be that he had escaped death from the hands of the robbers, only to meet it, in a form, if possible, still more terrific?

His doubts were speedily solved by the phantom, which seemed only intent on severing the bonds of the captive.— In an instant he was free, and with newly restored energy he responded to a gentle and steady voice, which whispered in his ear, “follow me!”

As one walking in his sleep, the bewildered de Beaufort followed the rapid pace of his mysterious conductor. They passed first through a long and narrow passage leading from the niche in which the form had first been seen, and after several subterranean turnings and windings, they reached the deserted court and ruined entrance. The gray light of morning was already beginning to dawn, and by its light he perceived for the first time, that he had not been conducted by an unearthly spirit, but that a living being, a tall female form, stood before him.

Throwing aside quickly the floating white garment and veil which had produced so supernatural an effect, she appeared in the simple garb of an Alsatian peasant.

“Permit me,” she said, “to offer one more testimonial of my willingness to serve you, and one dearer to you than

life. "Take these," she continued; offering the papers she had secured, when in the robbers' apartment; "they may be more precious than gold, and preserve this ring," taking a brilliant from her finger, "until we meet again. And now, permit me to go under your escort as far as Fribourg, for this haunted ground may otherwise be as fatal to me, as it had nearly proved to you."

As she spoke these words, the trampling of horses was heard, and de Beaufort beheld his companions rapidly approaching.

The explanations and revelations that followed, it would be needless to relate. They served to beguile the distance that remained, and the sun was brightly gilding the lofty spire of the gothic cathedral of the city, when they entered its walls.

"Delay not," whispered the unknown deliverer of de Beaufort, as he, with renewed thanks, bade her farewell. "There is a danger which threatens the being thou lovest, greater even than that thou hast so recently escaped. Farewell,—and receive my blessing for thyself and her!"

A few days succeeded the events just narrated. The evening was closing in, and the superb hotel of the Comte Grimaldi blazed with even more than its wonted magnificence. But its haughty possessor entered not his own splendid apartments. With a lowering brow, and a countenance "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," he slowly and musingly paced the floor of a large and dimly lighted library in a retired part of the hotel.

His reverie was interrupted by the entrance of a valet, who approached, and with a profound reverence, presented a note accompanied by a card. He then awaited, with respectful humility, the orders of his lord

The dark brow of the Comte grew still darker as he read the address presented to him.

“Admit him not;” he said, in a tone of angry decision.

The domestic bowed, and was about to withdraw, when his stern lord, who had approached the dim light, that alone relieved the apartment from obscurity, glanced slightly at the billet he held in his hand. His cheek was blanched to a degree of still greater paleness, as he read the few words it contained, and hastily arresting the retreat of his valet, he reversed his former order, and directed him to attend the visitor to the library. A few minutes elapsed, when the door was thrown open, and de Beaufort entered.

“I thought not, signor,” he said, with a graceful, but rather haughty reverence, “to have again intruded myself into your presence after our last interview. Yet I deemed it essential to your interest as well as my own happiness, to seek an explanation of what deeply affects both.”

“I know no explanation that is necessary on the part of either;” replied Grimaldi, with an air of defiance. “The order I gave for your admission, was only in consequence of this note I hold in my hand, which promises some important revelation.”

De Beaufort suppressed the feeling of indignant pride that rose in his heart and flushed his cheek.

“Your age, signor,” he replied, “alone prevents the retort that was rising to my lips. The object of my visit may be explained in few words. I demand an interview with Estelle St. Helène, and that without delay.”

Astonished at the boldness of the young officer, who thus presumed to address him, Grimaldi started:—his brow darkened like a thunder cloud.

“It is in vain, signor, to attempt to intimidate me by a lowering frown and haughty words,” returned de Beaufort,

with firm dignity; "know, proud Comte, thou art in my power,—thou darest not deny my request."

As he spoke, he drew from his breast a package of letters, and approaching the lamp near which Grimaldi stood, displayed the superscription of the first to his astonished view. Instantly his whole aspect was changed. As if startled by some fearful apparition, his rising brow relaxed its severity, his fixed gaze stared on de Beaufort as on a spectre, and he exhibited the ghastly terror of a condemned criminal.

"Thy life is in my hands, as thou art now aware, Comte Grimaldi," said de Beaufort, "yet thou shalt find that the injured may be generous. Once more, I demand an interview with Estelle St. Helène."

Without a word of reply, the hitherto haughty Grimaldi summoned an attendant, and complied with the request.

During this interview, the fair Estelle was the sole occupant of the splendid apartments in a distant part of the hotel. With anxiety and trepidation she had once more obeyed the stern injunction of her guardian to repair to the salons, where she was informed that he would speedily join her to receive his visitors. Her cheek was paler than its wont, and as she entered the rooms she cast an uncertain glance around. A sigh, breathed as if to relieve a throbbing heart, escaped from her lips as she advanced, and she seemed to congratulate herself on being alone. But soon, the sound of approaching footsteps awakened in full force the emotion and alarm which had for a moment been suppressed;—her varying cheek betokened the anxiety of her fluttering heart. She turned, and beheld,—not as she had anticipated, the dreaded d'Arnauld,—but Eugène de Beaufort!

It would be as vain as useless to attempt to describe the surprise of the lovely Estelle, or the happiness of her lover.

It will be sufficient to say, that the explanations which occurred during their interview, left not the slightest shade on the past.

“Strange,” said Estelle, at length, musingly, “strange indeed, was the adventure of the haunted castle, which has been blest in so singular a manner to us. The ways of providence are mysterious and wonderful. But did the Alsatian peasant give you no clue by which you might discover her?”

“She gave me a token of some value,” replied de Beaufort, displaying the ring entrusted to him by his deliverer.

Estelle took the jewel from his hand. “It is impossible,” she said, examining it attentively, “that I can be mistaken; this is certainly the ring I sent by the hands of my father’s faithful steward to his excellent wife. They are both devoted to me, and I believe would sacrifice life itself in my service. I see!” she exclaimed—“I understand the mystery now! The kind Eleanor has often told me, in my childhood, tales of a haunted castle of her native land in the vicinity of Fribourg. Her intimate acquaintance with all its turnings and secret doors enabled her to approach the subterranean apartment of the robbers by a way unknown to them, and by counterfeiting the white spirit, to save you at the risk of her own life. It was doubtless through her son, the young Dubois, that she was apprised of your danger, and secured your escape.”

“And thus,” continued de Beaufort, “preserved a life which would have been worthless but for”—

The sweet smile on the lip of the beautiful Estelle, and the gentle glance with which she raised her bright eyes to his, completed, better than words could have done, the sentence of Eugène. But suddenly the ruby lip was blanched, and an expression of deadly terror succeeded the placid

loveliness of her smile. As she looked up, she beheld in the large mirror opposite where they stood, the form and face of her dreaded persecutor, d'Arnauld. His countenance revealed the fiendish passions of his guilty heart, as he hastily unsheathed a stiletto. Another moment might have been fatal to de Beaufort, but the gleam of the upraised dagger flashed in his eyes from the opposing mirror, and in another moment, his dastardly foe was prostrate at his feet.

“Take thy worthless life!” exclaimed de Beaufort, as he snapped the unmanly weapon in twain, and threw the pieces from him, “but depart hence, and pollute no longer with thy presence an air which thou art unworthy to breathe. Let me never more behold thee, lest I be tempted to proclaim thee a coward and an assassin!”

To the astonishment of the brilliant circles of the metropolis, among whom surmisings had already arisen with regard to the fate of the fair Estelle, instead of bestowing her hand, as had been anticipated, on the nephew of her haughty guardian, who had suddenly disappeared, the stern Comte Grimaldi was seen occupied with preparations for her union with de Beaufort. Deeds were signed, and parchments delivered with surprising alacrity; and even the paternal office of bestowing the fair bride on her happy lover was, with seeming courtesy and willingness, assumed by him.

Never had lovelier lady or more gallant knight knelt before the altar; and well did the chaplet of snowy orange blossoms wreathed in her auburn tresses, and the bridal veil, with its transparent folds, that floated over her fair shoulders, become the face and form of the beautiful Estelle.

The rite was concluded, and de Beaufort, with the arm of his lovely bride gently resting on his own, was descend-

ing the broad steps of the church, when a young officer interrupted his dream of bliss, by placing a letter in his hand. The radiant expression of his fine features changed to one of the deepest anxiety, as he glanced at the few words it contained. The cabalistic writing, which he instantly recognised, told him but too plainly, that its contents could not be disregarded. It allowed him hardly permission to escort his fair bride to the elegant hotel prepared for her reception.

“Bright vision of happiness, how soon hast thou fled!” sighed de Beaufort, as they entered his halls. “My life! my love! we must part,—and that instantly; nor have I even the poor privilege of saying wherefore.”

“Part!” repeated Estelle with terror, “Oh, why this mystery? why should the few words of that strange scroll have such magic power?”

“I dare not reveal their import,” said de Beaufort. “Ere long it will be permitted to me to explain the cause of this sudden movement, that comes as if to crush the life from my heart; but now, I can only say—Adieu!”

Sad, indeed, was the parting of these youthful lovers, but to de Beaufort the stern decree was irresistible as fate, and a few hours found him with his regiment many leagues distant from the Metropolis.

To a mind of keen sensibility, there is an agony in uncertainty and suspense, hardly surpassed by the most terrible reality. The mysterious haste, with which de Beaufort had been summoned, convinced his bride that some great enterprise of difficulty and danger was in contemplation. The anguish that he manifested in parting with her plainly revealed that he foresaw the uncertainty of his return. The very circumstance of his concealing from her the object of his journey convinced her of his danger.

“I cannot endure this suspense!” she exclaimed, as she paced the apartments after his departure. “Far better would it be to follow,—nay, to perish with him!”

From the faithful Dubois she learned, that the regiment had taken the route to Dijon, and thence would proceed to Lausanne. Her resolution was speedily taken. This beautiful city, or that of Geneva would offer her a residence, in which, at least her present suspense and anxiety might have a more speedy termination than by remaining in the metropolis; and with her kind and trusty attendants, Dubois, and his excellent Eleanore, she departed.

Arrived at Lausanne, her anxiety became yet more intense. The sudden movement of the mighty conqueror, before whom all obstacles seemed to melt away, indicated his purpose of crossing the Alps at the Grand St. Bernard, and it now began to be understood. The dangers, which threatened his army on the Italian side of the Alps, could not be concealed.

“Let us meet once more before we part for ever!” exclaimed Estelle, as her faithful attendants in vain attempted to console her. “At the Hospice of St. Bernard, I may at least have the sad satisfaction of again bidding him farewell!”

“The route at this season of the year is fatiguing and dangerous, my dear young lady,” said Pierre, “I fear much that you may repent of your resolution.”

He ceased, however, to oppose himself to her wishes, when he witnessed her distress.

“I am almost alone in the world,” she said with a sort of despair, “why should I fear to perish, if I am never to see him more?”

On arriving in the village at the base of the Grand St. Bernard, they found that the army, in its recent departure,

had drawn off all the means of conveyance at hand, and it was impossible to procure even a guide for the whole distance. A peasant consented to permit the use of his mules until they should arrive within a league of the Hospice, but farther than that he would not go, fearing to be impressed into the service.

“I have walked many a league on a far lighter errand,” said Estelle, “on these conditions, we will depart without delay.”

Pierre shook his head, but the resolution of his beloved young lady triumphed.

The morning was bright and beautiful, as at the dawn of day they set forth. The valleys at the base of the mountain were covered with the fresh and tender green of the early May, and all was smiling and beautiful; but as the little cortège wound its way among the gloomy terrors of the *Montagnes Mortes*, the aspect of the heavens changed with that of the surrounding scenery. Long streams of fleecy mist rolled slowly over the dark summits of the mountains, and the occasional gusts of wind, that swept across the steep and rugged road, indicated a speedy change of weather. In vain did they use both entreaties and gold to induce the sturdy peasant to accomplish the remaining league of the route; his determination was inflexible, and with a heavy heart, Pierre aided his beloved charge in descending.

Slowly and silently, they pursued their toilsome way on foot. The recent passage of the army of Napoleon had rendered the road less difficult in places, where at that season, without such an advantage, it would have been impassable. They had accomplished nearly half of the route, when the gathering clouds lowered, and the snow began to fall around them. With his trusty iron-shod staff

in hand, and his arm supporting the steps of his sinking protégée, the faithful Pierre moved steadily onward. But the snow began to drift across their path, and the fleecy shower was rapidly concealing it from their view.

“Hasten, hasten, my dearest young lady!” he exclaimed, “I have been in these Alpine wilds before now;—you know not the danger to which we are exposed!”

Thus exhorted, his lovely charge increased the rapidity of her pace;—but the violence of the wind, and the whirling eddies of snow, that dazzled and blinded them, soon overwhelmed both with fatigue. Breathless and exhausted, they paused, and Estelle, gliding from the support of her kind attendant, leaned for rest against a projecting rock.

“Do not, I beseech you, dearest lady, attempt to sit there for rest,” said Pierre, alarmed at the paleness of her cheek, “there is more danger in rest than in the most violent exertion.”

But the fair being, to whom the exhortation was addressed, heard him not. Exhausted by fatigue, and benumbed with the penetrating cold, she sank insensible at his feet.

In vain did the unhappy Pierre make the surrounding rocks and mountains echo with his frantic cries for aid;—in vain, with his icy hands, did he endeavour to chafe her marble brow. No sign of consciousness appeared. In the extremity of his anguish, he alternately prayed and wept, and wrung his hands

He threw himself in despair by her side, when a sudden noise awoke a gleam of hope in his breast. A large dog bounded over the rocky path-way, and stood at his feet.

“All hope then is not extinct,” exclaimed the old man, “Heaven be praised for its mercies!”

As he spoke two marronniers were seen descending the

mountain, and with their aid, the slight form of Estelle was speedily conveyed to the Hospice.

“Where am I?” exclaimed Estelle, as with a deep sigh she awoke from the state of insensibility into which she had fallen. “What strains of music are those I hear?”

“Heaven be praised!” again ejaculated her kind old attendant, as the tears chased each other over his furrowed face; “I had feared never to hear that loved voice again. But we are safe, dearest lady,—we have found refuge in the Hospice of St. Bernard.”

“St. Bernard!” she exclaimed, “Oh Eugène!”

A loud burst of military music arose, as she pronounced the last words. Notwithstanding the recent exhaustion she had suffered, she sprang forward, and attempted to open the door;—but it was secured on the outside. The only window of the apartment opened into the front court of the Hospice. She flew toward it, and, looking out, beheld the formidable array of the legions of the conqueror. The tricoloured banners were waving above the heads of the mighty multitude, and the sound of the trumpet was mingled with the tramp of cavalry. The eye of Estelle passed quickly over the grand host, and rested on two officers near the Hospice. The face of the elder was turned toward her, and presented features, which, once seen, could never after be forgotten. The broad pale forehead, the eagle glance, the expression of the symmetrical and firmly closed mouth, would have revealed to her, had she not already seen him, the leading spirit of the legions around him. In the younger, she instantly recognised Eugène de Beaufort.

“Eugène!” she exclaimed, “Oh Eugène!”

Her voice was lost even in the apartment, amid the clash of arms and a loud burst of music.—A few moments more,—and the mighty host had disappeared from her view!

It was in the lovely month of June, 1800, as the moon was rising in silvery radiance over the peaceful lake of Maggiore, and ere the soft and brilliant tints of an Italian sunset had faded away, that a youthful pair were seen, slowly wandering through the fragrant groves of orange and myrtle that adorned the picturesque gardens of Count Borromeo's fairy palace. At one moment they paused to contemplate the waves of the glassy lake, that sparkled in the moon-beams; at another, they looked on the bright foliage that adorned the Isola Madre, and again the faint glow on the distant and snow-capped summit of Monte Rosa, challenged their admiration. Need it be said that this happy pair were Eugène de Beaufort, and his beautiful bride?

Crowned with laurels, earned on the field of Marengo, he had richly earned the privilege of passing the time of the armistice in this region of enchantment.

“Since that period,” continued our host, “I have frequently had tidings of my young friend, and though years have since passed away, he is still blessed with all that fortune and affection can give. For my own part, I was, at the period to which my story refers, far less fortunate. Imprisoned, as I before said, for the long and weary space of eighteen years, I found, on my return to my home and friends, many changes; my wife, as you may have observed,” he added, with a smile, “is young enough for my daughter, and the little ones you now see gambolling around me, should have been my grandchildren. My troubles, however, have had, at least, one good effect,—that of softening my heart to the distresses of others.”

To this we responded heartily and gratefully; and of this

extraordinary scene, and still more extraordinary company, we took our leave at a late hour of the night, and retired to rest, which was most welcome after this day of fatigue and anxiety.

At an early hour the next morning, our good host sent some of his numerous household to examine the condition of the road, and as they brought back a favourable report, we prepared to resume our journey. A delicate attempt at remuneration for the trouble we had caused, not only to the attendants of our host, but several of the villagers, was discovered, and arrested so abruptly, that we dared not press it farther, and (with the exception of the frolicsome maid servant, who laughingly pocketed the five-franc pieces showered upon her,) our offers were declined, and we were only permitted to express our gratitude for the patriarchal kindness and touching hospitality of this good man. Certain it is, that we shall never forget the Chevalier Leone, and the village of Pivarone.

We were fortunate enough at the little town of San Germano, to find one pair of post-horses that had been left by the queen. Of these we availed ourselves, and dismissed the poor old pair that had rendered us such important service the day before. At the next post we could congratulate ourselves on being out of her majesty's route, and the pleasure of travelling rapidly over a smooth road, with fleet horses and brisk postillions, can only be appreciated by travellers, who had experienced as many vicissitudes as ourselves. The change in the aspect of the country, was as great as that in our mode of travelling; and the perfect level of the rice fields, and crops of waving maize, the wide spreading and beautiful meadows, bordered by rows of willows and poplars, in the lovely plains of Lombardy, presented a most pleasing contrast with the mountains

among which we had been wandering. These mountains, though still in view, and near enough for the snow on their summits to be distinctly visible, were yet at a sufficient distance to assume that "azure hue," so essential to render them beautiful. The plain stretches out to their base, uninterrupted by the slightest rise, and it is impossible to imagine a more lovely country than that through which we were rapidly gliding.

Not the slightest temptation was offered to us to pause at the towns of Vercelli and Novarro, through which we passed on our way: they both presented an appearance of poverty and decay, that was anything rather than attractive or inviting.

We stopped a short time at the baths of Oleggio, which we found a fine establishment, filled with visitors from all nations, doubtless drawn to this charming spot by the beauty as well as the salubrity of the situation. The view from the gardens is unique;—the snow-clad Alps on one side, and the lovely valley of the Tessin on the other, melting away in the distance, and the smooth blue line of its beautiful and boundless horizon interrupted only by the innumerable spires of churches, resembling masts on the distant ocean.

During our drive that evening, we had an opportunity of judging for ourselves of Italian scenery, and the Italian sky, and no description, however glowing or romantic, can equal the reality. It may have been that we were particularly favoured in the aspect of the heavens, as their brilliancy was perhaps heightened by the purifying influences of the recent storm, but it is certain that we never saw them arrayed in such colours before. The sun, for several hours before he disappeared, presented a silvery brightness, which might be looked at without the painful effect ordinarily occasioned by looking his majesty in the face. As the orb descended, he

was "shorn of his beams" by a misty veil of clouds, and gradually changed from a brilliant white to a delicate rose colour, which deepened until he entirely disappeared. For half an hour a soft twilight succeeded, when the horizon brightened,—the light bluish clouds which were hovering over the distant mountains assumed all the rich and varied hues of the rainbow, while the sky above presented the glowing and golden tints so finely portrayed in the sunset pieces of Claude. The bright yellow light illuminated the whole scene around, and had just faded away as we reached the Lago Maggiore, on whose shore is the town of Arona, where we terminated our day's journey.

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THE RIGHI.

EARLY on the brightest morning we had seen for many, many days, we mounted our horses to cross the Brunig on our way to Lucerne, in the hope of meeting that evening with our fellow-travellers, who had pursued the more direct course from Berne. The air was fresh and pure, and the heavens without the slightest cloud. An involuntary sigh accompanied an expression of regret that we had not been favoured with this splendid day for our excursion to Lauterbrunnen; but we consoled ourselves with the hope of obtaining an indemnification for our disappointment, by reaching the Righi while it remained clear. The weather in these wild regions is so uncertain, that we felt particularly anxious to reach this celebrated mountain, before another change should deprive us of the view from its summit.

“You cannot reach the Righi to-day,” said one of our guides, while remarking the effects of the first rays of the rising sun upon the mountains and valleys below us, from the summit of the Brunig. “What a pity!” he added—“we have had so few such days as this during the summer!”

The remark increased our anxiety to proceed; but with the decided tone which those who happen to be “dressed in a little brief authority” are wont to assume, the guides told us we spoke of impossibilities, and we continued to walk our horses over the mountain, and to remark its beauties, which, though not extraordinary, are very pleas-

ing. As we approached its summit, we were informed by our loquacious conductors that we were passing the line between Berne and Unterwalden. They continued to amuse us with their comparison of the respective merits of the two cantons, in which their opinions were exactly opposed, (one being a Protestant and the other a Catholic,) during the descent, where we found the road, though rugged and narrow, redeemed from its savage wildness by passing through a superb forest of beech trees, which sprung from the clefts of enormous masses of rocks, thickly covered with moss. We enjoyed this refreshing shade until we reached the auberge in the valley below. Here we stopped for a short time to procure a little *char-à-banc*, to carry us through the valley of Sarnem. This lovely spot, though perhaps less known to travellers than any other part of Switzerland, offers every charm that nature and fine cultivation can afford. Its verdant fields are rendered yet more fertile by the quiet little lake of Lungern, which occupies but a small portion of the valley, and whose dimpled surface was laughing in the bright morning sun. Its placid beauties contrasted well with the Brunig we had just descended, shutting out on that side every object but the snowy and dazzling peaks of the mountains of the Oberlandt which peered above it. We paused for an instant at a turn in the road, to take a last view of this singular and beautiful feature, and then rapidly continued our route.

Our frolicsome coachman seemed inclined to favour our design of travelling quickly, for he appeared to be perfectly inspired by the fresh air and bright sun. He began first to whistle, and then to sing in a sort of bass voice, not unlike that of the cows he had doubtless been in the habit of attending before being exalted to his present station; accompanying each cadence with a motion of the head, well

calculated to produce the impression that he had learned this gesture from the same noble source. From time to time he gave a shrewd glance from the corner of his eye to see how the jest was relished, when finding we were almost as merry as himself, he began a sort of wild chant peculiar to the mountains, and descended from his seat at every little hill, more for the pleasure of dancing to his music, than the charity of resting his horses. As we proceeded, his spirits rose higher and higher. He barked at the dogs, squeaked at the pigs, *baaed* at the goats, squinted at the girls, bowed with mock reverence to the old men until his head touched the horses' tails, and saluted all the old women with a peal of laughter. It is impossible to conceive anything so ridiculous; especially when contrasted with the grave demeanour of a respectable old domestic we had brought with us from Berne, and who, seated by his side on the coach box, or rather the front seat of the *char*, was quite scandalized at the attention he attracted, and the astonishment of all these various inhabitants of the valley, who remained rooted to the spot where they had been saluted by our Jehu, staring after him in mute wonder. It was impossible not to laugh—and we did laugh, as the French say, "*aux larmes.*" His merriment was, however, interrupted by the appearance of a fine old church, of grand and imposing appearance; and as we passed through the lofty portico, supported by double rows of columns of fine black marble, we observed that he crossed himself with an expression of deep devotion. Our tour of observation was soon finished, and we departed quietly, without disturbing the devotions of the pretty peasant girls, who with uncovered heads, (probably left so for the innocent pleasure of showing to the best advantage their bright locks, secured by large silver bodkins ornamented with sparkling stones

of different colours,) were kneeling near the altar. We soon accomplished the remainder of our journey to Alpnach, a little village on the banks of the lake of the same name, which properly is a part of the lake of Lucerne, or the four forest cantons.

Having arrived at this place so much sooner than we anticipated, we again indulged the hope of reaching the Righi before sun-set, and lost no time in procuring a boat to continue our route. The promise of additional reward procured us additional oars-men, and our frail bark was soon flying over the blue waters of the lake. We had heard so much of the beauty of the lake of Lucerne, that this part of it entirely disappointed our expectations: on every side we saw nothing but high and barren mountains, and the scenery is entirely too rugged to be pleasing. But on emerging suddenly from the Alpnach see into the wider part of the lake, as we turned the corner of a huge promontory of rock, we found ourselves in another region. The pretty little town of Kersiten was just before us: on the right stood the town of Stantz; on the left rose the peaked summits of Mont Pilatre; and on the opposite side of the broad lake we saw the glittering spires of the capital of the canton. The rugged mountains were all soon in the rear, and the shores of the lake on each side presented the highest cultivation and the richest verdure. The lake was tranquil as a mirror; and the beautiful scene looked even more lovely reflected from its peaceful bosom, because, as our old domestic said, "*there the picture was varnished.*" Even the hay-makers, in their gay costumes, lost none of their picturesque effect by being seen *renversés*.

We glided rapidly past this pleasing scene, and soon reached the town of Weggis, at the foot of the Righi. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, we determined to

attempt the ascent, and our guides and horses were speedily in readiness. We found less difficulty and fatigue than we had anticipated, in the ascent; for the road is far better than that of the mountain passes we had recently encountered in the valley of Chamouni, and we yet hoped to reach the summit before sun-set. High, and higher we climbed, until all the mountains and lakes of Switzerland seemed to be laid out below us: range after range of mountains of every shade of azure appeared, until the snowy heights of the mountains of the Oberlandt crowned the glorious scene. Then we paused; for, it was impossible to reach the summit before the sun went down, and we stopped to watch the beautiful effect of his last rays upon the snow-clad mountains. Their dazzling whiteness was changed by degrees to the purest and most beautiful rose colour; then the roseate hue gave place to a ghost-like white, which brought forcibly to mind the end of all living, and this was succeeded by a bright and aerial blue, which faded, with the approach of night, into a sober gray. We were still half a league from the summit, and were yielding to the advice of our guides to dismount at the auberge they pointed out to us; but learning that there was another inn at the highest point, we resolved to proceed. We were encouraged in our determinations by the appearance of the moon, which was rising in full splendour; and though the silver light was too faint to give us a perfect idea of the magnificent scene below, it yet added to its enchantment. Another half hour brought us to the inn on the summit, where we found a party of about fifty people, who were all merrily engaged at supper. The comforts of this establishment certainly would not have been a sufficient attraction to its numerous guests, for they were "few and far between." Not so, however, were the little chambers in which we

were all penned up for the night; for, as they were separated only by thin board partitions, the conversation of those within them was only prevented from becoming general by the variety of languages spoken among them. It was a little *babel*. Just as the voices of two giggling girls, which were heard after the rest were silent, had died away, a tremendous wind arose, and blew with a fury that threatened to carry us all off together to the foot of the mountain; and the idea of being whirled like a "*feuille morte*," as the French naturalist said when in the same situation, "into one of the lakes below, or among the rocks of the unfortunate Goldau," was certainly not the most agreeable in the world.

I believe there were but few persons in the auberge who closed their eyes that night; for, those who were not apprehensive for their safety, feared that the wind might bring a change of weather, which would deprive them of the view of the rising sun; and this idea, with the discomforts of mine host's beds, was sufficient to banish "nature's sweet restorer." It was with no little pleasure that we heard the mountain horn announce a clear morning—the signal that is always given to travellers on the Righi, when the sun promises to rise without clouds. After a hasty toilette, of which a cloak formed the most important part, we all hurried out to the highest point of the mountain, distant only about forty or fifty feet from the auberge. The sun was partially obscured by a few light clouds for some minutes, but the sky above was perfectly clear, and the view entirely unimpeded by mist, so that we might well felicitate ourselves upon our visit to this celebrated spot, whose charms can never be exaggerated nor even described. On the eastern and northern side appeared innumerable mountains; and the splendid chains of the Oberlandt, now of a dazzling

white, rendered still more brilliant by the rays of the sun, rose in stately grandeur above the azure of those nearest in the picture. On the north and west, the view appeared to extend to the ocean, or to infinity; for it seemed to have no limit. The Black Forest was pointed out to us on this side, and the course of the "dark rolling Danube" likewise indicated. As far as the eye can reach, the mountains are interspersed with lakes, of which we counted twelve, distinctly seen. Just at the foot of the mountain on the eastern side, we had a complete view of the unfortunate valley of Goldau, and the Rossberg, whose slide, many years ago, buried three villages with four hundred inhabitants beneath an enormous mass of earth and rocks. It is affecting even at this lapse of time to view the fatal spot, and behold this once beautiful and smiling valley converted into a rude monument of those who perished there. Even the lake, in its vicinity, is half filled up by the immense rocks that were tumbled from their lofty resting place. It has been supposed by some naturalists that the Righi is composed, like the Rossberg, of a succession of strata, between each of which there is a sort of slippery clay, liable to be acted on by long rains, as well as internal springs. As these strata are said to be upon an inclined plane, it is conjectured that a part, or indeed almost the whole mountain might slide off, and be precipitated into the lake of Lucerne below. You will, I doubt not, felicitate us that this agreeable little adventure did not occur during our visit to it, for we certainly had not much desire to add to the *splash*.

After regaling ourselves for several hours with this magnificent view, so often denied by the clouds to travellers, who sometimes wait many days on the mountain in vain, we felt that we had been particularly favoured, and were completely indemnified for any former disappointments.

We descended slowly on foot on the northern side, having ascended on the southern, keeping in view the most serene part of this beautiful picture, and in a few hours were reposing in the chapel of William Tell at the foot of the mountain. This little chapel has nothing remarkable about it, except the interest it possesses in connection with the celebrated personage whose name it bears. It is said that on this spot he killed the tyrant Gesler; and there are several other chapels dedicated to him in this part of Switzerland. However great our admiration of the heroic acts of the patriot, we did not care to visit each of his chapels, and satisfied ourselves with this one as a specimen. We were, indeed, well content to take a chaise at the little town of Kussnacht, in its vicinity, to continue our route to Lucerne; for, a walk from the top of the Righi to its base, is no ordinary promenade; and in the present instance, it had been somewhat lengthened by our visit to the chapel, and rendered more laborious by the warm rays of a vertical sun.

We had not proceeded more than a mile, when the chaise seemed to me to move slowly, and yet move slowly, and at length entirely stopped. The cause of our detention was explained by the coachman, who said that the narrow road was occupied by a calèche, which had been accidentally broken, and that we could not proceed until it was removed out of the way. We descended for a short time to facilitate the operation, and were surprised to find that the calèche had been occupied by two gentlemen, one of whom was an old friend and acquaintance. The other I remembered well having seen the evening before at the auberge on the Righi, and being struck with his air, and manner, and the pensive sadness which clouded his brow. The most natural arrangement was, that we should offer them the vacant seats of our

chaise, as they were, as well as ourselves, journeying to Lucerne. Our friend immediately accepted the offer, but his companion, with graceful courtesy, declined it.

“You are less accustomed than I am to climbing these mountains,” he said with a melancholy smile to his friend. “I prefer, at present, a solitary walk. Adieu!”—and striking into a pathway which led from the more frequented route, he disappeared.

We re-entered our chaise, accompanied by our friend.

“I am rather surprised,” he said, “that I should have presented to you Lord —, with whom we have just parted, for the first time. You must have met with him before in the *haute société de Paris*, though he spends much less of his time there than he did in his more youthful days. He says, that his career of folly and dissipation was arrested by a visit to these mountains, where he witnessed a scene that made an indelible impression on his mind, and essentially aided in changing him from the thoughtless being he then was, to the sober and rational man you now behold him. The excellence of his character is well known in his own country; and he occasionally visits the continent, not to renew the mad career in which he was once engaged, but for health and recreation; and, as he says, to revisit this spot, lest he should again become too much devoted to the world, and that he may be reminded by it of the instability of all things here below. He last evening gave me so beautiful and touching a picture, that I have made a sketch of it—not without his approbation, however, for that would be betraying confidence. He told me that he did not object to his experience being made a beacon for others; and that I had his permission to record the events of his early history, with the proviso that his real name should not appear.”

Here our friend drew from his pocket a small manuscript, which we entreated him to read for our entertainment during the ride. To this he assented.

“Some of the other dramatis personæ, with whom you will become acquainted, during the recital I am about to make,” he said, “you will, I doubt not, see on your return to your far distant native land, though I have taken the same liberty with their names as with that of Lord ——, whom you will recognize under the title of Lord de Vaux. Indeed I think it most probable that you are already acquainted with the charming family to whom I allude. Should you find a resemblance to them in my description, I hope you will inform me if my picture is accurately drawn.”

Seeing the impatience with which we awaited the opening of the manuscript, our friend dispensed with father preface, and thus began:

On a bright and lovely morning in the latter end of the month of June, 1806, a small *char-à-banc* was seen slowly wending its devious way through one of the romantic valleys at the base of those stupendous mountains, that rise in isolated majesty on the northwestern side of the lake of the four forest cantons in Switzerland. As it was traversing the road that leads from the town of Schwitz to the Righi, it might well be imagined that its course was directed towards this *regina montium*, from whose summit the view at sunrise has been well said to “form an epoch in one’s life that can never be forgotten.” Whether this was the design, or whether, as the slackened motion of the little vehicle seemed to indicate, it was about to pause on the outskirts of one of the thriving villages that dotted the green and smiling valley, may perhaps be ascertained by some reference to its inmates. There were four persons;

three ladies, one of whom was apparently rather in the wane of life, while the other two seemed to have numbered hardly eighteen summers; and a young man, who was evidently the guardian and escort of the party. It may be perhaps as well to mention another individual, who certainly thought himself the most important personage of the groupe, whatever consequence other people might be disposed to attach to his pretensions. This was an Italian grey-hound, the most beautiful and diminutive of his species; nestled in one corner of the little carriage, his head reposed in tranquil security on the lap of the younger of the ladies, while an occasional glance toward her face, seemed to invite the caress often bestowed by her delicate hand. Though this dainty favourite could not boast the "ears of jet, and emerald eyes" of the classic and "pensive Selima," yet the "velvet of his paws" might have almost rivalled her's; and some reason he had to be proud of his silken coat of silver gray, his snowy breast, and the soft dark lustre of his gazelle-like eyes. There seemed to be a sort of mysterious sympathy between this dumb companion and his lovely mistress, which, however, a few minutes observation satisfactorily explained; they were alike beautiful, and alike dependant on the kind care of friends; for they were alike—mute. It has often been observed, that when several persons are travelling in company, they are either unusually communicative and gay, or particularly silent and contemplative. The latter mood seemed to possess our travellers; for, during the last half hour, not a word had been spoken, except an occasional exclamation of wonder or delight, as each turn in the road gave them, in ever varying beauty, the bright bosom of the lake of Lucerne, or the soft aerial blue of the distant Alps, in contrast with the bold dark outlines of the nearer Righi or the Rossberg.

As the char approached the village to which its course was directed, the attention of the young ladies was attracted by a neat residence, in which the snug comforts of a Swiss cottage were singularly blended with the embellishments of English taste; and one of them exclaimed—

“There is a sweet rural looking place, Henry! I think that house would exactly suit our mother’s taste.”

“I am glad it meets with your approbation, Mary,” replied the young man, “as it happens to be the one I have selected for your six weeks’ sojourn; and if I have been equally fortunate in another quarter,” he added, taking his mother’s hand, “my frequent visits to this valley, during our stay in Lucerne, will not have been fruitless. As to poor little Olivia,” said he, glancing toward their silent companion, “she cannot well be said to have a *voice* in the matter.”

“I am sure you have done all to ensure my comfort that filial duty and affection could suggest, my son,” said his mother, gently pressing the hand that held her’s; “you know I am not very fastidious: all I wish is a quiet retreat during your tour through Scotland, which I hope will not be delayed beyond the appointed time. It was only for your gratification, my children, that I have consented to wander so far from my native land, whither we must soon retrace our steps. I believe I can hardly consent even to revisit England before our return.”

“I know not exactly what the fashionable friends we met with in Florence last winter will think of our choice,” said the young lady. “They will, I dare say, wonder a little, that we should prefer this secluded valley to the shores of lake Lemman’s crystal tide, or the rocks of Melleirie.”

“It is true,” replied her brother, “that Geneva or Lausanne might offer a gayer residence, yet this valley has

many charms; and its vicinity to the Righi may perhaps render it at some future time as popular as other places of resort in Switzerland. It is certainly as pleasing as Interlachen, which is becoming so great a favourite; and besides," he added gaily, "when it is understood that Mrs. Leslie and her lovely daughter are here, it will need no other attractions."

"Thank you for my share of the compliment, brother," said Mary. "But you have not yet suspected the cause of our mother's fancy for this spot. Do you know," she added, looking at her mother with an arch smile, "that I begin to think her preference for the neighbourhood of the lake of the forest cantons may be found in its having once been the residence of William Tell. Have you never heard the tradition of one of her ancestors being descended from the Swiss patriot?"

"You have mistaken the cause of my preference, my daughter," said Mrs. Leslie, "though it is certain that it does exist. There is something sweetly soothing in the reminiscences of by-gone days, even when sad thoughts are awakened by them;" and as she spoke, a shade passed over her still lovely face. "I visited this spot many, many years ago, when I was blessed with youth, health, happiness, friends"—she paused, and the unbidden tears started to her eyes—"yet I would not be so ungrateful as to complain," she continued meekly. "I am now blessed in my children, and I trust I can appreciate the beneficent tenderness of an all-wise Providence."

At this instant the carriage stopped at the grille of the little court in front of their new home, and the travellers were saluted with much ceremony and more kindness by their host and hostess, who with their only daughter, a buxom and blooming lass, came forward to meet them.

Mrs. Leslie was rather surprised when the hostess addressed her in very tolerable English, though with a marked accent—

“You are welcome to our humble roof, lady,” she said; “and the more welcome, because you speak in a language most dear to me. Until I had attained the age of my daughter Annette there, I had heard no other. But will you please to glance at the rooms we have prepared for you?—though simple enough, they are the best we have.”

The accommodation she now displayed was far better than her guests had anticipated; a neat parlor, with trelliced windows, from which the grand and beautiful scenery of the adjacent country was visible; a small *salle-à-manger* adjoining it, and two chambers above, separated only by a thin partition, were all she had to offer. This was sufficient for Mrs. Leslie and her two young companions; and her son declined putting the family of their host to farther inconvenience for his accommodation, as his stay was so short. He should remain with them only two days, and for that space of time his lodging might be in the neighbouring auberge. The two days quickly passed away; and with a few silent tears, and the tender blessing of his kind mother and lovely sister, Henry departed, promising that his stay should not in any event exceed six weeks.

The hours of ennui that succeeded his departure, his fond friends endeavoured to alleviate by arranging their little household in such a manner as to insure them a profitable, if not pleasing use of the time which would elapse during his absence. Books they had been careful to provide, and to these, with Olivia's port-folio, and Mary's harp, which at no small pains and cost had been transported to this retired spot, and now formed the chief ornament of their parlour, they looked for their principal sources of pleasure during their brief sojourn in the valley. The time they

had recently passed in Italy, had been chiefly devoted to perfecting themselves in these accomplishments, for which they had both at an early period of their lives manifested a decided taste—and the graceful and spirited sketches of Olivia de Tracey, and the sweet voice and harp of Mary Leslie, were not unknown among connoisseurs even in that beautiful and classic land. It was not, however, a desire of distinction in fashionable society that induced Mary to devote several hours of each day to music; she was the most devoted of daughters; her mother's health was delicate; and often when her spirits were agitated or low, the soft stealing melody of her daughter's loved voice would soothe and calm her, and "witch the shade away." There was something indeed in that voice which touched less tender hearts than that of a fond mother; and few could have heard its soft, rich, thrilling tones, even in speaking, far less in song, without feeling convinced that its beautiful possessor added ineffable sweetness of character to her more brilliant charms. It was no wonder, then, that those accents should have been received with pleasure, or each graceful movement of her symmetrical form, and change of her expressive and lovely face, should have been watched with the deepest interest by one to whom she was almost the only earthly treasure.

Three weeks had glided away almost imperceptibly to our travellers in their quiet seclusion, when Mrs. Leslie was a little startled one morning by the rather precipitate entrance of her daughter into her apartment, her heightened colour evidently manifesting the occurrence of something that had disturbed her usual gentle equanimity.

"What has happened, my love?" said she, laying her

book down, and looking up anxiously; "have you any tidings of Henry?"

"I have, dearest mother," replied Mary; "but nothing is the matter—do not be alarmed."

"Then why did you enter in so *brusque* a manner; and where is his letter?"

"I have no letter, dear mother, and I am sorry I surprised you so much;—but when I inform you that the bearer of my brother's message is Charles Lennox, and that he is now under our roof, you will, I am sure, pardon my abrupt interruption of your morning occupation."

"I shall be happy to welcome him here, my dearest child," said Mrs. Leslie, rising from her seat, but exhibiting much less surprise at the intelligence of his arrival than Mary had anticipated. "I loved Charles tenderly when a child, for the sake of his mother, who was my dearest friend; and he had many pleasing and, indeed, winning qualities as a youth. Since he left us to return to his friends in England, you know I have seldom heard of him, except that he passes the greater part of his time in the French capital, the gayest of the gay."

"You will hardly recognise the hair-brained youth we loved so much, and so often quarrelled with at home," said Mary, "so much has our young kinsman improved in elegance and—assurance," she added in a lower voice, as her mother left the room, and she turned to a mirror that gave back her blushing cheek, to arrange the silken ringlets which had been a little disturbed by her meeting with her former friend and cousin.

When she descended to the parlour, she found her kinsman engaged in earnest conversation with her mother. He rose on her entrance, and gracefully offering her his seat on

the sofa, continued the subject which she had apparently for a moment interrupted.

“I perceive,” he said, “that beautiful and mysterious little being is still under your protection,” glancing slightly toward Olivia, who was sitting in a recessed window. “May I inquire if she will return with you home?”

“I think not,” said Mrs. Leslie, “if I may rely upon the letters I have recently received from her connections in Paris. The cloud of mystery in which she was enveloped when you last saw her has been partially dispersed. She is now no longer forlorn and friendless, as when she was first confided to my care. By the death of a near relative, she has become entitled to a considerable estate; and this circumstance, with the accounts they have received of her exceeding beauty, and singular talents, has determined her *friends*, as they now call themselves, to request her speedy return to them. She is devoted to her country, to the memory of her parents and her brother; and I believe it would give her more pleasure to wreath a garland of *immortelles* for them within the precincts of *Père la Chaise*, than the most delightful amusement could afford to one less sad. But she knows we are speaking of her.”

And in truth, by that singular instinct, if it may be so called, by which those who have been visited with her misfortune, know when they are the objects of attention, Olivia had perceived that she occupied their thoughts and conversation. A slight blush tinged the almost marble hue of her cheek, as she rose and glided softly from the room. With the benevolence which characterized her every action, Mrs. Leslie rose and followed her, saying, as she departed,

“As Olivia has discovered that we were speaking of her, it is but fair to let her know the substance of our conversation.”

“It is indeed singular,” said Charles, drawing his chair nearer the sofa, doubtless for the purpose of conversing with more facility with his lovely cousin, “to see such rare beauty in a little moving statue. I have never seen so exquisite a model in miniature. There is something marvelously beautiful in the contrast of those bright dark eyes and exquisitely pencilled brows, with the alabaster hue, ‘if hue that may be called which hue has none,’ of her complexion. How radiantly lovely she appeared a few minutes ago, when that faint tinge of rose appeared on her cheek, like the beam of the setting sun on the Alpine snow. Is it possible there can be any feeling under that ordinarily quiet, cold exterior?”

“It is said that *Etna* is covered with snow as well as Mont Blanc,” said Mary, smiling. “But to answer your question,” she added, more gravely, “*Olivia has feeling*—she is affectionate and grateful, and any marked kindness is never forgotten by her. When she designates me, it is by placing her hand on her heart. She loves with the simplicity of a child, and with her whole soul; and I have often heard my mother express a fear, that when she is withdrawn from the quiet circle in which she has hitherto moved, and is thrown more into the world, the professions of its heartless votaries may be misunderstood by her, and that she may form some hopeless attachment which will perhaps cost her her reason or life. I am, however, answering your question rather too much at length.”

“Not at all,” said Charles: “that may not be when you are the speaker and I the listener. But you cannot surely have any faith in the idea of a *broken heart*; trust me, that is a chimera, fit only for love-sick youths to believe, until they are cured of their credulity by the sober realities of life. If you are so forgetful of our former friendship, and

treat me with such coldness," he continued, as Mary withdrew the hand he had gently imprisoned in his own, "I shall be compelled to pay my devoirs at the shrine of another divinity; and as this little Venus approaches both in beauty and colouring the 'statue that enchants the world,' I think I shall dedicate myself to her."

Mary shook her head—

"Thoughtless as ever, Charles," she said. "But were I to say anything on this subject, you might suppose me jealous of the admiration which you have expressed to me of this beautiful statue; and which she, with far more than the ordinary ease with which such expressive glances are understood, read in those you bestowed on her—all, nay, perhaps, much more than you have said to me."

The re-entrance of Mrs. Leslie at this moment arrested the reply that Charles was about to make. Remarking the lateness of the hour, and apologizing for his interruption of their morning avocations, he took his leave, after receiving a kind invitation to repeat his visits to the cottage frequently during his sojourn in the valley.

It may be easily conjectured, that Charles availed himself of the permission thus frankly and kindly given. Notwithstanding the light and playful manner in which he conversed with his lovely cousin, a deeper feeling was awakened in his heart, in looking on this fair creature, whom a few years before he had loved with all the enthusiasm of youthful passion, and now beheld in the full bloom of beauty. With the confidence, that a very handsome and rather vain cavalier is apt to indulge, he had not for a moment permitted the idea to cross his mind, that she was not equally well pleased with the heightened grace of his manners, and improved elegance of his person; and before he had traversed half the distance between the cottage and his lodgings in the

village, he had formed a thousand plans for the future, over all which his charming cousin should preside. It was true that there was something rather too reserved in her manner toward one who had formerly been her friend and playmate; but that was perhaps occasioned by her instinctive perception of the depth of his attachment to her, or she might have been offended by the familiarity with which he met her after their long separation. He did not doubt, however that a day would suffice for their reconciliation. In the words of Cardinal Mazarine, he said, "*Le temps et moi.*"

"This shall be my motto," said Charles, as he reached his door: "and if I remain in this dull region a month, I shall consider the time well spent that ensures my favour with a creature so gifted."

Many successive mornings found Charles a visitor at the cottage, improving well, as he thought, the opportunity thus allowed him of cultivating the acquaintance and good opinion of its interesting inmates. His gay and lively sallies amused Mrs. Leslie, while the careless playfulness of his manner concealed the depth of his passion for her beautiful daughter. To Olivia his attentions were unbounded: he soon learned to converse with her with perfect facility, and as an avenue to her favour he neglected not to cultivate the good will of her graceful little favourite, who returned his caresses with interest. Mary, the ingenuous and guileless Mary, was the only one of the little group who harboured a suspicion of these pleasing arts. Her noble nature scorned the least approach to coquetry, and she wished sincerely for some suitable occasion, to dissipate the impression she could not doubt her kinsman had received, that he had only to ask, in order to receive her heart and hand. But how was this to be done? He constantly

alluded to their former childish intimacy, and as long as he placed their friendship on that ground, and alluded as he often did to his relationship with her, it would have been prudery to refuse him the pleasure of conversing with her, of accompanying her in a morning ride, or an evening promenade in their host's neatly kept grounds, which were more extensive than so small an establishment seemed to warrant, and were laid out according to his ideas of English taste, in which he had been much aided by his good wife. She had occupied many days of her youth, in planting hedges on each side of gravel walks, all of which led, though in various directions, from the door of the cottage to a fine grove of linden trees, as fondly cherished as her blooming Annette, and to which the growth of forty years had given considerable stateliness. Near this grove a summer house had been constructed, rather rudely it is true, as old Rudolph himself was the architect, yet the framework of the building signified little, while it was tapestried within, and ornamented without by the dark green foliage and crimson blossoms of the woodbine, the delicate bloom of the clematis, and the silver stars and fragrant breath of the jasmine. It may be easily supposed that this spot was not without its attraction to the inmates of the cottage, and that they often sought in its refreshing shade a refuge from the rays even of the declining sun. Yet Charles found some difficulty in persuading his fair cousin to spend only a few minutes with him there, and observed, not without some apprehension, that Mary was always happier when their interviews were observed by Olivia or her mother.

“Do you not walk to-day, *chère cousine*,” said he, as he made his appearance in the parlour one morning, with his usual graceful *entré*, and inwardly felicitating himself on

finding Mary and her harp its only occupants. "The air is soft and balmy, and it is beautiful—beautiful as—

"What?" said Mary, colouring at the expression with which the words were uttered.

"Nay, do not blush so prettily, my sweet coz, or it will destroy my argument for tempting you to walk—namely, the fear that your roses would wither, without fresh air. I was only going to repeat the words of a witty friend, who, when at a loss for some expression to signify his admiration, always says, 'beautiful! as the face of a woman!' But on farther reflection," he added, "I believe the sun is a little too warm, and this trellised window affords a charming air." Drawing a chair near to her own—"à-propos of airs, your harp reminds me of the land of song. Did you visit Venice during your sojourn in Italy?"

"Our visit there was very brief," said Mary—"we had hardly time to glance at its stately palaces, or to hear the song of the gondoliers, before we were hurried away. I had not even time to select a chain of the delicate workmanship for which its artisans are celebrated, and for which I had an especial fancy."

"A most fortunate circumstance for me," said Charles, "as it emboldens me to make an offering which, for several days past, I have been seeking an opportunity to present;" producing at the same moment a small casket, which opened with a concealed spring, as he held it towards her. It contained two bracelets, of the rarest and most exquisite workmanship, one of them a singular assemblage of gems and finely wrought precious marbles, or *pierres dures*—the other formed of a number of small chains, so minute as almost to require the aid of a microscope to distinguish the links, the clasp being beneath a small but perfect miniature likeness of himself, to which the artist, with inimitable skill,

had added many beauties, undiscernable even in the handsome original, without destroying the resemblance: the miniature was surrounded with the purest brilliants.

“I think,” he said, “I cannot have forgotten the size of that fair and rounded arm,” offering to clasp the bracelet which bore his likeness on it.

Mary blushed and hesitated. “Your offering is too costly, Charles. Why did you not bring me a rose? I should have preferred it greatly.”

“Because roses will wither, fairest, and then the donor might be forgotten. Is it possible, that you mean to refuse so small a gratification to your friend, your old playmate, your cousin?” He added, in a voice that showed his disappointment, as she still seemed to hesitate, “you will not, you cannot be so cruel!”

Mary was touched at the tone in which the last words were spoken. “I meant not to wound you by my refusal,” she said; and as she spoke the fair arm was extended toward him.

“You will then wear this, for my sake,” said Charles, “and when you look on it, think of one who offers it as a souvenir of the past; and,” he added, in a lower, softer, and more earnest tone, “*a pledge of the future.*”

Mary withdrew her arm decidedly. “On those terms, Charles, I cannot accept your offering—and—indeed—I have wished for some days,”—she paused and hesitated, in extreme embarrassment, for the noble ingenuousness of her nature strove with the bashful pride of a maiden’s heart. The former would have had the victory, but for the entrance of Olivia, who returned at this critical moment. Charles concealed his extreme vexation beneath the tone of careless raillery he knew so well how to assume.

“Why this is prudery,” he said, “downright prudery,

ma capricieuse! I have made many inquiries of one of our mutual friends concerning you, and though I confess his replies were not very satisfactory, I should at least have supposed he would have given me some information respecting this new and unexpected trait in your character."

"Made inquiries concerning me?" said Mary, evidently at a loss for something better to say.

"Yes, of you, sweet, blushing rose! I inquired of our friend Edward Montague, whom I lately met in Paris, and who had the felicity of spending some months in Florence during the past winter."

As he spoke, he looked with a penetrating glance at his fair cousin; but Mary at that moment stooped to raise a sheet of music that the air from the window had wafted from its place near her harp.

"I see," he continued, "you are determined, by your cruelty, to drive me to the shrine of the little Venus."

As he spoke, he approached Olivia, and returned the caress of her favourite by joining the costly bracelets together and clasping them around the white and slender throat of the little animal, at the same moment gently placing her hand on the clasp, to indicate that the offering was made to her. Again, the beautiful rose tint, which had attracted his admiration, gleamed brightly on her cheek,—she bent over her little favourite, and unclasping the gemmed bracelets, examined them with fixed attention. Her proficiency in painting, showed her at a glance the exquisite finish of the miniature; and the gems by which it was surrounded were unheeded. Could a deeper feeling lurk under the expression of unqualified admiration, which animated her beautiful features, as she gazed upon this marvellous work of art? Could it be that the young stranger who had almost abandoned his own country for the sunny

land she loved so dearly, and who brought with him from the spot which she had been accustomed to regard as an earthly paradise, so many graces and accomplishments, had awakened a feeling in that youthful heart unknown, unfelt before? This idea certainly occurred to Mary, as she looked on the blushing cheek of Olivia, but Charles was too much absorbed in his recent vexation to think of anything else at that moment. With his usual self-possession, however, he took his leave, and endeavoured, by every means afforded him, to dissipate the unpleasant impressions he had received during his visit of the morning.

A stroll through the wild and romantic environs of the village, and the exhilarating freshness of the mountain air, soon restored his self-complacency. He looked on the affair of the bracelet only as a momentary caprice, which needed no farther explanation. The following morning found him again at the cottage, apparently in one of his gayest moods. Mary flattered herself that he perfectly understood the explanation she desired to make of her feelings toward him, and that a few hours had sufficed to reconcile him to the discovery. She therefore felt more at ease with him, and listened to his lively sallies with far more pleasure than she had hitherto done. The absence of Olivia, and her mother, who excused herself soon after his arrival, as she was making up her despatches for her absent son, Mary now regarded with indifference, and she offered to beguile an hour, which she feared might be otherwise rather dull, in playing for him some of the new music with which he had furnished her on his first arrival.

“How does it happen, Charles,” said Mary, rising from her harp, after striking the last chords of a fashionable opera he had brought her, and resuming her silken tapestry

on which the expanding flowers and buds and tendrils were beginning to rival the glories of a Flemish picture, "how does it happen that you find Paris so enchanting?"

"Enchanting!" echoed Charles, in a voice of surprise; "is it possible, my fair coz, that you, with all your exquisite tastes, can ask such a question? Methinks an answer might be found in the charms of that divine air, whose ravishing beauties still penetrate my soul through my ear, and which, though now as delightful as a harp and fairy touch can make it, loses nothing by being heard amid the splendours of accompanying scenery, and the rich and varied harmony of the finest *artistes*, vocal and instrumental, that Europe can afford."

"I can easily imagine, Charles," said Mary, "that you may find pleasure in listening to fine music, though I think your expressions are rather extravagant, and pardon me, almost profane. I do not like to hear the word 'divine' applied quite so often to things which appear to me unworthy of the appellation; but you have not yet satisfactorily answered my question."

"I will answer it, sweet coz," replied Charles, "and as much at length as you will, provided you promise not to interrupt me by a homily, if I should chance to bring a few divinities on the stage. I am glad, however, that our friend Montague is not here. I protest his solemn air is worse than any sermon you can preach, Mary; when I speak of the pleasure of a *garçon* at Paris, he looks as cold and stern as the Righi in the month of December. I fear he has infected you with some of his precious ideas."

Mary blushed. "You are unjust, Charles, very unjust, to one who really loves you, though he believes, that with all your boasted happiness you are *not* happy in Paris. He thinks that the life you lead there, though it may amuse

you for a time, will add neither to your stock of wisdom, virtue,—or—or—anything else that an honourable and upright man should endeavour to attain.”

Mary paused; for at the conclusion of her speech, she encountered a keen and penetrating glance from Charles, whose brilliant eyes were fixed upon her with an expression she had never observed in them before. There was a sarcastic and haughty curl of the lip in his half smile, that gave her a feeling almost of dread. She blushed yet more deeply, and bending her eyes on her work, seemed silently absorbed in its progress. An unpleasant silence of a minute succeeded, when Charles, in a deep, and rather subdued voice, said—

“I am really vastly obliged to Montague for his affectionate solicitude; doubtless you concur with him in opinion?”

“I!” said Mary, “oh no, I know nothing about it; you have not even answered the simple question I asked you this morning.”

“What was it?” said Charles, resuming his usual air of gaiety and thoughtlessness,—“oh, I remember, you asked me why I found Paris enchanting? You have so often made this inquiry, or something very like it, that I believe I must answer it at length. Would you like a description of the life of a fashionable man,—like myself, *par exemple*—for a day, or a week?”

“I will hear it for a day,” returned Mary, “and then, if it is sufficiently interesting, you may go on to the end of the week.”

“As to that matter,” said Charles, “I must confess there is not quite so great a variety as we generally boast of; but you shall judge for yourself. Where shall the curtain rise first?—suppose we begin the drama at the *café de Paris*.

Imagine a few friends in *petit comité*—Sir Harry V., Lord L., Col. C., and your humble servant taking possession of one of the choicest *appartemens* of this pleasantest *café* on the Boulevards, at six o'clock *précises*; and, according to our precise arrangement, meeting the soup and salmon at the door of our *salle-à-manger*. Then, with light hearts and good appetites, sitting down to a dinner, not ordinary and tavern-like, but wreathed with flowers and sparkling with lights, like a Grecian feast. Imagine us enjoying all the exquisite delicacies of the *cuisine Française* and the ambrosial streams of purest wine—not the vulgar productions of Oporto, Xeres, and Madeira, but the more ethereal charms of Burgundy, Chateau-Margaux, Champagne, Johannisberg, vin de Paille, Hermitage”——

Mary interrupted him by laughing. “Really, Charles,” said she, “one would suppose from the interest you manifest, that you were describing the fabled nectar in one or the other of these favourites. But as I cannot appreciate their merits, I will, if you please, exchange them for a little of the conversation that seasons the entertainment.”

“Conversation!” said Charles; “you cannot doubt that the ‘feast of reason and flow of soul’ could be wanting? The *attic* salt is the only sort of which a profusion is admissible at a French dinner. Let me see if I can give you a sample:”——

“Why were you not at Long Chanips to-day, Lennox? I should have had an opportunity of showing you my divinity, the youthful and elegant Madame P.; I should have enjoyed the pleasure of proving to you the favour I am shown in that quarter; though I was near paying dear for it to-day, by the loss of life or limb, or perhaps both, in approaching too near her coupé. Centaur as I am, Wild-fire actually prevented me from acknowledging the salute

she gave me, by touching with her lips the tips of her rosy fingers. She is certainly a nice creature—a perfect amour,—I would lay a wager of a hundred Napoleons to a centime, that she is a thousand times more lovely than your boasted and beautiful Mary.”——

Mary started, and the eloquent blood mounted to her temples. She raised her eyes for an instant, and then again busied herself with her work. Charles continued silent for some minutes.

“Well!” said Mary.

“Well!” repeated Charles, “you do not seem to relish my description, *ma belle cousine*—what has given so brilliant a tinge to your delicate complexion?”

“Charles,” said Mary, raising her eyes, with an expression of sweet ingenuousness, “there are doubtless many *Marys* to whom the epithet of ‘beautiful,’ would be more applicable than to me. Yet I cannot help supposing it probable that your friend alluded to me.”

“Supposing that you have supposed rightly,” said Charles, half doubtingly, half playfully.

“In that case,” said Mary, “I confess I should not feel especially flattered by such a notice from such a quarter. I could not esteem it a very great compliment to be so lightly named by one, who, though he may be your friend, certainly from the specimen you have given of his conversation, has shown that he possesses not a few of the attributes of a coxcomb.”

“Most gravely and sagely spoken! Montague himself could not have made a speech more solemn. I shall begin again to harbour the suspicions that first raised those mantling blushes on your transparent cheek: take care that I do not penetrate all your thoughts through his brilliant but slight veil.”

Again he paused, and again the embarrassment of his fair auditrice was manifest.

“You have not finished a day yet,” she said, at length, “though you promised me a week in Paris, if I would listen. You have not even finished your feast, but I believe that has lasted long enough; let us suppose it over, and the cloth removed.”

“It would be most uninteresting to pursue the process that far,” said Charles, “for it has been many centuries since that antediluvian custom, as well as the barbarous antiquity of drinking toasts and healths has been exploded in Paris, even if it ever existed. The *bois d’allonges* would cut a sorry figure by the side of our polished old tables. No, no—we do not thus drain our cups of pleasure to the dregs; we leave the feast, with all its decorations, its garlands, its lights, its *bronzes dorés, porcelaine de Sévres, vermeil, cristaux, &c.*, only to exchange this for a scene still more delightful—for, we are never at a loss for occupation at this witching hour. The opera, the theatres, Frescati’s, the salon, the bal a l’ambassade—or—or a thousand other equally attractive places, engage us for the next six or eight hours. These are the hours in which a man of fashion *lives*, in the rest of the twenty-four, he only exists. At three or four in the morning, behold me *au logis*, where, with the aid of *croisées bien fermées*, and protected yet more effectually from the intrusion of the light by the ample folds of Lyons satin, I enjoy the luxuries of a French couch, secure within its graceful canopy from all that may prevent the influences of that most welcome visitor Morpheus. I know not exactly whether I should acknowledge my hour of rising; it is indeed rather too soon for a fashionable man, but owing, I presume, to early habit, I have an inveterate practice of awakening precisely at eleven. In vain does Dupont don

his softest pantouffles, and step with cat-like pace into my chamber; he finds me invariably striking my repeater, which gives me the hour of eleven. 'What is the hour, Dupont?' 'Onzes heures précises, Monsieur.' 'How is the weather this morning?' 'Un peu orageux, Monsieur.' 'Ah! I thought so; a man of fashion is a perfect barometer! Well, have you read the journals this morning—what news is there?' 'No sare; dat is to say—yes sare; on a attrappé quatre voleurs dans la rue St. Dennis, et trois dans la rue St. Martin—la grande revue aura lieu demain, et le bal de l'opera au profit des indigens le dimanche en huit, voila tout, Monsieur.' 'Why, Dupont, that is exactly what you told me yesterday, when I asked you the same question.' 'No sare; dat is to say yes sare; it is de nouvelles of dis morning—je vous assure parole d'honneur—it is de most perfect true, de most exacte verité. Mais, Monsieur, le bain est prêt, et le déjeuner vill be ready in one petite demi heure.' The petite demi heure passed, and my tasteful *cabarat* of *Sèvres* and *vermeil* removed, I await my usual visitors in my robe de chambré brodée, and pantouffles de velours. 'Monsieur, voici, M. Le Coiffeur, M. Le Tailleur, M. Le Gantier, M. Le Bijoutier, M. Le——.' 'Bah! why did you let all these people in? Bid them wait in the anti-chamber, and send the jeweller to me.' Exit Dupont, and entre M. Le Bijoutier. It would be impossible to select a jewelled cane, and a *chaîne d'or* in less time than an hour and a half. This important matter accomplished, there is no leisure for the rest. I have a rendezvous aux Tuileries at two, and there is barely time for the toilette. 'Dismiss those people in the anti-chamber, Dupont, et defend la porte.' 'Yes sare—dat is to say no sare—dere is a gentil-homme who wishes to speak wid you, Monsieur.' 'I am not in, Dupont—or rather I am not up. No, I believe I

am au bois de Boulogne. That will be far enough to banish this intruder, I hope." Soon after I overhear the following colloquy in the ante-chamber. 'Monsieur est sorti!—are you *sure* of it?' 'Oui, certainement, Monsieur,—depuis dix heures.' 'Oh! you must be mistaken—he never rises until eleven.' 'Mon dieu, Monsieur! I know, certainement—je suis son valet; il est sorti—il est au bois de Boulogne—depuis dix heures, parole d'honneur, je vous assure, it is de most perfect true—de most exacte verité!' My visitor departs, and in an hour more I am ready for the Tuileries. A lounge there, a ride en verité au bois de Boulogne, and a visit or two bring me again to six o'clock. Shall I give you another day?"

"Thank you—I believe this will do. But is this a fair sample? Are all your days spent in this manner?"

"It is a fair sample, most fair coz."

"And on Sunday?"

"Oh, that makes no difference in Paris, you know; except that the most delightful operas, and the most brilliant balls are reserved for that day."

"And so, in this agreeable division of time, there are no moments, far less hours, left for reading, reflection, correspondence, deeds of charity, devotion ——"

"Stop! stop! lovely preacher; remember our compact. I cannot accept a sermon in return for all my confessions."

"Well, I will not give you one; but, Charles, are there no hours or moments, in which a suspicion crosses your mind that all is not right, and that this is not the sort of life a rational being would be content to lead?"

"An infringement on our compact again!—yet I will answer." As he spoke, a cloud passed over his brow—he pressed his hand an instant over his eyes, as if to shut out some fearful vision, as he continued in an altered tone—"I.

will acknowledge that impertinent thoughts sometimes intrude on my gayest hours; that I feel as if the sword of Damocles were suspended over my head; and that there have been moments when I would almost have exchanged my delirious pleasures, for the mortal repose of *Père la Chaise*." He said these words rapidly and earnestly, and an expression almost of despair usurped the place of his usually gay and careless smile. "Are you answered now, Mary?"

"I am, indeed; but I did not intend to give you pain. One more question, and my inquisition is finished. What becomes of these fashionable people, if they happen to be ill? I suppose they are not exempted from all human infirmities."

"No, that is very certain; indeed, I believe they are rather more liable to them than you sober people. But then they never permit their cares to mar the pleasures of others. In this they are truly philosophical."

"I agree with them heartily, so far," said Mary; "but there are moments when we have a right to expect the sympathy of our friends. I think I have heard that you were once ill at Paris."

"Not once only, but often. I was once attacked by the *grippe*, in its most ferocious style; and have twice narrowly escaped a *fièvre nerveuse*."

"And did your friends manifest their concern?"

"Oh yes, certainly. It is true, I never saw them; but cards were sent, *pour demander*; and they all congratulated me on my recovery, which they had been assured was almost a miracle. They took it for granted that they would not be admitted, and feared to disturb me. I am not surprised at their repugnance to a sick chamber: pah! the remembrance of it is gall and wormwood. To see a gay

youth, whom one is accustomed to admire *en grande costume*, stretched out like a *cadavre*; but it is enough. However, I am unjust. Sir Harry V—— *did* call one morning, and sent for Dupont. When he returned, I desired to know what he said. ‘Did he ask after my health?’ ‘No sare—yes sare, dat is to say, he desire me to inform you dat he hope to see you au Champs de Mars to-morrow, as he learn dat de chevaux sont arrivés; de chevaux dat you import from Angleterre; and dat he will parier one mille Napoleons contre une centime dat his Wildfire and Selima will beat Daredevil and Mary Leslie.’

Mary started from her seat. “Oh, Charles, is it possible that you can have made such a use of my name?”

Charles threw himself on one knee, in an attitude that a *danseur de l’opera* might have envied.

“Beauteous Mary!” he exclaimed—detaining her by clasping her hand within both of his, with the most graceful air of supplication, while Mary, now really vexed, tried in vain to escape—“Fairest of saints! have I not made confession of all my sins—even of this last, which you seem to consider the most heinous? And am I to be repaid with scorn, instead of receiving absolution from those lips; or even a sign of the cross from this delicate hand!” kissing it as he spoke.

“Charles,” said Mary, now overwhelmed with confusion, “why do you treat me so like a child? With all your professions, you have proved that you have no respect for me. Pray, let my hand go.”

“I cannot, unless you promise me forgiveness, peace, absolution—Mary!”

“Anything, anything—there is Olivia’s light step; and I confess I would rather even she should not see you thus feigning the gallant”—

“Feign!” repeated Charles—“but I obey. Adieu ma belle!” and after imprinting another kiss on the imprisoned hand, he released her, and the impatient girl flew to her chamber.

Charles retraced his steps slowly and thoughtfully. This last interview certainly was not very satisfactory; and to add to his disquietude, he found letters on his table urging his immediate return to Paris, on account of the illness of a near relative. It was true that the vexation he felt was not a little alleviated by the reflection, that the demise of his old uncle, whom he had hardly known, would leave him possession not only of a title, but a superb estate. Yet he felt an invincible repugnance to leaving the valley, until he should have ascertained, with perfect accuracy, the real state of his beautiful kinswoman’s heart.

He waited only for the decline of the summer sun, and as his last rays tinged the snowy peaks of the distant Alps, he again returned to the cottage, in the hope of finding its inmates straying through the refreshing shade of the grove, or among the secluded walks; and thus affording him the opportunity, he now so ardently wished, for a perfect éclaircissement. As he had anticipated, he found the cottage untenanted, and passed quickly through one of the avenues to the grove. On emerging from the leafy canopy which shaded and bordered the walk, he found himself within a short distance of the fair object of his search; but to his infinite surprise and vexation, she was not, as he had fondly hoped, unattended; but was apparently listening with evident pleasure, though with downcast eyes and a heightened colour, to the animated conversation of another cavalier, and that cavalier young, handsome, graceful, and as he knew but too well, in all more important matters, a most formidable rival. For an instant, Charles lost his usual self-

possession, and the anger and jealousy that gnawed his heart, were plainly manifest in his countenance; but immediately recovering himself, he advanced with a rapid step, and the exclamation of "Ha, Montague! my ancient friend and comrade!" In spite of the apparent friendliness and careless gaiety of the salutation, there was too much of pique and mortification discernible in his air and manner, to escape the observing eye of him to whom it was addressed. His greeting was, however, reciprocated with perhaps less of *hauteur*, but with a dignified, yet frank and graceful courtesy, which made Charles almost ashamed of the heartiness with which he wished his rival—anywhere but in his present most enviable position. He was, however, too much a man of the world to permit his feelings to betray him into farther indiscretion; and by the time they had emerged from the grove, and joined the rest of the little party in the summer house, the conversation had become general and animated. As the twilight dews began to descend, Mrs. Leslie proposed their return to the cottage; and Charles, in bidding them adieu, remarked, that this was probably his last visit, for he should leave the valley on the following day.

"To-morrow?" said Mary, with a smile. "You have then forgotten the promise you exacted from Olivia and myself, to make an excursion on the lake. Our good host will be quite heart-broken when he hears of your determination; for I think he felt a peculiar anxiety to present us to his brother's family on our way thither. I dare say he would have no objection to an additional oar,"—she added, glancing at Montague, who readily offered his services.

"Yes, it is true," replied Charles, who had secretly determined at all hazards to remain another day, but who only desired to see if no objection would be made to his

departure, "I cannot forego so great a pleasure. I shall claim your promise."

Many revolving and unpleasant thoughts banished the sweet influences, that are wont to "knit up the ravelled sleeve of care," from the eyes of our young hero, after he had retired to rest. He tossed on his sleepless pillow until dawn, and then sank into a heavy slumber. He was aroused by a tap at the door; and, starting up, perceived with surprise, that it was near mid-day.

"You are late, my young gallant," said old Rudolph, putting his good-humoured face within the door. "Our party has been ready and waiting for the last hour."

Ashamed of his apparent want of gallantry, Charles speedily equipped himself for the expedition, and following the counsel of the host of the cottage, he arrayed himself in a light, thin garb, appropriate to the season, and peculiarly suitable for the severe exercise he was about to undertake. He found his handsome rival again in possession of the field, and inwardly upbraided himself for permitting him to have even this slight advantage.

The good host had provided them with horses and another guide beside himself, to traverse the distance between the valley and the far-famed lake of the forest cantons, in the prospect of whose charms they all anticipated so much pleasure. The morning was gloriously beautiful, and the pure azure of the sky was reflected in cloudless splendour from the mirror-like surface of the lake, as it broke on the view of the little party at a sudden turn in the road, or rather the broad pathway that led to the house of Rudolph's brother. This singularly constructed building, presented all the grotesque variety of architecture peculiar to the canton; yet its air of snugness and comfort, the goodly rows

of bee-hives that found protection beneath its broad projecting eaves, the evidences of plenty revealing themselves on every side, made ample amends for what might have been deemed bad taste; and its rude simplicity was soon forgotten in contemplating the romantic beauty of its situation. The house, or *châlet*, if it might be called by so humble a title, was placed about midway the descent of a gentle sloping hill, which terminated at the water's edge; the hill, and the little fields that surrounded it, were adorned with the richest verdure. In front, a range of snow-clad mountains melted away in the distance, and made a fine contrast with the tranquil loveliness of the broad lake; while, in the rear, rose an enormous rock, redeemed, however, from its savage wildness by innumerable tufts of the Alpine rose, the fir trees that crowned its summit, and the brilliancy of a dashing waterfall, that soothed the ear with its pleasing though monotonous sound, and was broken into a cloud of white mist as it fell into the stream, that was hurrying on with its tributary waters to the lake.

As soon as the approach of our little party was perceived, the inhabitants of the *châlet* came out, with the simple hospitality which has always distinguished their country, to welcome them. The family, old and young, were dressed in their gayest attire, the athletic young men and stout blooming girls in their holiday costume—the latter looking still taller, from their singular yet pretty head-dress, resembling a huge butterfly with its wings erected, or the sails of the paper *Nautilus*. The good old hostess regaled her guests with the most delicate of her cream cheese, the freshest honey, and white bread, which last was regarded as no small luxury in that wild region; and the family only permitted their guests to depart, on the condition of another call on their return from their excursion on the lake. The

young men both offered their services as oars-men, but our cavaliers declined their aid; there could, surely, they all agreed, be no necessity for more than two oars, which, with one spare hand, could be easily managed.

“Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,” said Mary, when they had skimmed lightly over the surface for nearly a league, and the fresh air and beautiful scenery had inspired them all with almost equal gaiety.

“Youth on the prow,” continued Montague, looking towards old Rudolph, who had stationed himself there, “and pleasure at the helm,” he added, with a smile, resigning his oar to Charles, whose turn it was to use it, and taking his place by Mary’s side. “I trust our good old guide does not anticipate ‘the sweeping whirlwind’s sway,’ for he appears rather puzzled by something that he is looking at with such intense interest.”

In truth, the old man had laid down his oar, and was looking at some distant object with fixed attention.

“I like not that frown on the brow of old Pilatre,” said he, looking towards that redoubtable mountain, which is still regarded with a sort of superstitious awe by the simple inhabitants of the country, on account of the ancient traditions connected with it. He pointed, as he spoke, toward the peaked summits of the mountain, behind which a small but very black cloud was discernible. “When he puts on his cap,” he added, “it is like replacing the plumed hat of royalty—all humbler people must hasten their departure from his presence.”

“I fear we shall find some difficulty in obeying the signal of his majesty,” said Charles, “for I have been pulling with might and main for the last five minutes to little purpose. The wind has certainly changed, or at least risen; for there was hardly a breath when we left the shore.”

“It is too true,” added their host, as he resumed his oar, and exerted himself resolutely to direct the course of their slight skiff to the place of their embarkation. “I fear much, if this head wind continues, we may get a shower bath, if nothing worse, ere yon rising cloud be past.”

The breeze continued to freshen, and the sun began now to be obscured by the clouds which rose with a rapidity known only to those mountainous regions; long wreaths of thick mist floated down the sides of Mont Pilatre, and the glassy surface of the lake was broken into waves, which rose higher with every blast that swept over them, until they were crested with foam. Nearer and nearer the tempest came sweeping on, and at length the red lightning gleamed athwart the snowy billows, and a loud burst of heaven’s artillery announced its presence. The dangerous situation of our little party was now manifest; and it seemed in vain, that with stout arms and willing hearts, the oarsmen exerted their skill and strength. Their utmost efforts could only prevent the boat from being driven in a direction exactly contrary to their much desired haven. During this trying hour, their fair companions were the chief objects of their anxiety; and never did the serene loveliness of Mary’s character appear in a more perfect light. She neither shrieked, nor fainted; and it was only by the paleness of her cheek, and the compression of her beautiful lip, that her full apprehension of their peril could be discerned. She supported on her bosom the head of the shrinking and timid Olivia, who sought, by concealing her face, to hide at the same moment her terror, and the alarming scene before her. At length a change, which old Rudolph had anticipated, and of which he had already expressed his fears, took place. The wind, which had so powerfully obstructed their progress, suddenly veered, and a violent

gust swept the boat with fearful velocity onward—then for a moment it died away.

“Now in Heaven alone is our trust,” said the old man, throwing down his oar in despair. “Another such blast and we are inevitably dashed on yon beetling rock.”

“In Heaven then be our trust,” said Montague, who, with the energy that superior minds are wont to exercise under circumstances of difficulty and danger, had assumed the command; “we are within reach of assistance if we could make ourselves heard. It is not more than fifty yards to the shore. I can discern even the chalet through the mist.” As he spoke, he raised his voice in its utmost power to call its inhabitants to their aid, but in vain; its tones rung like a silver-tongued trumpet to those around him, but was lost amid the roaring of the storm. “The mountain whistle, good Rudolph,” he said hastily.

The old man replied only by placing his hand to his mouth, and sending forth a sharp shrill whistle, well understood by the hunters of the chamois amid the high Alps, and which reverberated from rock to rock on the shore. Almost instantaneously two men were seen bounding down the slope that led from the chalet to the lake.

“My resolution is now taken,” said Montague; “we have only a moment left to rescue us from destruction. You were once a bold and dexterous swimmer, Lennox, and Rudolph has but now boasted to me of his skill. With his aid you can easily support the slight form of Olivia, until those hardy mountaineers come to our assistance. I will myself be responsible for the safety of Miss Leslie.”

“She shall not, she will not entrust herself to your guidance!” exclaimed Charles, in a voice that betrayed jealousy and passion, mingled with real apprehension for her safety in so hazardous an experiment.

“I have saved life under circumstances of almost equal peril,” was the calm and laconic reply of Montague.

Charles felt an indescribable repugnance at being reminded at this moment, of the time when, in their more youthful days, he had been rescued from a watery grave by the strong arm and dauntless heart of Edward Montague; but the reminiscence awoke the better feelings of his nature. He permitted Mary to resign the sinking form of Olivia to his arms; while Montague, who waited only for this signal of her approbation of his design, and one glance of her eye, sprang with her into the foaming waves. The instant his movement was perceived by the mountaineers on the shore, they dashed without hesitation into the water and swam to his aid; his example was speedily followed by the rest, and a few minutes sufficed to bring them all in safety to the land. The event proved the wisdom of Montague’s counsel; for the instant they had abandoned it, the frail bark was driven by a blast, yet more violent than the first, full against the projecting rock, and dashed into fragments.

Never was the hospitable kindness of the good inhabitants of the *châlet* more lavishly bestowed, or more gratefully appreciated, than by those who were now so dependent upon it. Fully two hours had elapsed, ere their good hostess was convinced that their comfort had been sufficiently secured. The buoyant spirits of youth, and their happiness in having been delivered from such imminent peril, soon restored their usual animation, and when they all again met, their singular costume excited no little merriment; as, habited in the peculiar dress of the canton, they resembled a party equipped for a masquerade. The earnest persuasions of their kind hosts, to delay their return to the cottage until the next day, was graciously though decidedly declined; for Mary knew too well the agonizing apprehen-

sions that had agitated her fond mother's heart during their protracted stay, to add to it a farther pang. The storm had entirely ceased, and the dewy foliage sparkled in the light of the setting sun, as they again traversed the road that led to their temporary home.

Several times during their ride, Charles thought of seeking an explanation with his fair cousin, which he well knew she had often desired to make; but the formality attending a request to speak with her alone, and above all the very natural desire to be ignorant of that which he did not wish to know, kept him silent. He flattered himself in the belief that circumstances would soon occur, which would place his pretensions in a far more favourable light than at that moment; and before they had reached the valley, his decision was made.

“Here then we part,” he said, as they reached the grille of the court. “It would be unkind as unmannerly in your knights to intrude farther, after the fatigues and discomforts of the day. Ere to-morrow's sun be risen, I shall be far, far away!”

Mary hastily returned the adieux of the cavaliers, and flew to the arms of her anxious parent, who clasped her adored child and her loved protégée to her heart with tears of pious joy and gratitude. And fervently did they offer their united thanks to that Gracious Being, who had so mercifully interposed to save them during the perils of the past day.

Another and another week passed away, and our travellers still lingered in their quiet seclusion. Apparently, Montague had found less difficulty than his rival, in persuading the gentle Mary to permit him to accompany her in her evening visit to their favourite withdrawing room—the

summer house; for, each successive evening found them there, often, it is true, accompanied by her mother and Olivia; but it appeared certain, that the anxiety she had formerly manifested, for their presence, during her interviews with her cousin, was far less with his envied friend, than it had been with him. Indeed, no ordinary impediment would have prevented Montague from availing himself of the permission thus given him; and it was with a degree of impatience, that made him almost overstep the bounds of civility, that he found himself one evening arrested by an acquaintance, who, a stranger as well as himself in the valley, seemed resolutely bent on depriving him of his accustomed visit, by relating all his own adventures. After many ineffectual efforts, on the part of Montague, to appear interested in this prosing conversation, and often "bustling up with unsuccessful speed," the traveller began to suspect that some more agreeable engagement might possibly have awaited his tantalized auditor, and he condescended to take his leave, after having inflicted himself for four mortal hours on his "*friend*." The instant he departed, Montague hastened rapidly to the cottage, but found, to his mortification, the doors were closed for the night; and to his surprise, his repeater sounded a quarter past eleven. It was too late to request admittance; yet he could not deny himself the gratification of a stroll through the grounds, by the light of the moon that was now riding high in silvery brightness through the Heavens, though his entrance might be deemed somewhat lawless. Without much fear, however, of the consequences, in case of the discovery of his trespass, he sprung over the slight barrier that obstructed his entrance, and wandered through the walks. He soon reached the summer house; and, throwing himself on one of the rustic seats, was speedily lost in a pleasing reverie, in which it

may be naturally supposed, that the occupant of his thoughts was the lovely being, who, in that hallowed spot, had renewed to him the vows of plighted love he had won from her many months ere they had met there. It cannot be a matter of surprise that, with such a subject of meditation, breathing the sweet balm of dewy flowers, and gazing on the resplendent beauties of a cloudless summer sky, studded with countless stars, he should have been aroused from his sweet reflections only by the sound of the distant village bell, which tolled the hour of twelve. He rose, and was departing with a slow and lingering step, when his attention was attracted, and then enchained by the appearance of a figure, gliding through one of the avenues that led to the grove. It passed on so rapidly, that he had not time to form any resolution before it had disappeared among the trees. There was something so singular, so mysterious, so unearthly in the gliding motion of this strange apparition, and in the almost supernatural whiteness of its apparel, as it gleamed in the light of the moon, and was then lost in the leafy shade, that Montague felt an irresistible curiosity to view it more nearly. His first impulse was to follow it into the grove; but the idea crossed his mind that it might be the stratagem of some robber, who, aware of his presence, desired to decoy him thither. While he hesitated, the apparition emerged from the grove, and was apparently approaching the spot where he stood. Ashamed of the feeling of superstitious awe that involuntarily crept over him, Montague determined to discover who, or what it was; but when within a few feet of the place where he stood, it turned with the same rapid, noiseless and gliding motion, and in an instant had disappeared. Montague followed in the same direction. He was certain that the avenue in which he had lost sight of this extraordinary apparition, terminated,

after several serpentine windings, at the cottage door. He pursued the same path rapidly and anxiously, knowing from the thickly entwined shrubbery on each side, that the vision, if a real being, which in spite of his incredulity with regard to supernatural appearances he almost began to doubt, could only find refuge in the cottage itself, where the avenue terminated; but he was destined to disappointment—the door was closed and fastened, as when he had an hour before so much desired to enter it; and he had no other resource than to retrace his steps, and return to the village by the same route he had pursued in entering the grounds.

It may easily be presumed, that Montague felt but little inclination to sleep after this singular adventure. He vainly tried to account for it upon any reasonable supposition. In vain did he endeavour to trace any resemblance between the stout person of Rudolph's blooming daughter on whom his suspicions had at one time fallen, and the slight form, the graceful, ethereal movements of the apparition he had beheld. If a real being, it must have re-entered the cottage; and it could have been none other than one of its inhabitants. Mary, his loved, his beautiful Mary! never once crossed his mind in connection with so strange a mystery; but might it not have been Olivia? The face, as the vision glided by him, was partly averted, and so concealed by a long white veil, as to hide the features from him; yet he thought he recognised the stature, and the symmetrical form, and even the fair and delicate arm on which a gemmed bracelet glittered in the bright moonlight, had been near enough to him to challenge his attention. But then, why should a being so helpless, so delicate, expose herself to the night air at this unseasonable hour? What object could she have had in view? Why was she thus alone; and would her strange wanderings be permitted by her affectionate

friends and guardians? All these improbabilities perplexed him greatly; but he resolved, if possible, to satisfy his doubts on the morrow.

As soon as a reasonable hour arrived—which, from his disappointment on the preceding evening, he began to think would never come, so slowly did the moments pass—he paid a visit to the cottage. He found the little parlour occupied by Mary and Olivia. It could not be imagination that pictured Olivia to him more delicate, and paler than he had ever observed her before. A playful hint at the want of gallantry, manifested in his unusual absence, drew from him not only an explanation of the circumstances that had caused it, but also of his moonlight adventure.

“It was indeed singular,” said Mary thoughtfully; “but with regard to Olivia, it is impossible that it could have been *herself*. Her *spirit*, you would almost persuade me it must have been; for, if you will look narrowly, you will perceive beneath the folds of her muslin sleeve, the bracelet which shone with so pure a lustre in the moon-beams.”

Montague looked; and the shadowy outline of the arm, as well as the bracelet, corresponded exactly with that of the apparition of the grove.

“Why should we not ask her?” she continued. “She certainly knows best, and can easily resolve our doubts.”

Montague was about to interpose, but Mary had already attracted Olivia’s attention by a sign.

“Did you walk last evening—last night, Olivia?” was her first interrogatory. Olivia shook her head.

“I had a headache,” was the reply.

“Where were you at midnight, last night?”

Olivia looked up with surprise; but not the slightest expression of confusion appeared in her countenance—not the least agitation—not even the slightest change of colour

betrayed any embarrassment. Apparently she fancied that she had mistaken her friend's question, for she indicated a wish to have it repeated. "Where were you last night, at midnight?" Mary said again.

With a sweet smile of the most innocent simplicity, Olivia laid her cheek on her hand, and closed her eyes. "In bed—and asleep," said Mary, translating her gesture.

"It is impossible to doubt the perfect truth and ingenuousness of that lovely expression," said Montague musingly; "yet it is strange, passing strange!"

"It must have been a sort of hallucination," said Mary, smiling. "Perhaps you were thinking at the moment of some fair lady; and this pretty ghost only appeared to show you that spirits might be called, if not from the 'vasty deep,' from a leafy grove, that would obey your behest. Of one thing, however," she added, in a more serious tone, "we may be certain—that Olivia has answered us faithfully. I have known her intimately, as you are aware, for many years, and I have never known her to depart in the slightest degree from the truth."

The gallantry of the reply to the first part of this speech may well be imagined, but the latter part of it increased Montague's perplexity. Yet he began to think that he had permitted his imagination to dwell too much upon a matter of but little concern to him; and though he naturally felt much curiosity to solve this singular mystery, he resolved to banish the subject entirely from his mind, which, in the delightful society he was now favoured with, was no very difficult matter.

"Alone and in tears!" said a well known voice, whose deep rich tones were modulated to the soft cadence in which a youthful lover is wont to speak, as they fall on the ear for

which they are destined. "And may I not be permitted to participate in this sorrow?" continued Montague, with a mute but expressive acknowledgement to the fair hand that extended an open letter to him, which had evidently some connection with the distress he perceived.

"You will not be surprised," was the reply, "at my unhappiness, when you know its cause; though it seems almost like insensibility to the gifts of Divine Providence to be absorbed in unpleasant meditations this lovely evening, in the sweet embowering shade of this our favourite retreat, and with so much to make me happy. But—nay, do not interrupt me while I explain my griefs to you. That letter will tell you that my loved brother has been recently exposed to great peril during a tour through the Highlands of Scotland. He would fain persuade us that the injury he sustained is very slight, and to relieve our anxiety, his account is corroborated by a friend of our acquaintance; yet he cannot disguise from us that the period of his return hither is thus rendered uncertain, and our mother's anxiety is almost beyond endurance. The declining health of our poor Olivia, too, is a source of the greatest alarm and perplexity to us. She has drooped like a broken lily ever since the departure of our young kinsman, and I cannot help fearing, that she has given her unsuspecting heart in return for his thoughtless gallantries. She regards him as the preserver of her life, on the eventful evening of the storm on the lake. She wears the beautiful miniature, he so heedlessly presented her, day and night; and so entirely am I convinced of the delusion she indulges in the belief that he is equally attached to her, that I wish much to undeceive her. It is most probable, however, that she would persuade herself I am mistaken, even if I were to undertake so painful a task. We have therefore determined to leave the dis-

covery to herself, in the hope that time and change of scene may banish her present impressions. "My mother's prophetic fears," she continued, mournfully, "may be realized; for I do not think my hapless friend would survive a knowledge of the truth. I may perhaps speak too freely, but I am betraying no confidence; and you will, I know, appreciate the motives that induce me to impart my thoughts to you."

It would be vain to attempt even a description of the passionate eloquence, poured forth in the reply to this explanation of our heroine. What a text for a chapter of persuasion to abridge the long, tedious interval, destined to separate him from his promised happiness! It may be perhaps anticipating, to reveal the effect of his oratory; but it is certain, that the interview ended by his finding that the exaction of one little word, and even that one conditional, had made him the happiest of men. Speeches, explanations, and arrangements, sometimes occupy more time than those who are engaged in them are aware of; and the bright moon had poured her flood of silvery light around, before all were completed. The happy lover and his promised bride were leaving the summerhouse on their return to the cottage, when the aerial apparition of the preceding evening emerged suddenly from the grove. With the same light, noiseless, gliding motion, it advanced rapidly toward the spot where they stood. The same gleaming whiteness distinguished its apparel: again were the features partly concealed by a long veil, which, as it floated on the summer breeze, added to the supernatural appearance. Again it advanced near enough for Montague to distinguish the sparkling gems that encircled the delicate arm. Determined, if possible, not to be baffled, as he had been when it had before crossed his path, he was springing forward to intercept it, but he was arrested by the supplicating voice of Mary—

“Stay! I entreat, I implore you stay!” she exclaimed, in accents of terror, “there is far more danger than you imagine in”—— A loud shriek from the shaded avenue, whither the apparition had directed its course, interrupted her farther explanation. “Seek not to know more now,” she said hastily. “To-morrow I may perhaps be able to explain what appears so mysterious;” and with a rapidity almost equal to that of the bright vision itself, she followed its course toward the cottage.

We must now, for a short time, leave these scenes of the valley, and pursue the footsteps of our young hero, who, in happy ignorance of what was passing there, found himself once more surrounded by the pleasures and luxuries of the French capital. He was one morning reclining in graceful indolence on the *canapé*, still in the “robe de chambre brodée, and pantouffles de velours,” that he once mentioned to our heroine, when the re-entrance of his valet, who had apparently been charged with some commission of importance, drew his attention from the morning journal—whether a *journal des modes*, or something of more consequence, it might not be fair to say. Struck with the odd mixture of real pleasure and affected sorrow, that gave to his attendant the ludicrous expression of one of Hogarth’s prints, he almost anticipated the answer to his questions.

“Have you delivered my note, Dupont?” he said. “Shall I be admitted this morning?”

“I bring de most triste nouvelles, mi-lord,” replied the valet, bowing with unwonted reverence as he uttered the last word, “Monsieur, votre oncle, est—mort!”

The annunciation of this expected event did not elicit any very profound emotion: we will, however, do our hero the justice to say, that it was received with a feeling of solemn-

nity, to which a heart entirely deadened by the vanities of the world, would have been a stranger. Insensibly, however, this feeling wore away; and, as he paced the apartment, brighter thoughts soon rose uppermost in his mind.

“Lord de Vaux,—twenty thousand a year,” said he, musingly. “What female heart can gold despise? especially when”—and his eye rested involuntarily upon a splendid mirror which reflected his elegant person to the greatest advantage. “Mary! beautiful Mary! thou art mine! How unfortunate it is, that I shall be delayed here a week or perhaps longer! Something must be done in that tedious interval. Who can tell what may be the consequence of my apparent indifference?”

The next moment found him seated at his *scrutoire*, penning a rapid declaration of his passionate attachment to his lovely kinswoman, with an offer of his heart, his hand, and his brilliant fortune; his letter concluded with a thousand regrets at being compelled to delay for a week his return to “*happy valley*.” Determined not to trust a communication of such importance to the uncertainty of the post, he thought of some private and express conveyance, and his favourite valet was speedily summoned.

“I think you have been in Switzerland, Dupont?” he inquired

“Yes, mi-lord,” replied the valet, with a slight shudder; “I have been in dat terrible pays sauvage.”

“Then, to oblige me, you cannot refuse to go again. Take this letter, and depart with it immediately; deliver it according to the direction. Be faithful, and your reward shall be rich.”

“To oblige mi-lord, certainement oui, mi-lord,” said the valet; the dismal expression of his countenance in the anticipation of so long a journey, and so tedious an absence from

the place which he regarded as the only habitable spot in the world, being somewhat dispelled by his young lord's last words. "De suite, mi-lord," and with another profound reverence and unusual alacrity he disappeared.

A few hours found him on the road to the place of his destination; for, having twice travelled the same route in the suite of an English nobleman, he was at no loss to find his way. Before the week had elapsed, the important letter was delivered, read and answered. The reply may be easily conjectured, without being literally cited. It contained a frank avowal of a previous attachment and engagement on the part of the fair writer,—a sincere expression of regret, that her sentiments toward her kinsman had not, as she had hoped and believed, been explained during his visit to the valley, with the kindest appreciation of his preference, and the hope that he would still retain for her the friendship which would ever be reciprocated on her part. All this was expressed in the most gracious and graceful manner, but without leaving a shadow of a doubt with regard to her sentiments. The letter was signed, sealed and delivered, and in an hour after his arrival, the valet of mi-lord was on his return to Paris.

But the little blind god, who seemed to take such a malicious pleasure in baffling our hero, had prepared another disappointment for him. In passing through Lucerne, the faithful Dupont, unhappily for his young lord, though as he deemed it happily for him, met with a pretty *soubrette*, who had been detained, as she said, amid these *malheureuses montaignes*, by the caprice of Madame la Comtesse, in whose service she was. It would have been cruel and ungallant to decline her invitation to spend a day in the town of Lucerne; and this day involved another and another, Dupont still relying upon the difficulties of the route,

and an account of his "hair breadth 'scapes," which he trusted a "*parole d'honneur*" would confirm. Impatient at his unexpected delay, Charles resolved not to await his return; and as soon as the arrangements which had retarded his departure were accomplished, he set out for the valley. A few days rapid travelling brought him to Lucerne, where, it may be easily foreseen, he did not meet with his attendant, that worthy personage having taken good care to set out in the direction by which his young lord came, as soon as he heard of his arrival. It was with great impatience that Charles watched the declining sun on the last evening of his journey, and with no small vexation that he found it entirely too late to attempt to pay a visit to the valley before the next day.

The succeeding morning arose in cloudless splendour. Our young hero, as soon as a reasonable hour arrived, procured a guide and horses to pursue his way to the valley. The buoyancy of his spirits was unchecked by even a shadow of doubt as to his success, and the brilliancy of the atmosphere corresponded well with the visions of bliss that flitted through his imagination. Once, and once only, as he looked on the bright bosom of the lake, he remembered, that he had seen its placid loveliness succeeded by the awful frown of the tempest; but the painful idea was speedily banished, and all was again light and joy. He was aroused from his pleasing meditations by his guide, who, on reaching a path-way which diverged from the beaten track, had made a dead halt.

"There lies the route," said Charles, who remembered the spot well, indicating it by a motion of his hand, "why do you not proceed?"

"Because," answered the guide, in rather a dogged tone. "my good horse Wolff refuses to go farther."

Charles was about to make an impatient and rather angry expostulation, when his attention was attracted by the appearance of the animal, who had planted his feet in the rocky pathway in the attitude of a mule when urged over a dangerous precipice, as if with a determined resolution not to move an inch farther.

“You travellers are for the most part Protestants, seigneur,” said the guide, dismounting from his obstinate steed and leaning his arm over the saddle; “and if I tell you a piece of my mind, you will say I am a Catholic, and that I am superstitious; but by the holy Virgin I believe Wolff is right, and with your leave I shall follow his example.”

“What is the meaning of all this?” said Charles, whose patience was ebbing fast

“Why,” continued the loquacious guide, “it means that neither I nor my wiser horse will go farther into this valley, both of us being convinced that some evil bodes it this day. Do you not see the very flocks gathering together, as they do before a storm? Do you not hear the cry of those ill-betiding ravens as they scream from the fir trees around us? Have I not twice seen the bats and owls flutter by me—creatures that would never have left their dark hiding-places on this sunny day but for our warning? Do you not see the eagles with their young wheeling over our heads?—and shall I disregard all these friendly warnings? No! by the saints! no!”

“Then, in the name of the saints you worship,” said Charles, whose patience was exhausted by this long harangue, “begone, and let me find my way alone. I have traversed this pathway often enough to know whither it will guide me.”

He threw himself from his horse as he spoke, and flinging the bridle to his conductor, dropped a piece of gold into

his open palm, and in another moment was lost to view amid the windings of the forest pathway. The guide remained stationary for an instant, looked after him, shook his head, and then taking his horses, which showed no farther symptoms of the contumacious spirit they had manifested, retraced his steps to Lucerne.

In the mean time, our young hero, with the light step of a chamois, was rapidly surmounting the difficulties of his route; and half an hour sufficed to bring him to the grille of the little court in front of the cottage, which he fondly thought contained his coveted treasure. Without waiting to request admittance, he passed the court, entered the open door, and stopped not until he found himself at the entrance of the little parlour. He paused a moment at the threshold, for all was silent within. A glance, however, sufficed to show him that it was not untenanted; for the slight form of Olivia was reclining on the sofa. She was apparently absorbed in deep meditation, and her downcast eyes were riveted on the beautiful miniature he had himself presented her, and which she held in one hand, while the other rested on the head of her faithful little favourite. A single step within the door-way changed the scene. The little animal, startled by its sound, raised his head from beneath the delicate hand which reposed on it, and turned to look at the intruder; but instead of manifesting the delight he had formerly shown at the appearance of his friend, he looked up with an expression of uneasiness and even terror, and buried his slender head beneath the rich folds of the cachemere which was thrown around the lovely person of his mistress. This slight movement, however, was sufficient to arouse Olivia's attention; a hectic flush rose with meteor-like brilliancy into her pale cheek, and on perceiving his entrance, she attempted to rise from the sofa. A suppli-

cating gesture from the intruder, however, aided by her own agitation, prevented her intention.

“You have then been ill?” he said, in the graceful pantomime in which he had become so perfect an adept during his former visit.

Olivia took the porcelain tablet which lay near her, and inscribed,

“Yes, but I am better now.”

“And how is it, then,” continued Charles, adopting her own mode of communication, by gently taking the tablet from her hand, “that I find you thus alone?”

“I am not alone,” was the reply, “though I often wish much to be alone. My health has suffered sadly since I saw you last, though I think it would have been restored by rambling in the sweet shade of the grove where we used to walk. I have been debarred from this pleasure ever since you were here, by my feeble health, which they tell me was chiefly occasioned by wandering there twice in my sleep; and the second time thrown into a state of nervous terror, by being suddenly awakened by our hostess, whose daughter mistook me for a ghost.” A faint smile illumined her beautiful features, as she presented the tablet again.

“But how then,” continued Charles, who, in spite of his anxiety, found himself interested in these artless confessions, “is it that your friends are not with you? Has the friend you loved best forsaken you?”

“Forsaken me? Oh no! she is an angel of light!” raising her bright eyes to Heaven, with an expression of devoted affection. “She left me only half an hour ago, and will return immediately. They have only gone to Lucerne.”

“To Lucerne? Impossible! I have but just left it. Who has gone?”

“All—even the family of our host, whose places are temporarily supplied by other but faithful attendants;” continued Olivia. “I might have accompanied them—and they persuaded me much to do so; but I believe I was capricious, and did not just now care to witness their happiness.”

There was a mystery in all this, which embarrassed Charles almost beyond endurance. How could he have failed to meet the lovely being who was his attraction to the valley, unless indeed, as might well have occurred, she had passed by the more frequented route, while he pursued the forest path? Another circumstance also greatly increased his anxiety. Their brief conversation had been carried on chiefly in pantomime, and Olivia had twice passed her hand over her forehead. Charles remembered well an explanation she had once made to him of this gesture. Struck by the singular beauty of Montague’s noble brow, she had ever since her first acquaintance with him, indicated his name by touching her forehead. Perplexed and alarmed, he repeated his inquiries.

“They have gone to Lucerne,” was the reply; and Olivia made a sign of the cross with an expression of deep reverence.

“To church?” said Charles, interpreting her gesture,—“but this is not Sunday, and your fair friend is not a Catholic.”

“There is a Protestant church in Lucerne,” was inscribed on the tablet in reply.

“Do you not yet understand?” raising her hand with a gesture that startled and appalled her attentive companion. Again he signed to her to repeat it. Olivia again made the reverential sign of the cross, touched her brow, then pressed her hand to her heart, clasped both hands together, and

raised them towards Heaven. Charles translated the gestures aloud—"at church,—Montague—Mary—united—for ever!"—he cried—starting wildly from his seat, and forgetful that even the world, far less the narrow apartment contained aught but himself and his bitter disappointment, he paced it with gestures of almost frantic despair. He was flying from the room, when his eye was caught by the death-like paleness of Olivia, who had sunk back in a recumbent attitude on the sofa. The idea flashed across his mind that he beheld in her another victim of unrequited affection. He returned hastily, and throwing open the casement, knelt by the sofa and raised her drooping head from the pillow.

"Olivia! Olivia!" he cried in tones of agonized distress, as if the hapless being he invoked could even in life have heard and answered him. Alas! his cares were vain! The rich masses of soft dark hair fell over his arm and shaded her marble cheek and brow—the silken fringed lids were closed, and no returning beam of consciousness met his anxious gaze—the throbbing heart was still—the grieved spirit had passed away for ever!

"Is this then to be added to my cup of wo, just Heaven?" he exclaimed, as the dread reality in all its awful truth burst on him, and as if endeavouring to fly even from himself, he rushed madly from the house.

Unconscious whither his steps were directed, he fled through the forest pathway that had brought him to the cottage, and continued in the same route, until utterly exhausted by fatigue and mental anguish, he sank upon a moss-covered rock. "Would!" he exclaimed in the bitterness of his spirit, "would that yon dark and cragged mountain had fallen on me and buried me beneath its ruins, ere I had entered that once lovely, but now, oh how fatal spot!"

Could it be his disordered imagination which pictured to him that awful mountain "bowing its cloud-capped head?" No! it was no illusion!—a loud crashing sound met his ear, more fearful than the thunder of a mighty avalanche!—the earth shook as if rocked by an earthquake. He looked again—the dark mountain had disappeared from his view, and the beautiful valley lay buried beneath a huge mass of chaotic ruins!

"You will doubtless rejoice with me," continued our friend, who at this moment closed his manuscript, "at the almost miraculous escape of this lovely, and interesting family, though with me you must mourn over the hapless fate of the poor Olivia. It affords one more proof, however, of the danger of *firtation*, which has broken more hearts than the world is aware of; and if my story may serve to arrest one thoughtless youth, or one coquette amid a series of heartless triumphs, it will not have been told in vain."

* * * * *

A BALLAD.

“The world was very guilty of such ballads some three ages
since.”

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

ON the noble site of a forest-crown'd height
An ancient castle stood,
Broad fields were near, and a stream flowed clear
'Thro' its old majestic wood.

To the youthful heir of this realm so fair,
No boon had heaven denied,
He had all it sends, in wealth, in friends,
And in choicest gifts beside.

But mortals ne'er are contented here,
And he lov'd not his happy home;
New bliss he sought, and for this he thought
In distant climes to roam.

Sweet peace and ease could no longer please,
And those whom life had blest,
He hath left them all in the festive hall,
And wearied sought his rest.

Within his bower at the midnight hour
Appears a being fair;

She waves, as she sings, her glittering wings
That float on the ambient air.

“ Arise, sir knight!” said the faery sprite,
“ And would’st thou happy be,
To my voice give heed,—and away let us speed,
Far over the dark blue sea!

“ Pleasures are there, ever fresh and fair,
There thou shall happy be,
Light-hearted mirth,—all the bliss of earth
Shall be thine,—then follow me!”

To her voice he gives heed, and away they speed
Far over the dark blue sea,
Fast fills the sail to the freshening gale,
And the bark flies merrilie.

And soon they stand on fair Gallia’s strand,
And gaily they wend their way
To pleasures bright, where the festive light
Might charm all care away.

And there might he find, for sense or for mind,
A banquet fair and free,
Or obey the behest as an honoured guest,
Of the courtly revelrie.

He moves along in the brilliant throng
Of knights and ladies all,
Noble and fair were gather’d there
To grace the stately hall.

And dark eyes bright, as stars of light,
Shed around their magic spell,
And music's power, at that witching hour,
On the charm'd ear gently fell.

“The scene is fair!” said a soft voice near,
“Hast thou happiness found at last?”
But his wandering eye glanc'd carelessly,
And o'er all the bright scene pass'd.

“It is soft and fair, but I hope not here
Thy promis'd bliss to see,
For far have I rov'd from the hearts that lov'd
And only throbb'd for me.

“In the look askance, and the cold keen glance,
The stranger's fate I see,
But the gentle wile and the wreathed smile,
'These, these are not for me!”

He spoke not again, for his thoughts had then
Far away o'er the ocean stray'd,
But the words had pass'd, and a cloud o'ercast
The brow of the beauteous maid.

But soon the wile of a lovely smile
On her radiant face he may see,
And again she sings, as she waves her wings,
“Follow, oh follow me!”

Again he gives heed, and away they speed
From haunts and pleasures gay,

To regions wild, where the sylph beguil'd
The toilsome yet pleasing way.

Oh 'tis sweet, I ween, on the fairy scene
To gaze from the mountain's brow,
On the roseate light of the snow crown'd height,
Or the gathering clouds below:

To glide o'er the lake while its waters break
On the ear with a silver sound,
Or to sit in the shade of the forest glade,
While the dark firs wave around:

To watch the soft hue of the mountain blue,
Or the glacier's icy thrall,
Or the glowing west thro' the pearly mist
Of the dashing waterfall:

To hear the sound, as it echoes round,
And each crag and cliff gives back,
Of the whistle wild of the mountain child,
As he springs on the chamois' track.

His heart grew warm, for who feels not the charm
Of nature, where e'er we roam?
But the glistening eye, and the rising sigh,
Betray'd thoughts of his own lov'd home.

Again did the shade, o'er the brow of the maid,
Like the cloud of summer fly,
And a transient beam like the lightning's gleam,
Shot forth from her bright dark eye.

“Thou lov’st not, then, this beauteous scene,
It hath no charms for thee?
Then no longer stay, let us haste away,
Follow, oh follow me!”

Again he obey’d and again they stray’d
To a fair and sunny clime,
Whose classic name, and her storied fame
Were the boast of the olden time.

Where art may vie with the purpled sky,
And the sculptor’s glories stand,
As if all were given of earth or heaven,
To adorn this favour’d land.

And oft did they rove in the orange grove
When the golden sun-set shone,
And the snow-white bloom its rich perfume
O’er the dewy air had thrown.

But the soothing hour had lost its power
And the scene its gentle balm,
For memory brought one sadd’ning thought
To banish his spirit’s calm.

For he no more his native shore
Might e’er again behold,
Nor could he reveal, or to one he lov’d well,
The dark mystery unfold.

Youthful and fair, he had left her there,
Lovely and kind and true,

And vainly he sought to dispel the thought
Of her sad and last adieu.

For then was there hid in that silk fring'd lid
A gentle tear perchance,
And a blush did speak on the pale pure cheek,
That brightened beneath his glance.

He thought of all that in bower or hall
Had enlivened his distant home,
Of the hearts he had 'reft, and the sweet peace left
In exile far to roam.

All pensive he stray'd,—'till the dark-eyed maid
On his pathway quickly turn'd,
And scorn flash'd high in her sparkling eye,
And her cheek with anger burn'd.

“Ingrate!” she said, “for thee have I fled,
And thy solemn promise heard,
And would'st thou now forget thy vow
Or be false to thy knightly word?”

“Yet not in vain, my care and pain
And my wanderings all shall be,
Nor thy oath shalt thou break, nor thy guide forsake,
Then follow, follow me!”

On, on they sped, and the way she led
At the close of the parting day,
Nor e'en was there one twinkling star
To lighten the devious way.

The wind swept past in a fitful blast
That the gathering storm foretold,
And the glare of the dread volcano near
Did a fearful scene unfold.

For he saw by that bright and terrific light
That illumin'd the awful gloom,
The spirit wild had his steps beguil'd
To the verge of a yawning tomb.

And on his gaze as the lurid blaze
Still high and higher burn'd,
The beauteous sprite, from a being of light
To a hideous spectre turn'd.

All vanish'd the grace of her lovely face,
And far had all beauty flown,
And a fleshless arm round his manly form
With a giant's strength was thrown.

And the golden hair that was erst so fair
O'er her snowy shoulders flung,
A death's head bound, all coil'd around,
And with hissing serpents hung.

In vain did he seek the spell to break
And to loosen the deadly grasp
Of the skeleton hands that like iron bands
His heaving chest enclasp;—

And a hollow voice near said within his ear,
“Thy home thou shalt never see,

“ In this loathsome tomb behold thy doom,
“ Once more shalt thou follow me!”

She said, and sprang, and one wild cry rang
With a frightful and thrilling sound;
The ponderous stone o'er the vault was thrown,
And dread silence reign'd around!

* * * * *

The horrid spell broke when the knight awoke,
As they plung'd, from his couch he fell,
And the morning's beam did his fever'd dream,
With the shadows of night dispel.

And the vision he'd tell to one he lov'd well,
When seated by her side,
And merry he laugh'd, and a bright cup quaff'd,
To the health of his fairy guide.

THE END.



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