

# Clermont

## (4 Volumes Complete)

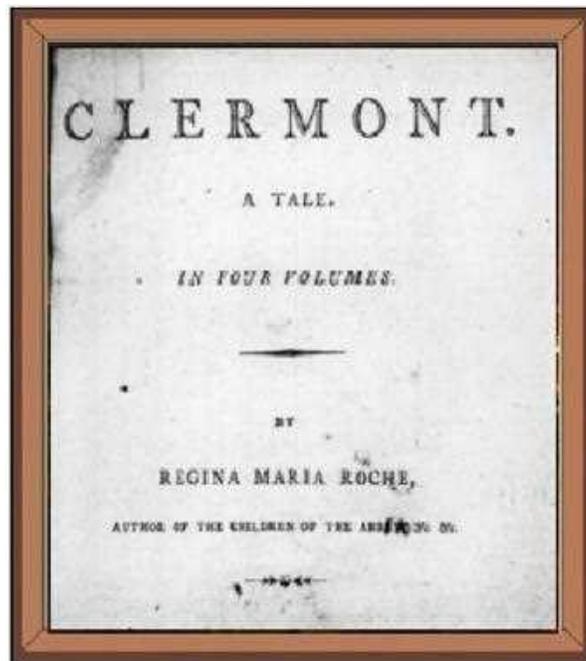
### by Regina Maria Roche

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#### PREFACE NOTE

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# Clermont

VOLUME ONE







if she could not obliterate, she might at least soften their remembrance.

But to do so in reality, was, alas! beyond her power. 'Tis true, he sometimes forced himself to wear the semblance of cheerfulness, although his heart was ever a stranger to it; oppressed by a sorrow which the boasted efficacy of time, the solicitude of filial attention, or the tenderness of sympathy could not mitigate;—a sorrow, which anticipated the work of time, had already faded his cheek and furrowed his brow, though yet in what might be termed the prime of man's life, not having attained his fortieth year; and sometimes so far overcame him, as to render him unable to bear even the society of his daughter, his only earthly comfort. At those periods he always wandered to the wildest and most sequestered spot that he could find in the neighbourhood of his residence,

*'mid  
thorns and mire;  
all forlorn,  
To muse at last, amid the ghostly gloom  
Of graves, and hoary vaults, and cloister'd cells,  
To walk with spectres thro' the midnight shade,  
And to the screaming owl's accursed song,  
Attune the dreadful workings of his heart.*

Though one of his chief sources of pleasure (as I have already said) was derived from the culture of his daughter's mind, he was often tempted to forego this gratification by reflecting on the inutility of accomplishments to her, who, like the desert rose, seemed born to waste her sweetness in obscurity. The task, however, was too delightful to be relinquished; and he at last rejoiced that he had persevered in it; for, as he carefully guarded her against all refinements which could render her dissatisfied with her humble station, he found that the expansion of her mind, by opening new sources of amusement, increased her happiness: he cultivated to the highest perfection that taste which the

*Source divine of ever-flowing love,  
And his unmeasur'd goodness, not content  
With every food of life to nourish man,  
Implants within his heart to make,  
By kind illusions of the wand'ring sense,  
all  
beauty to his eye,  
And music to his ear; with which  
well pleased he scans  
The goodly prospect, and with inward smiles,  
Treads the gay verdure of the painted plains,*

*Beholds the azure canopy of heaven,  
And living lamps that over-arch his head  
With more than regal splendour.*

Never did a pupil render the toils of an instructor less difficult than did Madeline those of her father; and as she grew up, her perfect knowledge of the historian's record, and just conception of the poet's beauty, rendered her a companion well qualified to diversify his lonely hours.

She possessed besides an exquisite taste for drawing and music, and accompanied the soft melody of her lute with a voice which, though not strong, was inexpressibly sweet; melodious as that which the rapt poet at the visionary hour of twilight sometimes thinks he hears

*chaunting from the wood-crown'd hill,  
The deep'ning dale, or inmost sylvan glade.*

The liveliness of her fancy was equal to the strength of her understanding, and often raised a visionary paradise around her; softness and animation were happily blended in her disposition; and with equal delight she could enjoy the gaiety of innocent mirth and the lonely hour of solitude: feeling and precept had early taught her pity for the woes of others; and with cheerfulness she could tax either convenience or comfort to supply the claims of poverty. To her person Nature had not been less liberal than to her mind; by her prodigality to both, it seemed indeed as if she had been anxious to make amends for the deficiency of fortune.

She was tall and delicately made; nor was the symmetry of her features inferior to that of her bodily form: but it was not to this symmetry that they owed their most attractive charm,—it was derived from the fascinating sweetness diffused over them. Her eyes, large and of the darkest hazel, ever true to the varying emotions of her soul, languished beneath their long silken lashes with all the softness of sensibility, and sparkled with all the fire of animation; her hair, a rich auburn, added luxuriance to her beauty, and by a natural curl, gave an expression of the greatest innocence to her face; the palest blush of health just tinted her dimpled, fair, and beautifully rounded cheek; and her mouth, adorned by smiles, appeared like the half-blown rose when moistened with the dews of early morn.

Such was Madeline Clermont, who, ignorant of the great world, neither practised its follies, sighed for its pleasures, or dreaded its vices; her highest wish was gratified when she could steal from the brow of her father its usual sadness, and render him for a moment forgetful of his sorrows.

Their house stood on a little eminence, in a deep, romantic, and

verdant valley, which wound to a considerable extent between cultivated hills, where the vine spread her treasures to the sun, and the husbandman often gathered a luxuriant harvest; woods of variegated verdure stretched up many of their steep ascent, and the summit of one of the highest was crowned with the ruins of a once noble castle, the residence, according to tradition, of some of the ancient Counts of Dauphiny. This shattered pile, the record of departed greatness and the power of time, was carefully shunned by the peasant after sun-set, for the village legends were swelled with an account of the horrid noises, and still more horrid sights, heard and beheld within its dreary walls: but though feared by superstition, it was the favourite haunt of taste and sensibility; and thither, as the last beams of the sun glimmered o'er the scene, Clermont and Madeline often wandered; they loved to explore its grass-grown court and winding avenues, and picture to themselves the scenes that had once passed to all appearance within them: they also frequently ascended to its broken battlements, covered with wild vegetation, where the birds of night held their unmolested reign, startling by their melancholy cries those persons whom chance or necessity conducted near the spot, from thence to feast on the delicious prospect beneath; whilst the breeze sighed amongst the surrounding trees, (whose ponderous trunks and matted branches declared them long inhabitants of the soil) as if the genius of the pile still haunted their recesses and mourned its desolation. The hills were completely surrounded by a chain of mountains, bleak, barren, and desolate, except in the summer months, when the shepherd led thither his little flock to crop the sweet herbage that then grew amongst their interstices.

A narrow river run through the valley, whose calm current was in many places interrupted by projections of rocks, which served as rude bridges for the villagers to pass from one side to the other; numerous herds enlivened its banks, along which a low brushwood crept, intermingled with a few tall trees, weeping willows, and sweet-smelling shrubs, which formed embowered seats for the solitary angler. A number of neat cottages were scattered about the vale; and it was delightful of a fine evening to behold their young inhabitants dancing to pastoral music on the little grassy lawns before them;—

*Like fairy elves,  
Whose midnight revels by a forest side,  
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,  
Or dreams he sees; while over head the moon  
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth  
Wheels her pale course, they on their mirth and dance  
Intent, with jocund music, charm his ear.*

The cottage of Clermont was embosomed in a small grove, through which a broad grassy path, enclosed by a rude paling, led from the valley to the house; o'er the door honeysuckle and wild roses, during the summer, formed a kind of portico, and half shaded its laticed windows; its interior was as simple as its exterior, and it was ornamented, as Madeline grew up, by her fanciful drawings. Midway up the hill that rose at the rere of his cottage, Clermont had continued his garden, as the space which lay between it and his dwelling was too narrow to yield sufficient vegetables for his family, small as it was; a silvery stream descended from this hill that gave fertility to the flowers which Madeline cultivated; and immediately above the garden it projected into craggy points of rock, which allured thither, by the fragrant herbs that grew about them, not only the industrious bee, but the wild and adventurous goat; and though the garden, its fences being readily overleaped, sometimes suffered from having the latter in its vicinity, Clermont could not think of driving away a neighbour, whose appearance on the heights added to the romantic and picturesque scenery of the spot. On the southern side of the hill lay a small vineyard belonging to Clermont, which he diligently cultivated.

Unchequered by incident, unruffled by discontent, the days of Madeline glided away till she had attained her seventeenth year; at which period their calm current was interrupted.



alternately rising, alternately sinking, as the sounds swelled with grandeur on the air, and tremblingly died away, till only their faint echo amongst the mountains could be distinguished: at last they ceased entirely; but, as if unwilling to relinquish the pleasure they had given her, she immediately began singing the beautiful air she had been listening to, and with which she was well acquainted. She however soon ceased, imagining that she heard a low voice beneath the balcony repeating her words. Somewhat startled, she hastily arose, and looked over it; but no object was visible, and all again was silence. Her fancy, she was then convinced, had deceived her, and her composure returned in consequence of that idea; but the night being now far advanced, she delayed no longer quitting the castle.

The next evening her father again left her to herself. Slinging her lute across her arm, with which she was wont to amuse herself in her moments of solitude, she again proceeded to the castle, and sought her favourite seat; but scarcely had she gained it, ere the following lines, penciled on a smooth white stone that had once formed part of a supporting pillar to the door of the chamber through which she had passed, caught her eye, and filled her breast with inexpressible surprise.

#### THE LINES

*Midst grass-grown courts, the 'ivy mantled tower',*

*Where legends say afflicted spirits mourn*

*O'er the sad records of departed power,—*

*I restless watch for dewy eve's return:*

*For then the chauntress of the woodland vale*

*Awakes the echoes of the dreary pile,*

*With sounds that o'er my tortur'd soul prevail,*

*And all its cares and agonies beguile.*

*The evening star, the pale moon's silver ray,*

*I raptur'd hail, that gives her to my gaze:*

*Her form, her smile, harmonious as her lay,—*

*The mild expression of her angel face.*

*Should this weak record of ill-fated love*

*E'er meet her eye,—ah, may one tender tear*

*Be shed for him, whom fate forbade to prove*

*His ardent passion or his truth sincere!*

*Ah! may she pity then, compassion is his claim,*

*'Tis all he dares to ask—'tis all he hopes to gain.*

The moment Madeline had read those lines, she recollected the voice which she fancied she had heard the preceding evening, and was convinced her ear had not then deceived her.

A stranger, she was sure, had visited the ruins, for to none of the inhabitants of the valley, all the rough and illiterate children of industry, could she ascribe them; neither could she avoid believing them addressed to herself; not from any conscious superiority of charms over the rest of the village maids, but from a conviction that they never visited the castle, on account of the superstitious dread they entertained of it.

An idea that the person who wrote the lines might be loitering about the ruins, now struck her; and she instantly determined to quit them. Scarcely had she done so, when she heard the sound of a step in the adjoining chamber; she hastily bent forward, and looking through the little arch which led to the balcony, she perceived a man gliding from the opposite door into an obscure corner of the room; there was just sufficient light within to enable her to perceive he was a stranger: her heart beat quick; she trembled, and shrinking back, regretted the thoughtless temerity which had exposed her to danger, by tempting her to visit the lonely pile at such an hour.

That it was the author of the little sonnet she beheld, she could not doubt; but the tender sentiments it expressed could not inspire her with sufficient courage to bear the idea of throwing herself entirely into his power, which, by attempting to leave the castle, she must do, her only passage being through its innermost recesses; she deemed it safer therefore to continue in her present situation, where there was a chance of not being observed, and of obtaining assistance by crying out if she should find it necessary, either till she was assured the stranger had departed, or that some hope of protection presented itself to her view.

Eagerly she listened for some sound from the valley, that might inspire this hope, but in vain; by the silence which reigned over it, interrupted only by the barking of cottage dogs, as if they bayed the moon, she was at length convinced that care and industry had already retired to repose.

The late hour to which her father prolonged his nocturnal rambles, and the timidity of their servant, gave her little reason to hope deliverance through their means: scarcely suffering herself to breathe, she continued a long time in a state of greater agony than she had ever before experienced. At last she heard a step; but her almost fainting spirits were soon recalled by a conviction that it was not approaching her; and in the next minute she caught a glimpse of a figure (the same she was sure she had seen in the chamber) descending a winding path near the balcony. Her strength and courage immediately returned, and with a quickness that scarcely permitted her to touch the ground, she left the castle, and reached the valley by a different path from that which the stranger had taken. She had scarcely quitted it, when a sudden rustling among

the trees behind her induced her to look back, and she perceived him slowly emerging from the midst of them. The speed of Madeline was now if possible increased, and, faint and breathless, she gained the enclosure before her father's cottage. As she fastened the little gate, she paused and leaned over it, but almost instantly retreated from it to the house, discovering the stranger to be within a few yards of it.

Her father was not yet returned; and the maid, busied in preparing the supper table, took no notice of her agitation. The idea of security soon restored Madeline's composure; she then resolved not to acquaint her father with the incident that had alarmed her, least it should agitate, and render him uneasy, if at any future time chance prevented her returning home as soon as he expected. She also determined not to visit the castle again till she was convinced the stranger had forsaken it, nor even then at so late an hour as she had hitherto done; to know who he was, to have a perfect view of him, she could not help wishing.

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, when her father withdrew to the vineyard, Jaqueline, the servant, entered the room; she was a faithful creature, much attached to Clermont and Madeline from the number of years she had lived with them, and now appeared with a face full of importance.

'Lord, Mam'selle,' cried she, 'I have been wanting to speak to you this long time; I have something to tell you that will so surprise you! I dare say, if you lived to be an hundred, and were all that time guessing, you would not find it out.'

'Very likely,' said Madeline, taking up her work; 'so do you save me the useless trouble of trying to do so.'

'Why this morning,' began Jaqueline, 'before the sun was risen, I went down to the river to get a pail of water, and there I saw the most handsomest young man I ever beheld in my days.'

Madeline dropped her work, and fastened her eyes eagerly upon Jaqueline's face.

'Claude Dubois and Josephe le Mure, though counted so handsome, and to be sure they are the best looking young men in the village,' resumed Jaqueline, 'are not to be compared to him. So, as I was saying, I found him standing by the river looking so earnestly at this cottage, as if there was something or somebody in it he wanted to discover. God bless my soul, says I to myself, if he should be looking at it with any bad intent!—for you know, Mam'selle, there are people wicked enough to go about the world trying to do mischief; so I laid the pail upon the bank, and, thinks I, I will try to discover what he wants, or what he means; but how to begin to speak to him, I did not know; for though I did not feel afraid, I felt some how or other an awe of him: he saved me the trouble however of inventing an excuse for speaking to him, by asking me whether I

lived in the house he had seen me come out of. So after I had answered him, I was just going to beg in return he would tell me why he stood looking at it, for all the world as if he wanted to take its length and breadth and all its dimensions, when Margarett Duval, going to market with some kids, came up to me for the price of a new hat which I had desired her to buy me the next time she went there, and whilst I was untying my glove to take out my money, away he marched, notwithstanding he saw I was going to speak to him when she came up.'

'Perhaps you said something about him to Margarett,' said Madeline.

'Nothing that could offend him, I am sure,' cried Jaqueline; 'I only said, when she asked, as I was taking out my money, whether that handsome gentleman near me was a sweetheart of my young lady? "heaven knows who he is; he may be a sweetheart of yours or mine as well as of hers, for ought I know." I must confess, indeed, she stared at him with all the eyes in her head, which perhaps drove him away; for I am sure my words could not: this I took care to tell her, after he was gone, was a piece of very bad manners. Before I came home,' proceeded Jaqueline, 'I met some neighbours, to whom I described him, in order to find out if they knew any thing about him; but they were quite ignorant of any such person; it is evident, therefore, that he does not lodge in this valley, or he would be known to its inhabitants.'

'Tis strange, thought Madeline, that visiting it as he does, he should not be known to any of them.

'I was all in a flutter till I told you about him,' said Jaqueline; 'and should be glad to know whether you would have my master also told, that in case of any bad design against the house, he may be upon his guard.'

'I think I may venture to say there is no bad design formed against it,' exclaimed Madeline; 'consequently there is no occasion to speak to him on the subject.'

'Very well, Mam'selle,' answered Jaqueline; 'I am sure you have more wisdom and discretion than I have, notwithstanding I am the oldest; I shall therefore do as you please.'

Madeline resumed her work as Jaqueline quitted the room; but not with her wonted diligence did she pursue it; her eyes continually wandered from it to the valley, where, however, they met no object to which they had not been accustomed.

In the evening her father invited her to walk; this invitation she accepted with pleasure; nor was her satisfaction diminished on finding that he proceeded in the direction to the castle.



Madeline gazed on them, she involuntarily said to herself, one glance from those benignant eyes last night, would at once have dissipated every terror.

As if rivetted to the spot by a magic spell, she stood immoveable, till roused by the voice of her father calling her at a distance. She started, and as she turned to obey the summons, she caught those eyes she had just been admiring, the consciousness of which perhaps occasioned the blush that instantly mantled her cheeks and an agitation that scarcely permitted her to walk: yet was her emotion faint to that which (though she but glanced at him) she saw the stranger betray when disturbed by the voice of her father; he looked towards her, starting from his seat; the paper he held dropped from his hand, and wildly, yet delightedly, he gazed on her.

She met her father on the spot where they had parted, and informed him, though not in a very articulate voice, of the motive which had made her quit it; her agitation was too great to escape his observation, and he enquired if any thing had frightened her? 'No,' said she, 'nothing.' Clermont therefore imputed it to the haste she had made to meet him. As they had walked a good way, he now proposed that they should return home, to which she did not object; but never had she been so silent, so absent before, since of an age to be his companion as she was at this time with her father.

On arriving at the cottage, they found supper already prepared, to which they immediately sat down: they had scarcely finished, however, when one of the young villagers rushed into the room, and with a trembling voice and pale face, besought Clermont, for the sake of heaven and his own soul, to come out and give his assistance to a poor gentleman whom he and his brother, returning from their daily labour to their cottage, had found lying bleeding and senseless, as they supposed, in consequence of a fall, at the foot of the hill upon which the castle stood. 'Tis surely the stranger, thought Madeline, and instantly her colour changed.

'Do you know him?' asked Clermont, rising as he spoke.

'No,' replied the young peasant. Nevertheless he and his brother had carried him to their mother's cottage, who had laid him upon her best bed, and was then trying to bring him to himself. 'But,' added he, 'except his wounds are drest, she can be of little service to him.'

I have already said, that studying the works of nature was a favourite amusement of Clermont, and from that study and reading, he had learned the healing property of many simples, which he carefully gathered and administered with success to the external as well as internal complaints of his poor neighbours: to him the young peasant had therefore come without hesitation to solicit relief and assistance for the wounded stranger.

'You will go, my father?' said Madeline.

'Go, my child!' said he; 'yes, and happy I am to think I can in any degree mitigate the sufferings of a fellow-creature.' He hastily collected what things he wanted, and went out.

Madeline left her supper unfinished, and in a state of agitation, such as she had never before experienced, watched in the little grove before the cottage for his return. The moment she saw him approaching the gate, she flew to meet him.

'Well, my dear sir,' cried she, 'is there any hope?'

'Hope!' repeated Clermont, 'heaven forbid there was not; the unfortunate young man, though severely, is not dangerously hurt; and I trust, and make no doubt, but that in a few days, with proper care and attention, he will be able to rise: his senses, which the shock of the fall alone deprived him of, were completely restored ere I went to him, and he was perfectly sensible of every thing I did for him, though too much exhausted to express his thanks, which his looks evinced him anxious to do, but which indeed a common act of humanity like mine does not merit.' Clermont proceeded to say that he thought the stranger, though in such a situation, one of the finest young men he had ever seen. Madeline blushed; and, perfectly relieved from her uncasiness, felt a conscious pleasure at her father's opinion coinciding with her's.

The next morning, before breakfast, Clermont went to visit his patient; when he returned, his countenance announced pleasing intelligence.

'Well,' said he, seating himself at the breakfast table, 'I believe I shall soon grow vain of my skill, and declare myself a professed physician; as I prognosticated, my patient is already better, and I have had some conversation with him.'

Madeline looked earnestly at her father.

'He had learned,' resumed Clermont, 'from the good dame of the cottage that I was not a surgeon, but merely attended him from good will; in consequence of which he would have loaded me with thanks, had I not stopped him by declaring, that if he persisted in talking of obligations, I would instantly bid him a final adieu.

'After I had silenced him on that subject, he proceeded to tell me his name was de Sevignie, and that a love of rambling, inspired by a wish of seeing all in nature and art worthy of observation in his native country, had led him to a little hamlet about a league from our valley, where enquiring, as was his custom whenever he halted, if there was any place in the neighbourhood worth visiting, he had been directed by his host to the old castle, as one of the finest monuments of art and antiquity in this part of the country. "I visited it almost immediately," said he; "and from that time, which was about a fortnight ago, have never failed repairing to it every evening at sun-set, attracted thither by an irresistible impulse.

“I am sorry,” said I, “your visits were at last so unfortunately terminated; your present accident is, I suppose, to be imputed to them.”—His reply was “Yes”; he had wandered unheeding whither he went, into a wrong path, extremely rugged, where, his foot slipping, he fell from the top to the bottom of the hill. His spirits seemed low,’ continued Clermont; ‘so I rallied my own to endeavour to raise them.

“There is I believe,” said I, “some spell, in that castle which allures, or rather draws, people thither, whether they will or no; I have a little girl who is always gadding to it, in defiance of all the ghosts, hobgoblins, and fairies, which, according to the account of the villagers, continually haunt it.”’

Madeline felt her cheek glow; and, withdrawing her eyes from her father, she pretended to be busy in pouring out the coffee.

‘My forced gaiety was however lost upon him,’ said Clermont; ‘he grew agitated, so I took my leave, promising to call upon him again in the course of the day; and, at his desire, sent one of the young men of the cottage to the hamlet for his servant, whom he wished, in preference to a stranger, to attend him. As soon as you have breakfasted, my love, I wish you would take a loaf of white bread, which cannot be procured where he is, and a bottle of last year’s vintage to the cottage for the young stranger.’

No commission could be more pleasing to Madeline than the present one. The moment she rose from table, she tied on her hat, and putting the bread and wine into a small osier basket, proceeded to the cottage, at the door of which its mistress sat netting.

‘Ah! how kind,’ said she, rising and taking the basket from Madeline, ‘is Mr. Clermont! heaven will requite him for his goodness: won’t you come in, Mam’selle; ’tis a warm day, and I am sure you must be tired by your walk: all my folks, old and young, are gone to the vineyard (it was now the vintage season), and I am a little lonely or so in their absence.’

‘Your guest is better?’ cried Madeline, entering as she spoke, and taking a chair.

‘Yes, Mam’selle, heaven and your father be praised for that; he is a fine youth, and it would be a pity indeed if any thing ailed him long. I must, now that I have so good an opportunity, shew you, Mam’selle, a little picture, which I think belonged to him, as my Claude found it near the spot where he fell.’ So saying, she opened a drawer, from whence she took the picture, and presented it to Madeline, who, the moment she cast her eyes upon it, recollected it to be the same she had seen in the hands of the stranger; and this convinced her of what indeed she had scarcely doubted before, that he and de Sevignie were the same person.

She now found it to be a highly-finished landscape of the castle and surrounding scenes, in which a small female figure was con-

spicuously drawn. This bore so great a resemblance to her own person, that she had no doubt of its being designed for her. Such an indication of attachment touched her young and simple heart more perhaps than the most impassioned declaration could have accomplished.

'As soon as he departs, I shall pin this picture up,' proceeded his hostess; 'it will look so pretty against the wall; but till then I should be afraid to do so, lest he should demand it.'

'I think,' said Madeline, who feared the good woman or some of her family might discover the resemblance which the figure in the drawing bore to her, 'you had better return it.'

'No, indeed,' replied Janette, 'I shall do no such thing; he does not know I have it, so there can be no harm in keeping it.'

'Well, do as you please,' said Madeline, rising to depart, and taking up her empty basket. All the way back, her thoughts were engrossed by what she had seen; and she felt agitated at the idea of being introduced to Sevignie, which she supposed would now be the case as soon as he had recovered.

The attentions of her father were unremitted; and he returned from every visit more and more pleased with his new acquaintance, who, though too severely hurt to be able to rise for some days, was perfectly capable of conversing with him.

'I never,' said Clermont to his daughter, on returning one evening, 'met with a mind more indebted to nature, or more improved by education, than that of de Sevignie; yet, with all his abilities and acquirements, he is unobtrusive, unassuming, and unaffected; he does not study for subjects calculated to display his talents, as too many possessed of such would ostentatiously do; instead of leading, he is rather led to them; and his modesty, not only from its intrinsic merit, but its novelty, greatly heightens his perfections.'

Such encomiums on de Sevignie were inexpressibly pleasing to Madeline; they seemed to give a sanction to the tender interest she felt for him; and they made her, besides, feel a sensation of gratified pride at being an object of regard to so amiable a youth.

At the end of a week, her father told her that his patient was able to rise, and expressed a wish that she would take some little delicacies, which he mentioned, to the cottage for him.

Madeline never obeyed a wish of her father's more readily; tying on her straw hat, she proceeded almost directly to the cottage with her osier basket upon her arm, well filled, and covered with a napkin. The cottage door lay open, but Janette (as in general was the case) was not there; neither was she nor any other person in the little room it opened into. Madeline, not willing to depart without seeing her, proceeded to an apartment which looked into the garden, and was divided from the one she had left by a long passage, at the door of which she tapped; it was instantly opened by Janette,

and Madeline was entering, when the appearance of de Sevignie, who had not, she imagined, yet left his room, seated in a wrapping gown at an open window, as if to inhale the balmy and refreshing sweetness of the air, made her suddenly start back. Janette, however, prevented her retreating entirely:—'Lord, Mam'selle, don't be frightened,' cried she, ' 'tis only Monsieur de Sevignie you see, who has left his chamber this morning for the first time; do pray come in, and wish him joy of his recovery; he will be very glad I am sure to see you.'

'Permit me, Madam,' said de Sevignie, who on her first appearance had risen, though with evident tremor and difficulty, 'permit me, Madam,' advancing to her, 'at least to have an opportunity of thanking you for your humane attention to a stranger. Oh, to the daughter suffer me to express what to the father I am forbid—my warm, my fervent sense of the obligations which both have conferred upon me.'

'You rate much too highly, sir,' said Madeline, raising her eyes from the ground, 'any little attentions we had the power of paying you.'

'See, Monsieur,' cried Janette, taking the basket from Madeline's arm, and uncovering it, 'how good Mam'selle is to you, what nice things she has brought you: do pray come in, Mam'selle, and take some refreshment; Monsieur, I dare say, will be very glad to have you sit a bit with him.'

'Glad,' repeated he with energy, while his eyes were fastened upon Madeline; 'that were a poor expression indeed for what I should feel if I were so highly honoured.'

The words of Janette, and the looks of de Sevignie, heightened the blushes which had already overspread the beautiful cheeks of Madeline.—'I cannot stop another minute,' said she, confused, and turning to Janette as if solely to address her.

'Well, I am sorry that you can't,' replied Janette; 'but before you go, won't you tell Monsieur how happy you are at his recovery.'

'I am very—happy indeed,' said she with some hesitation, 'that he is so well.—Adieu, sir,' again glancing at Sevignie, whose eyes eloquently expressed his wishes that she would comply with the request of Janette, though diffidence and timidity prevented his seconding it; 'adieu, sir, I trust you will soon be perfectly recovered.' She then, without waiting for him to speak, hurried to the outer room, followed by Janette—'I assure you, Mam'selle,' said she, 'if you had sat a little while with Monsieur, you would have liked him vastly, he is so gentle and good-humoured; did you observe what a beautiful smile he has?'

'Yes—no,' answered Madeline moving to the door.

'Do you know, Mam'selle,' cried Janette, still following, 'I was obliged to restore the little picture; he enquired so particularly

about it, and seemed so uneasy at the idea of losing it, that I could not find in my heart to keep it from him.'

As Madeline walked back, she regretted the confusion she had betrayed at the sight of de Sevignie, which she feared he might impute to a consciousness of his sentiments towards her; and his wish of concealing them was so obvious, that the idea of being suspected of knowing them, shocked her beyond measure. She therefore resolved, if ever they again met, to have a better guard over her feelings, to endeavour to remove such a suspicion if it really existed.

Her resolution was however easier to plan than to carry into effect; for when, on the second day after her interview with him, of which she informed her father, Clermont ushered him into the parlour where she sat at work; she suddenly rose from her chair with an emotion that rendered her for some minutes incapable of speaking.

'You and my daughter have already met,' said Clermont to him; 'any introduction is therefore unnecessary. Madeline, my love,' addressing her, 'I am sure you will feel happy at Monsieur de Sevignie's being able to come abroad again, and at his kind intention of devoting this, his first day of recovered health, to our gratification.'

'I shall indeed, sir,' said Madeline bowing.

The eloquent eyes of de Sevignie seemed to thank her for this assurance. Clermont made him take a seat by her; and her confusion gradually subsiding, they soon entered into conversation. The situation, simplicity, and ornaments of the cottage were pleasing themes to de Sevignie; the latter he particularly admired, perhaps from knowing they were Madeline's performances; and Clermont listened with unspeakable delight to the praises bestowed upon the taste and ingenuity of his daughter, nor could he forbear, with the pride so natural to a paternal heart, joining in them.

'Yet 'tis not so much from the beauty of these works that I derive my pleasure,' said Clermont, 'as from the consideration of their being specimens of the taste which will always furnish my child with agreeable employment, and prevent her from feeling that most disagreeable of all sensations, weariness of herself: but excuse me, my love,' seeing a blush steal over the cheek of Madeline, 'for speaking as I have done; modest merit I know always shrinks from public praise. Monsieur de Sevignie will also I hope have the goodness to pardon me; to speak of what we love, is a foible we are all, particularly a parent, liable to; and some years hence, when he is himself perhaps a parent, he will be able to make allowances for its being indulged.'

'You do not know my heart,' said de Sevignie, with warmth, 'or you would not suppose I could not now make these allowances:—

cold and unfeeling indeed should I consider that soul which was not proud, which did not boast of, such a treasure as you possess.'

After dinner, when the heat of the sun had declined, they walked out to the garden; and from thence ascended by an easy path to the summit of the hill which overlooked it, to enjoy the lovely prospect and the fresh breeze that played around so delightful after the oppressive warmth of an autumnal day.

Immediately before them, they could only see the white chimnies of the cottages rising amidst embowering groves; but, on either side, they commanded a full view of the valley, o'er which the sober colouring of closing day was already spread, heightening the gloomy solemnity of its hanging woods, and giving a deeper tint of green to the smooth and sloping banks of the stream which, now clear and beautifully serene, reflected, as in a glass, those sloping banks, the neat cottages, the waving woods, that rose above them, and the blue firmament, yet marked by the glories of the setting sun; whilst beside it lay its ruminating herds, and all around was silence, as if nature and her works were hushed to repose by the declining hour.

'How delicious is this prospect,' said de Sevignie, in a voice of rapture! 'the eye could never be tired of it; yet is its tranquillity even more pleasing to the mind, than its beauties to the eye.'

'Tis delightful indeed,' cried Clermont, 'to a mind that has been harrassed by care.'

'Would to heaven,' exclaimed de Sevignie, with fervour, 'fate had destined a situation of such tranquillity for me!'

'Not now,' cried Clermont.

'Yes, at this very period,' replied de Sevignie.

'Suppress such a wish, my friend,' said Clermont; 'it is unworthy of you; it would be an ill requital to the goodness of Providence, if you sought to bury such talents as it has given you (talents calculated to benefit mankind) in obscurity; besides, you could not at present enjoy such a situation.'

'Not enjoy it!' repeated de Sevignie, with a degree of astonishment.

'No,' replied Clermont; 'at your time of life you cannot have seen much of the world, or experienced many of its vicissitudes; and without doing so, we can seldom, or rather never I should say, understand the real value of rural tranquillity.'

'Think you the sailor, who always glided upon smooth seas, would thoroughly enjoy his haven of security?—no; 'tis the remembrance of the perils he has experienced upon those seas, which renders it so delightful to him: he vaunts to his friends of the dangers he has encountered with an exultation, a happiness which those could never feel who always enjoyed a state of safety; and with that exultation and happiness is intermingled gratitude of the

most fervent nature to that Almighty Being who lent his supporting arm through those dangers; and, should any little crosses arise, all murmurs, on their account, are instantly suppressed, by reflecting how insignificant they are, compared to what he has already suffered.

'Thus have I attempted to prove, that to render retirement truly pleasing, we should first intermix in active life, and understand what we gave up in withdrawing from it; and also, that a knowledge of its difficulties will silence that discontent which is too apt to rise at every little trial; for he who has witnessed or braved the storm, will never shrink from the biting blast.'

The arguments of Clermont were too just to be controverted; at least de Sevignie had not the temerity to attempt doing so: they continued to converse till the lovely prospect they had been admiring, became all one swimming scene, uncertain if beheld. They then rose to return to the house.

De Sevignie offered his hand to Madeline: as she took it, she felt it tremble. A rising moon began to dissipate the darkness as they descended the hill, and soon o'er all

*her silver mantle threw,  
And in her pale dominion check'd the night.*

'How lovely is this scene,' said de Sevignie, stopping at the foot of the hill; 'how soft, how pleasing the shadowy light of the moon! how beautifully does it tip the waving trees with silver; and what a solemn glory does it cast upon the mouldering battlements of yonder castle.'

They entered the cottage; supper was prepared for them, and they sat down to it with no other light than what the moon afforded, and by an open window, through which a soft breeze wafted delicious odours; no sound could now be heard in the valley, but the melancholy rippling of the water.

After supper, 'this is an hour,' said Clermont, 'which my Madeline often devotes to music; the soul is never more suited for the enjoyment of harmony, than at such an hour as the present, when the busy cares of day are over, and the more painful ones of recollection are softened by the universal tranquillity of nature and her works: you, de Sevignie, are I am sure a performer, and you will not, I hope, refuse to accompany my Madeline.'

De Sevignie spoke not, but his smile declared his readiness to oblige; Clermont put his oboe into his hands, and they proceeded to a rustic bench, beneath the spreading branches of a chestnut tree, near the cottage. Here they passed a considerable time in a most delightful manner; the execution of de Sevignie was in the most masterly style, but his taste if possible surpassed it, and never had his companions been more gratified than they were by listening to

him: at last they rose to return to the cottage, and he then bade them farewell.

From this day de Sevignie became almost an inmate of the cottage; and as Clermont, then engrossed by the vintage, could not devote much time to him, Madeline was almost his sole, and during the mornings, his only companion: those mornings were generally spent either in reading poems to Madeline, to which the harmony of his voice imparted new charms, in watching the progress of her pencil, or in listening to the melody of her lute. The melancholy which oppressed him made Madeline exert all her powers to try and beguile it, but without effect; every day seemed to add to it; and often, affected by its soft contagion, Madeline has swept the chords of the lute with a disordered hand, and abruptly quitted the room to wipe away the tears it occasioned:—she ascribed, she wished to ascribe, her feelings for him to pity, but they proceeded from even a tenderer impulse than pity.

At length her altered looks and manner discovered to her father the secret of her heart: bitterly he then regretted the hospitality which had introduced so dangerous a guest to her knowledge; and wondered he had not timely foreseen the probable consequences of such a measure, and avoided them. His attentions immediately slackened to de Sevignie; and he scrupled not to hint in pretty plain terms, that his visits at the cottage were attended with inconvenience. Severely however was his generous nature wounded at being compelled to speak in this manner; and as the words passed his lips, he averted his looks from de Sevignie, whose faded cheeks were instantly flushed by a pale hectic. Had Clermont seen a probability of his daughter's attachment ending happily, he would not have acted as he now did; but of this he beheld not the remotest prospect; for though de Sevignie appeared by his looks to admire her, and by his delay in the valley (now that he was sufficiently recovered to leave it), to be attached to her company, not a word expressive of that admiration or attachment ever escaped him: even if he had declared a passion, there would still have been a bar to Madeline's happiness from her father's ignorance of de Sevignie's real situation and circumstances; both which it was obvious he wished to conceal, as Clermont had more than once introduced a conversation calculated to lead to the mention of them, from which, with visible confusion, de Sevignie instantly withdrew.

The day after the alteration took place in Clermont's manner, an alteration Madeline wept in secret, de Sevignie absented himself from the cottage till the close of evening; he then entered the room where Clermont and Madeline sat dejectedly together, and informed them he was come merely for the purpose of taking leave, having fixed on the next morning for his departure: delighted to hear this,

Clermont lost all coldness, and would have conversed again as usual with him, had the spirits of de Sevignie permitted him to do so; but Madeline was unable to speak; pensively she sat in a window, wishing, yet fearing, to quit the room, lest her father and de Sevignie should suspect the motive which tempted her to do so.

At length de Sevignie rose to depart; Madeline also involuntarily arose.—‘Farewell! sir,’ cried he, addressing Clermont with a kind of solemnity in his looks; ‘I cannot do justice to the feelings that now swell my heart; I shall not therefore attempt to express them.—Once more, sir, farewell!’ taking his hand, and pressing it to his breast, ‘may that happiness you merit be ever yours,—greater I cannot wish you: then turning to Madeline—‘and you, Mam’selle, who, like a ministering angel, tried to soothe the sorrows of a stranger!’—He paused—a tear at that instant stole from beneath the half-closed eyelids of Madeline, and gave him emotions he could scarcely conceal; he tried, however, to proceed, but in vain; and, clasping her hand between his, he bowed upon it the adieu he could not articulate: then snatching up his hat, rushed from the house, followed by Clermont; not indeed, from any idea of overtaking him, but merely to give Madeline an opportunity of recovering herself.

‘He is gone then,’ said she, sinking upon a chair; ‘we have parted to meet no more!—Oh, de Sevignie! I now almost regret we ever met!’

Absorbed in melancholy, she forgot the necessity there was for trying to suppress her emotions before her father’s return, till his step, as she imagined, in the hall roused her from her reverie, and made her precipitately fly to another room which opened immediately upon the stairs. She had scarcely gained her chamber, when Jaqueline entered.

‘Come down, Mam’selle,’ said she, ‘Monsieur de Sevignie is below, and wishes to speak with you.’

‘With me!’ repeated Madeline, starting from the seat on which she had thrown herself; ‘good heaven!’ in inexpressible agitation, the agitation perhaps of hope, ‘what can he have to say to me?’

‘I am sure that’s more than I can tell,’ said Jaqueline; ‘but I will go and inform him you are coming.’ So saying, she descended the stairs, followed by Madeline as soon as she had wiped away her tears. De Sevignie was waiting for her at the parlour door—‘I came back,’ said he in a hesitating voice as she entered, ‘to return the poems which you were so obliging as to lend me, and which I forgot this evening when I came to take leave.’

The colour which had mantled the cheeks of Madeline died away, and she took the book in silence from him.

‘Permit me now,’ cried he, ‘to return those thanks for your attentions, which, when I saw you before this evening, I had not

the power of doing. Oh, Madeline!' as if with irrepressible emotion, 'who can wonder at my being then incapable of speaking.'—Madeline turned from him to conceal the feelings he inspired, and walked to the window; he followed her—'this evening,' cried he, 'I have bade a final adieu to felicity; to-morrow, to-morrow at this hour, oh, Madeline! and I shall be far, far distant from this spot!—I shall only behold this lovely face in idea:—tell me,' he continued, taking her hand, and looking at her with the most touching softness, 'when I am gone, may I hope sometimes to be remembered, as a friend?—to think of living in the memory of those I love, would be to me a soothing pleasure, the only pleasure I can enjoy.'

Madeline promised not to forget him; 'twas a promise her heart told her she would truly perform. De Sevignie still lingered after receiving it;—'I must be gone at last,' cried he; 'every moment I stay but increases my reluctance to depart. Oh, Madeline! no words can express my heaviness of heart at thus bidding a last adieu to—' He paused—but his eyes expressed what his tongue left unfinished. Madeline sat down; her tears fell in spite of her efforts to restrain them: de Sevignie grasped her hands in his; he looked at her with a countenance full of anguish.—'I must fly,' said he, 'or I shall no longer have any command over myself.' The breeze that blew in at the window had wafted aside the hair of Madeline from her forehead; de Sevignie pressed his lips against it for a moment; and, dropping on his knees, 'bless, heaven,' he cried, 'bless with the choicest of thy gifts, the loveliest of thy works!'—then rising precipitately, he once more rushed out of the house.

Madeline, more dejected than ever, returned to her chamber; nor could any effort she made for the purpose so far restore her composure as to enable her to join her father (whose walk had been purposely lengthened on her account) at supper: she excused herself by pleading a head-ache. Clermont sighed, as he thought that a heart-ache was what she should have said. The departure of de Sevignie Clermont trusted would check the passion of Madeline; and that, like an untoward blossom of the spring, it would gradually die away—the 'perfume and the suppliance of a moment': how greatly therefore was he disappointed when convinced of the falsity of this idea, by the alteration which took place in her after the departure of de Sevignie; the rose forsook her cheek; she pined in thought, and neglected all her former avocations: with an anguish which no language can express, he watched over her; he did not hint at the observations he had made; but gently and by degrees he strove to lead her back to her former pursuits, well knowing that employment was the best antidote against melancholy: he also frequently hinted, that she should be particularly watchful of her peace, as his entirely depended on it. These insinuations at length recalled her to a sense of what was due to him and

herself; and she felt guilty of ingratitude in so long giving way to feelings which, by injuring her tranquillity, had interrupted his: a conviction of error was followed by a determination of making every possible atonement for it; she therefore struggled against despondency, and applied herself more assiduously than ever to her wonted occupations: success crowned her exertions; her health returned, and with it its almost constant attendant—cheerfulness; a cheerfulness, however, which derived its principal support from the hope of again beholding de Sevignie, and which sometimes, losing that support, sunk into despondency.

The winter glided away without any event happening in the least interesting to her feelings or her father's; and without lessening the impression which de Sevignie had made upon her heart: the scenes he had particularly admired about the cottage, she still wandered to; and the old castle still continued her favourite haunt; she copied the lines, though her doing so was unnecessary, for they were already deeply impressed upon her memory; and often visited the house where he had lodged, and where every tongue was eloquent in his praise.



been the means of discovering to me the retreat of a friend so valued.'

'I cannot indeed regret it,' said Clermont, advancing, and taking her hand, which he pressed to his lips and to his heart; 'I cannot regret what has again introduced me to the notice of the Countess de Merville,—what has convinced me that a being still exists interested about the unfortunate Clermont.'

'Clermont!' repeated the lady, with a mournful voice; 'oh, my friend! but there is no name, no title by which you would not be equally estimable to me.'

'Allow me,' said he, looking at his daughter, 'to introduce another recluse to your ladyship.'

She bowed; and Clermont advancing to Madeline, who, lost in wonder, had hitherto stood contemplating them, took her trembling hand and led her forward. The Countess clasped her to her bosom; then suddenly held her to a distance from it, and exclaimed—'what a resemblance!'

'A fatal one,' cried Clermont; 'it often embitters the pleasure I take in gazing on her; the eyes, the voice, the smile!'

'Come, my good friend,' said the Countess, 'reflect that there is no earthly pleasure without alloy, and try to support the common lot with fortitude: I believe I need not bring any proof to confirm the truth of what I have said, that the cup of joy never comes into mortal hands unmixed with bitter ingredients.'

'No,' replied Clermont, 'I want no proof of the truth of your words.'

'I hope and believe,' said she, 'that the destiny of this dear young creature will be happier than was that of the person she resembles.'

'If not,' cried Clermont, raising his eyes, 'grant, oh thou supreme Being! that I may never live to see it fulfilled.' His own energy struck him; he recollected himself: handed the Countess to a chair, and briefly informed Madeline, whom he saw almost stupefied by surprise, how she should arrange matters for the accommodation of their guests; entreating her at the same time, to hasten whatever supper could be procured. She directly left the parlour, but was greatly surprised to find two females standing in the hall, younger, but not quite so well drest as the Countess. She expressed her regret at their having continued so long in such a situation, and her wonder at their not having accompanied the Countess into the parlour: they smiled on each other at this, and said they were only her attendants. Madeline blushed at her mistake, for she had supposed them companions of the Countess, and conducted them into a small room adjoining the parlour, used by her father as a study: here, having procured lights, she left them. She found Jaqueline stirring up the fire, and asked her how she could suffer the strangers to continue so long in the hall?

'Why, Lord a merey, Mam'selle,' said Jaqueline, 'how could I think of every thing? here have I been in such a fuss, ransacking my brain to know what we should do about supper. Lord, what an unlucky thing it was that Father Pierre dined here to-day; he has always such an appetite; only for him some of the fowl at least would have been left, and then I could have made some rich gravy, and tossed it into a fricassee in a moment. I am sure I am as sorry as the lady herself can be about the accident; not that I should have cared a pin about it had it happened in summer or autumn, when one would have had nothing to do but put out their hand to gather something nice; but now nothing can be got for love or money.'

'I am sure,' said Madeline, with a look of distress, 'I don't know what is to be done.'

'Well, Mam'selle, there's no use in fretting any more about the matter; I'll dress a good dish of eggs, and what with them and the new cheese, and some of your sweetmeats, we'll be able to furnish the table pretty tolerably.'

'We must bestir ourselves, my good Jaqueline, for the rooms are yet to be settled; my father is to have a mattress brought down to the study for himself; and you must make up a bed here for yourself, as I shall be obliged to take your's in consequence of giving my own to the Countess.'

'Holy Virgin! what a hurly burly's here,' exclaimed Jaqueline; 'Lord what ill luck we had that they should fix on our cottage in preference to any other in the valley.'

'Hush, hush,' said Madeline; 'consider how ill-natured it is to regret giving shelter to those who were benighted and distressed.'

'Well, Mam'selle, if you'll lay the cloth, as I am so busy; I'll be after you in a moment with supper.'

'Very well,' replied Madeline as she took it up; 'and pray do not forget the strangers in the study.' She then proceeded to the parlour, where she found her father and the Countess sitting by the fire, apparently engaged in an interesting discourse, which her presence interrupted. Clermont rose to assist her in laying the cloth; and the Countess watched her every movement with looks that spoke the warmest admiration: never indeed had Madeline appeared more beautiful; surprise and agitation had heightened the faint glow of her cheek to a bright crimson, which increased the lustre of her eyes, and rendered it almost dazzling. With downcast looks and hesitating accents, she apologised to the Countess for the frugal fare she was compelled to set before her. Jaqueline soon made her appearance with it; and ere she retired, was again reminded of the servants in the study, for whom she received some of Madeline's nice sweetmeats, and Clermont's best wine.

Either from compliance to the delicate feelings of her entertainers, or from real inclination, the Countess seemed to enjoy her

supper; every thing indeed, though simple, was excellent in its kind. Her conversation now turned on general subjects, and Madeline was disappointed beyond expression, for she had flattered herself it would have recurred to former days, and of course explained to her what she had so long sighed to know, namely, the real origin of her father, and those misfortunes which had occasioned his present seclusion: and her disappointment rendered her unable, as she otherwise would have done, to enjoy the conversation of her new and noble guest; which, like her eye, still retained all the fire of youth, and indicated a spirit at once penetrating and benignant.

Clermont appeared unusually animated; and Madeline, amidst her wonder and disappointment, blest the chance which had produced an incident so pleasing to him. Soon after supper, the Countess complained of fatigue: Madeline immediately took the hint; and having seen that a chamber was ready for her, offered to conduct her to it; an offer which the Countess instantly accepted; but her attendance was not permitted; the Countess's women were summoned, and from their lady's room repaired to the one allotted for them.

Madeline returned to the parlour, hoping that her father would explain whatever appeared mysterious to her, but she was disappointed; for he instantly said that he must wish her good-night, as he was extremely fatigued. Madeline could not help believing this was a pretext to avoid entering into conversation, and with involuntary dejection she received his adieu, and retired to her little chamber. Here she sat a long time pondering over all that had passed, and wondering why such profound secrecy should be observed to her: wearied at last with conjectures, she repaired to bed, but her mind was too much disturbed to let her rest as quietly as usual. About the middle of the night she was startled by a noise from below stairs; trembling she sat up in the bed to listen more distinctly; and in the next moment heard a soft tap at the door of the room adjoining hers, in which the Countess slept; she immediately stole out of bed, and unlatching her door, opened just as much of it as would permit her to observe what was going on without being discovered. She had not stood here a minute, when the Countess's door was opened with as much caution as her own had been, and she saw her coming from it with a light; and then, to her inexpressible amazement, beheld her father standing in the passage, who, taking the hand of the Countess, led her softly down stairs. It was some time before Madeline could move, so much was she astonished; a number of uneasy sensations rushed upon her mind; but she was too innocent to harbour any ideas prejudicial to her father and his friend: she concluded they had chosen this time as the best for talking over affairs which they wished to conceal. What an opportunity, thought Madeline, is there now for

discovering those affairs:—she instantly flew to the chair on which her things were thrown, and snatching up a wrapper, threw it over her with breathless impatience, and hastened to the lobby;—but here she paused and reflected,

‘Good heavens!’ cried she, whilst she felt her cheeks suffused with the burning blushes of shame; ‘good heavens, what am I about doing!—going to steal meanly treacherously upon the privacy of my father and his friend!—a father, from whose uniform tenderness I might well suppose that nothing which had a tendency to promote my happiness would be concealed;—a father, who has so sedulously cautioned me against any action contrary to virtue; that any deviation in me is inexcusable.—Fie, fie, Madeline, what a wretch art thou! how unworthy of his goodness! how little benefitted by his precepts!’ She returned to her chamber, fastened the door, and sitting down upon the bed, burst into an agony of tears—‘I shall be ashamed to meet my father’s eyes in the morning,’ cried she, ‘I am sure my looks will betray my guilt: well I am resolved I will punish myself for it; henceforward I’ll never express the smallest curiosity to be acquainted with his affairs; and never more will I scold Jaqueline when I catch her with her ear to the key-hole listening to our discourse.’

She continued lamenting her conduct and imploring heaven to forgive it, till she heard the Countess, notwithstanding the lightness of her step, returning to her chamber. Roused by this, she then first perceived that day was dawning, and cold and exhausted crept into bed, where she lay till it was time for her to rise. As soon as drest, she went down to assist Jaqueline in preparing breakfast, and found her the only person yet up.

‘Why, Mam’selle,’ said she, the moment she saw Madeline, ‘I believe you slept but badly last night, for you look very pale.’

‘Do I,’ said Madeline, with a sigh.

‘Yes, indeed; and I fancy I don’t look vastly blooming myself, for my rest was not over good I can assure you; I thought I heard strange noises last night; do you know, Mam’selle, I don’t half like those strangers.’

‘We must give them their breakfast however,’ said Madeline; ‘so pray, Jaqueline, let us lose no more time in talking.’

‘Bless you,’ cried Jaqueline, ‘you’ll find I have lost no time in getting it ready; the coffee is ready for making, the things are laid, and I am just going to the dairy for the butter and cream.’

Madeline turned into the parlour, and walked to the window, but not now, as heretofore, to gaze upon the prospect with delight: her mind was sunk in the heaviest dejection; for, for the first time, it was conscious of error; and all that had before charmed, was now disregarded.

Oh, Innocence! first of blessings! how tasteless without thee would

all the pleasures of life appear to a heart of sensibility! as no state can be happy without thee, neither can any be truly wretched with thee; thy smiles can give fortitude to the weak; thy power can blunt the arrows of adversity: he who cherishes thee shall, in the hour of misery, be rewarded by thy consolations,—and blessed, thrice blessed are they who know them.

Madeline was not long in the parlour ere her father entered. After the usual salutations, he began a conversation which seemed contrived for the purpose of knowing whether Madeline felt any curiosity about the proceedings of the last night; he at length took her hand, and leading her to a chair, seated himself by her,

‘My dear Madeline,’ said he, ‘you were no doubt surprised at what you saw last night; and your silence respecting that surprise, pleases me more than I can express, as it at once convinces me of the command you have over yourself, and the respect you have for me.’

Praise so undeserved was more cutting to the heart of Madeline than the severest reproaches could have been; she burst into tears; declared her unworthiness, her contrition, and implored her father’s forgiveness.

‘An error,’ exclaimed Clermont, after the pause of a minute, and taking the hand which he had suddenly relinquished, ‘so ingenuously acknowledged, so sincerely repented, I cannot deny my pardon to: but, my dear Madeline, let the conviction of your weakness, render you more fervent than ever in imploring heaven to strengthen your virtuous resolutions: let it also influence you to make allowances for the frailty of others; ’tis inexcusable in any one to triumph over the indiscretions of another, which perhaps the want of similar temptations alone prevented their falling into; but doubly inexcusable in those who are conscious of having committed them.’

‘From the first pang of remorse, judge of the horrors which ever attend misconduct, and strive to avoid them by ever resisting inclinations that side not with your duties: to oppose our passions, is finally to conquer them; like cowards, they are tyrannical with the weak, but timid with the brave: and no victory can be so glorious as one obtained over them; ’tis applauded by our reason, sanctioned by our conscience, and applauded by him who records the smallest effort in the cause of virtue.’

‘Oh, my father,’ said Madeline, ‘henceforward I trust I shall convince you I have profited by your lessons.’

‘Be your error forgotten,’ resumed Clermont, ‘or only remembered as a caution against any future one. And now, my child, to return to last night; you were no doubt astonished at the feelings manifested by the Countess de Merville and me at our unexpected meeting; but strong as is our mutual regard, friendship is the only

tie between us: how that friendship commenced, or was interrupted, would not be more painful to you to hear, than to me to relate. You were right in supposing our stolen interview was for the purpose of talking over affairs which we wished to conceal; a wish dictated by regard to your tranquillity; as the Countess knew my past, so was she now acquainted with my present situation; and in consequence of being so generously noble, humanely offered to take you under her protection.'

Madeline started, and would have spoken, had not a motion from Clermont enjoined her to silence.

'You know not,' he continued, 'heaven only knows it, the load of anxiety her offer has removed from my heart; unnumbered have been the sleepless nights, the wretched days I have passed on your account; looking forward to the hour which should deprive you of my protection,' a tear dropped from Madeline on his hand; 'which should leave you forlorn in a world too prone to take advantage of innocence and poverty: the asylum of a cloister was the only one I had means of procuring you; but to that you ever manifested a repugnance, and I could not therefore influence you to it; the free-will offering of the heart is alone acceptable to heaven: besides, I do not thoroughly approve such institutions; I think they are somewhat contrary to nature; and I can never believe that beings immured for life, can feel gratitude so ardent, piety so exalted to the Almighty, as those who, in the wide range of the world, have daily opportunities of exploring his wonders, experiencing his goodness, and contemplating the profusion of his gifts. The Countess de Merville is just the guide to whose care I can consign my beloved girl with confidence and pleasure; her virtues are as fascinating as her manners; and though her ability to do good is great, her wish is still greater.

'With her you'll move in a sphere of life very different from your present one; and against the dangers so often attending sudden exaltation I would caution you, did I not know that she will at once cherish you with the tenderness of a parent, and watch you with the sedulity of a friend: all I shall therefore say is, that I trust you may ever continue the unaffected child of nature; ever remember that modesty is the best ornament of a female, and simplicity her chief attraction: the Countess departs after breakfast, and you then accompany her.'

Madeline again started; all the pleasure she might from a lively fancy have derived at the prospect of such a change of scene, was damped by the idea of leaving him;—'oh, my father!' she said, bursting into tears, 'how can I leave you!'

Equally affected as herself, and bitterly lamenting the cruel necessity which could alone have caused a separation, he clasped her to his bosom, and mingled tears with hers; in pity to his feel-

ings, he besought her to moderate hers; to consider the tranquillity he should enjoy from having her under such protection. He told her in a few months, if it pleased heaven, they would again meet, as the Countess then intended to return to Paris, and had promised in her way to it to make some stay at his cottage.

Madeline, comforted by those words, wiped away her tears, and said, she would try to compose herself. Clermont then took a small picture, plainly set, from his pocket; 'I know,' said he, 'your tenderness will be gratified by this present; accept therefore, my dear Madeline,' putting it into her hand, 'the copy of what your father was when his cheek was unfaded by age or care, his spirit unbroken by disappointment.'

Madeline had never before seen this picture, she received it with transport; though from its being done at a very early period, she could now scarcely trace any resemblance in it to her father.

The Countess now entered the parlour with a countenance open as day, and irradiated with the sunshine of good-humour:—'Well,' cried she to Clermont, 'have you told our young friend that I mean to run away with her?'

'Yes,' replied he, 'and she has no objection to the measure, but what proceeds from her reluctance at leaving me.'

'If she did not feel that reluctance,' said the Countess, 'she would be lessened in my esteem; but while I admire, it will be my study to remove it.'

'I am convinced it will,' said Clermont.

'And I, madam,' said Madeline, 'am truly sensible of your goodness; I feel it at my heart; and it will be the height of my ambition to merit it: oh, what joy should I derive from it, but for quitting my father!'—A tear, in spite of her efforts to restrain it, trickled down her cheek; but she hastily wiped it away, and seated herself at the table, to which Clermont handed Madame. The emotions of Madeline prevented her eating and she lingered over the breakfast things, long after her attendance was necessary, till the Countess, looking at her watch, begged she would pack up whatever she wanted to take along with her, as she expected the carriage every moment, and was anxious to begin her journey that it might be terminated at an early hour, the roads about the chateau being very loansome.

Madeline immediately rose and repaired to Jaqueline to obtain her assistance, and inform her she was going.—'Alack a day, it was an unlucky hour which brought those strangers to our cottage!' cried the good-natured Jaqueline; 'here they have come to disturb our happiness and comfort, and leave me and my poor master like two solitary hermits: we never more shall have any pleasant music! never more any midnight serenades, or dancing on the lawn—no, no! Claude and Josephe will never more come about the house with

their flutes when you have left it;—poor lads! often and often have I scoffed at them for doing so, and said they might as well pipe to the kids on the mountains as to you, who was a lady born, I was sure. And then, Mam'selle, if the Chevalier de Sevignie should ever re-visit the cottage, how sadly he'll be disappointed at finding you gone; for I'll never believe but what he was deeply in love with you; what else could have kept him in the valley so long after he was recovered, or make him come loitering about the cottage as I discovered him one morning?'

Jaqueline had now touched a chord which could not bear vibration. Madeline from being pale, turned red, and then pale again; and, hastening up stairs, desired Jaqueline to follow her directly. Jaqueline obeyed; and Madeline, too much agitated to do much for herself, gave her the things to pack up which she wanted to take with her; then leaning pensively against a window which commanded a view of the castle, 'I am going then,' said she to herself; 'going, I may say, into a new world, without really knowing the family to which I belong,—the mother from whom I sprung, or one circumstance about her: but why do I indulge this restless curiosity? oh, let me try to repress it, as well from the resolution of last night, as from the conviction, that could the knowledge I desire add to my happiness, it would not be kept from me:—never, therefore, may my rashness again attempt to raise the veil which prudence as well as tenderness, I must believe, has cast over past events.'

'Well, Mam'selle,' cried Jaqueline, 'your things are now packed, but heaven knows most unwillingly. Is there no way by which you could avoid going?'

'No,' replied Madeline, 'for my father wishes me to go, happy to have me under the protection of a lady who is as good as she is great.'

'She may be very good indeed,' said Jaqueline; 'but that's more than her attendants are, I fancy; I don't like them at all, they did so titter at me last night when I went to the study with their supper, though I am sure I paid my compliments to them very handsomely: Lord they think, because they have been in Paris, that no body but themselves knows any thing of good-breeding.'

Madeline now descended to the parlour; and in a few minutes after the coach appeared. She trembled and wept, and the fortitude of Clermont almost forsook him; he blessed, he embraced her with unutterable tenderness; he put her hand into the Countess's, and said he committed to her charge his only earthly happiness,—the only treasure he had preserved from the wreck of felicity,—his sole friend, almost his sole companion, for fifteen years.

The Countess, convinced that to delay would rather increase than diminish the emotions of both, hastened to the carriage,

led by Clermont, and followed by Madeline, her attendants, and the weeping Jaqueline.

'I shall certainly break my heart,' cried the latter as she walked by Madeline, 'and this great lady will have my death to answer for: Lord send she mayn't have any more sins upon her conscience; they say those Paris folks are sometimes very wicked.'

Madeline cast her pensive eyes alternately on her father, his cottage, and the lovely prospect surrounding it: 'oh, dear preceptor of my youth! oh, solitary scenes of early infancy!' she cried to herself, 'how gladly would I resign all the pleasure which, perhaps, awaits my entrance into another situation, to continue the companion of one,—the peaceful inmate of the other!'

More dejected than words can express, she entered the coach, whose swiftness soon made her lose sight of her father; but while one glimpse of his habitation could be seen, she did not turn her eyes from it; and when a winding of the valley hid it from her view, she again sighed, and implored the protection of heaven for its beloved owner.



admiration of the rich, the comfort of the poor, the pride and darling of his parents; this beloved son was murdered about seventeen years ago upon the Alps, and ever since that period the Count has never held up his head. To complete his misery, the Countess, on whom he doted, died in two days after she heard the fate of her son; and poor gentleman, from that time to the present, he has led a wretched and unsettled life, wandering about from one seat to another, (for he has many in France) as if he hoped change of scene could give him comfort;—alas! nothing in this world can do so. He has now been two years absent from Montmorenci Castle; we therefore expect him soon at it. While he is away, 'tis always locked up: and from his frequent absences, and the neglect shewn to every thing when in it, 'tis become, both within and without, quite an altered place. The only pleasure he has experienced since his son's death, has been in doing what he thought would show respect and honour to his memory: he has had a fine monument erected for him in the chapel of Montmorenci Castle; and on the left side of it, at a good distance, you may see, my lady,' approaching the window, and pointing out the spot to Madeline, 'rising above a thick clump of trees, the top of a monumental pillar, which he placed there to his memory.'

'Yes,' said Madeline, 'I see it; there appears to me an urn upon it.'

'You are right, my lady, there is an urn ornamented with a wreath of laurel, withered ere half blown. Some people say that the Count in his youth,' resumed the old man, 'committed actions which deserved the chastisement of heaven. For my part, I say nothing; when a man is in sorrow, his faults should be forgotten.'

'Not always, my friend,' said the Countess, who had hitherto sat silently listening to the conversation; 'I agree with you, a man should not be reproached for them when in trouble; but they should be remembered to prove the justice of Providence in sending that trouble, and that, sooner or later, he will punish the evil doer.'

'Very true, very true,' cried her host, bowing to the ground.

The Countess was now informed her carriage was ready, and she lost no time in re-entering it: it passed within a few yards of Montmorenci Castle; and through the bars of the massy iron gate which opened into its spacious court, Madeline beheld that court strewed with fragments of the building, o'er which the high grass waved in rank luxuriance. 'The pride, the glory of the family belonging to that castle,' said the Countess, bending forward to look at it, 'is gone for ever; dazzling was its splendour, but rapid its decline: greatness unsupported by goodness can never be durable.'

'You think then, madam,' cried Madeline, 'that the Count really merited his afflictions.'

‘Tis an unpleasant subject, my dear,’ said the Countess, ‘we will change it’; ’twas accordingly dropped.

About sun-set they reached the chateau, which the Countess de Merville possessed in right of her father; it was built at a very distant period, and its architecture was rude in the extreme; for the pride of its possessors would not permit the smallest polish or improvement, considering its rudeness an honourable date of their own antiquity. Time, however, had been less sparing, and marked it in many places with visible decay; some of the windows were dismantled from the failure of the stone work, and many of its battlements had mouldered away: it stood upon an elevated lawn, sequestered in the bosom of an extensive wood, whose mighty shades appeared co-eval with itself: on one side a narrow stream crept from a little shrubby hill with sluggish murmurs through the brushwood, expanding by degrees, till it formed a spacious lake, whose rising banks were covered with a profusion of fragrant and flowering shrubs; the myrtle, the laurestine, the flexile ozier, and the weeping willow here intermingled their beauties, and fantastically fringed its margin; while on its bosom lay a few small islands of variegated verdure, the haunts of lonely and aquatic fowl, whose melancholy cries heightened the natural solemnity of the evening hour. Behind the chateau lay its old fashioned gardens, full of fountains, labyrinths, bowers, and mutilated statues; and above them, bounding the horizon, were seen the towering Alps, those gigantic sons of creation, to whom compared, the proudest monuments of art are as insignificant as the ray of the glow-worm to the solar blaze. The gardens were terminated by a narrow valley, to which there was a descent by steps cut in the sod: it lay between stupendous mountains, whose summits, at a distance, appeared tinged with blue vapour, and proudly reaching to the clouds; and in it stood the remains of a religious house, built and endowed by an ancestor of the Countess, many years prior to the erection of the castle, and at which this period had been long uninhabited in consequence of its decay; it still however continued to be the Countess’s place of worship; hither, whenever she resided at the chateau, she was wont to retire at the close of day, and pass an hour in prayer and solemn meditation; and here a priest (belonging to the community that had once inhabited it, and for whom her father had procured another habitation) officiated at stated periods. The chapel was still in tolerable preservation; but all beside, except a flight of stairs that led to the dormitory above, was in irreparable decay. The numerous religious devices and heavy gothic windows of the chapel, were of themselves almost sufficient to have inspired a holy awe: reliques of saints and departed warriors covered great part of the walls; and banners presented by knights croisaders on their return from the Holy Land, as grateful offerings to heaven for its protecting care,

still hung from some of the pillars, waving, as if in sullen dignity, o'er the sculptured marble that covered their remains. For religious retirement, no place could have been better adapted than the valley; its towering mountains excluded every prospect that could have allured the heart to wish to stray beyond it; and the gloom of the hanging woods invited to meditation, which there was no sounds to interrupt, except the dashing of distant waterfalls, and the cawing of rooks: a thick mantle of grass covered the valley, and here the thistle shook its lonely head, and the moss that crept over the buttresses of the monastery whistled to the wind. This building communicated with the castle by means of a subterraneous passage, now never used on account of its vicinity to the burying vaults.

The vast magnitude and decaying grandeur of the chateau, impressed Madeline with surprise and melancholy; which were almost heightened to awe and veneration on entering a gloomy-vaulted hall of immense size, with small arched windows, and supported by stone arches, ornamented with rude sculpture, and hung with rusty coats of armour; while against the walls the ancient implements of war were placed in curious devices of suns, moons, and stars. At one end of the hall was the picture of the founder of the castle, and at the other the grand stair-case, whose sides were covered with historical pictures reaching to the ceiling.

The old domestics of the chateau were here assembled to welcome the return of their lady; and their delight at seeing her was a convincing proof, if such a one had been wanting, of her goodness. She addressed them all kindly and severally, nor betrayed the least impatience at their tedious enquiries. She then led Madeline into a large parlour, where she embraced and welcomed her to the chateau, which she desired her in future to consider as her home. Coffee was immediately brought in, and the house-keeper soon after followed; presuming on her superiority over the rest of the servants, she had come in to hear and relate all that had happened since her lady's departure; she was a little woman, almost double with age, and neat even to preciseness. The Countess, who esteemed her from her long residence in the family, and her fidelity, made her take a cup of coffee, and sit down.

'Well, madame,' said the little creature, while her eyes twinkled with pleasure at the kindness of her lady, 'has my young lady yet given an heir to Monsieur D'Alembert?'

'No,' replied the Countess.

'Dear heart! I am sorry for that; I had hoped by this time to have heard there was a grandson born to my beloved lady.' She then proceeded to mention her pleasure at the Countess's having procured such a companion as Madeline, one who would prevent her missing her daughter as much as she had formerly done.

The Countess sighed at these words; and a shade of melancholy for a few minutes obscured her countenance. The eyes of Madeline, meanwhile, were busily employed examining the apartment; many things within it excited her surprise and curiosity; and scarcely could she keep herself from asking a number of questions about what she saw. While the Countess and Agatha were talking over family matters, she retired to a window which commanded a beautiful prospect of the lake, now glittering with the beams of a setting sun: the scene recalled to her mind the manner in which she had been situated the preceding evening; and the sigh of involuntary regret mingled with the pleasures of recollection.

With her father she had then viewed the retiring glories of the sun from the little lawn before their cottage;—glories which he had likened to those that attend the departure of the virtuous—calm, awful, and lovely: together they had enjoyed the fresh breeze which played around; and heard the soft voices of the peasant girls chaunting the evening service to the Virgin, in which they joined, elevating their hearts like their eyes to that heaven whose goodness they experienced. Enraptured with the scene, they thought not of returning to the house; but continued to watch the moon gradually breaking through the fleecy clouds, mellowing the extensive landscape, and casting long tracts of radiance aslant the trembling waves; while the owl, from his ivy-mantled bower, hailed her with notes of sadness, and the young cottagers came forth to dance beneath her beams. ‘Oh, my father!’ cried Madeline to herself, ‘if I did not think such evenings would return, how wretched would be now the heart of your child!’

As she leaned pensively against the window, she was suddenly roused by lively music from the wood; and immediately after, saw a troop of rustics emerging from it, dressed in their holiday clothes, and adorned with large boquets of the gayest spring flowers. Those were the Countess’s tenants come to celebrate her arrival. She directly went forth to meet them, followed by Madeline, who derived unspeakable pleasure from such a sight. They all eagerly crowded round their beloved mistress, each anxious to be first noticed; some weeping for joy, and others blessing heaven for permitting them again to behold her face. Affected by those proofs of love and gratitude, the heart of the Countess swelled with sensibility, and a tear rolled down her cheek: oh, how delightful! how different her sensations from those experienced by the selfish beings who neither feel nor interest themselves about the welfare of others; but, like the haughty tyrant, seated

*amid the gaudy herd  
Of mute barbarians bending to his nod,*

close their eyes upon the distresses of mankind, because elevated above them; and say within themselves, let not

*the clam'rous voice of woe  
Intrude upon mine ear!*

After conversing some time with the peasants, the Countess returned to the parlour; from whence she and Madeline watched them resuming the dance, and partaking of refreshments laid out for them on large tables about the lawn. The gaiety of the scene somewhat amused, but could not entirely remove the dejection of Madeline's heart; her father, sad and solitary in his cottage, was present to her view: and she sighed almost unknowing to herself. The Countess perceived her dejection, and loved her the better for it, as she knew the amiable source from which it proceeded: she tried, however, to beguile it by her conversation; and related a number of pleasant anecdotes; described the different places she had seen; and gave a particular account of Paris, its customs, and diversions.

Subjects so new to Madeline could not fail to amuse and interest her; and she expressed her pleasure in the liveliest manner.

'Yet this charming place,' said the Countess, alluding to what Madeline had said on hearing Paris described, 'I should never visit but on my daughter's account. At my time of life, its gaieties begin to tire: besides, I love retirement, particularly the retirement of this chateau; I venerate its woods; they were planted by my forefathers; and if ever departed spirits are permitted to review this world, their spirits I think sometimes revisit them. Often, at the solemn hour of twilight, have I fancied their voices mingled in the gale which sighed among the trees: such fancies, perhaps, you'll say are weaknesses; the generality of mankind would consider them so; but they rather strengthen than enervate my mind: they are more soothing to it than language can express; they calm, they refine, they almost exalt it above mortality, and gradually prepare it for that hour which, in the course of nature, I may soon expect. But think not, my love,' continued she, on seeing a gloom again stealing over the countenance of Madeline, 'that you are come to live with a dismal recluse; no,—I love innocent and rational society, and shall continue to do so, while I have health or spirits to enjoy it.'

In this manner they continued to converse, till supper was announced in another room. Hitherto a stranger to any thing like luxury or splendour, Madeline was astonished on entering it at the elegance and grandeur exhibited to her view; for the Countess, though of the most domestic turn, still kept up that state her high rank and fortune entitled her to. She gazed alternately at the table, the attendants, and the massy plate which covered the side-board;

and began to fear she should make but an awkward figure in a situation so very different from her former one.

Fatigued by her journey, the Countess soon after supper proposed retiring to rest; a proposal extremely agreeable to Madeline, whose spirits still felt agitated. The Countess conducted her to her chamber, which was near her own, and at the end of a long gallery that overlooked the hall; here they parted; but a servant remained, who offered to assist Madeline in undressing; an offer which she, never accustomed to such attendance, refused; and, feeling a restraint in her presence, dismissed her: yet scarcely had she done so, ere she felt an uneasy sensation, something like fear, stealing over her mind as she looked round her spacious and gloomy apartment; nor could she prevent herself from starting as the tapestry, which represented a number of grotesque and frightful figures, agitated by the wind that whistled through the crevices, every now and then swelled from the walls. She sat down near the door, wishing herself again in her own little chamber, and attentively listening for a passing step that she might desire the servant she had dismissed to be recalled; but all was profoundly still, and continued so; and at length she recollected herself, blushed for the weakness she had betrayed; and, recommending herself to the protection of heaven, retired to bed, where she soon forgot her cares and fears. She awoke in the morning with renovated spirits; and, impatient to gratify her curiosity by examining the contents of the chamber, instantly rose: the furniture was rich but old-fashioned; and as she looked over the great presses and curious inlaid cabinets, she thought indeed she must have not only a great fortune, but great vanity if she could ever fill them. Thus employed, she forgot the progress of time, till one of the Countess's women appeared to know if she was ready for breakfast, as her lady waited. She immediately descended to the parlour, where she was received with the utmost kindness.

Breakfast over, she wrote a long letter to her father, and was then amused by looking over the chateau. In the course of a week she received an answer from her father; and the pleasure he expressed at her situation, joined to the unremitting attentions of the Countess, entirely restored her spirits. Every day raised her benevolent friend still higher in her estimation, and love and esteem were soon united to gratitude and respect.

The Countess determined not to receive any visitors, nor if possible let her arrival at the chateau be known, till she had recovered from the fatigue occasioned by the dissipations of Paris. But the total retirement in which she at present lived, neither tired nor depressed Madeline; with the Countess, it was, indeed, impossible to experience any dullness; she had received and profited by all the advantages of a liberal education; and her almost constant intercourse with the great world, contributed, as well as her knowledge

of books, to render her conversation entertaining and instructive. But not alone by her conversation did she try to enliven their solitude; she varied it by excursions about the domain and to the most romantic places in its neighbourhood.

She also diversified it, by seeing carried into execution a number of benevolent schemes for her poor tenants: she went amongst them herself to see if they had every thing requisite for comfort; and whether their children were taught to reverence the power that gave them being; she loved to watch their labours, and encourage industry by reward. Madeline, who always attended her in her rambles, beheld with the most exquisite delight the cheek of youth dimpling into smiles at her approach, and the eye of age glittering with tears; while she seemed to tread in air, and her cheek, warmed by the glow of benevolence, again displayed a colour that might have rivalled the brightest bloom of youth. Next to these, the most delightful of the hours passed by the Countess and Madeline, were those in which they rambled through the wild wood walks of the forest; at that time of day when all the

*air is hush'd, save where the weak-ey'd bat,  
With short shrill shrieks, flits by on leathern wing;  
Or where the beetle winds  
His small but sullen horn,  
As oft' he rises 'mid the twilight path,  
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum.*

A month glided on in this manner, when the Countess, having recovered from her fatigue determined to emerge a little from her solitude on account of her young friend.



now that we have discovered the treasure you possess, be assured, my good friend,' continued she, 'we shall not suffer you to monopolize it entirely to yourself.'

'Do not wrong me so much,' said the Countess, 'as to suppose I ever harboured so selfish an idea; no, be assured I would not do society so much injustice.'

'I am particularly pleased,' said Madame Chatteneuf, 'that you have come to-day, as my daughter gives a little ball this evening, which, to her and her whole party, I am sure will be doubly agreeable from having your company and Mam'selle Clermont's.'

'How unfortunate,' exclaimed the Countess, 'that we had no presentiment of this, for then we should have put on all our airs and graces.'

'Nature has already done that,' replied Madame Chatteneuf.

'Well, but seriously,' said the Countess, 'we shall not be able to appear in our morning dresses before company so brilliant as I know yours always to be.'

'Every one,' cried Madame Chatteneuf, 'will be dressed quite in a simple stile, I can assure you, for it is to be quite a rural affair; we are to dance in the garden, and have a collation in the banqueting-house; and should I now be deprived of the pleasure of your company and Mam'selle Clermont's, after the hope I entertained of enjoying it, I should derive little from the amusement.'

'Enough,' said the Countess, 'we will not mortify ourselves by refusing your invitation.'

The conversation then turned on general subjects, and Madeline became if possible more pleased with her new friends. After dinner they proceeded to the garden which was large and beautiful: on a spacious and level green, at the remote end of it, surrounded with trees, stood the banqueting-house, a light and elegant structure, elevated on white marble steps, and encompassed by a balustrading of the same: it opened entirely in front in form of a pavillion, supported by fluted pillars, which were entwined with fragrant shrubs that, creeping over the roof, fell through its lattice-work and formed a canopy of 'inwoven shade': orchestres were erected in the most sequestered parts of the garden, and the walks were ornamented with arches and festoons of coloured lamps. Madeline was struck with admiration at all she saw; and her friends anticipated the yet greater pleasure and surprise she would experience when the company assembled and the garden was lighted: nor were they mistaken; she could then have almost fancied herself suddenly conveyed to the regions of fairy-land; the brilliancy of the lights, heightened by the darkness of the grove through which the walks they ornamented were cut;—the softness of the music that seemed to steal from the very bosom of retirement;—the elegance and

animation of the company that were scattered about in groups,—altogether formed such a scene as Madeline had never before seen, or even conceived; a scene, crowned by a prospect of the majestic Alps, whose awful cliffs appeared in many places to overhang the garden, and tinted as they were with the purple rays of evening, united richness and solemnity to gaiety and splendour. The ladies, engaged in receiving their guests, could no longer pay her particular attention; and the Countess, who had a numerous acquaintance, was drawn from her into a chatting party with some of her old friends, but not till she had seen her in a general manner introduced to the company, with whom she then supposed she would intermix and amuse herself; but poor Madeline was too diffident to join any party unsolicited; and they were all too gay and thoughtless either to solicit her or deem it necessary to do so. Left to herself, she felt awkward at standing alone, and accordingly repaired to a bench placed round the trunk of an old tree near the spot destined for the dancers. Some ladies and gentlemen occupied the same seat, though at a little distance from her, and thus prevented any impropriety in her situation. Here she was sufficiently amused by attending to what was going forward; but when she saw the company preparing for the dance, an universal terror seized her least she should be asked to join them: fearful as she was that she should not be able to acquit herself like them from never having mixed in any but the simple dance of the peasant, she took care to place herself as much out of the way as possible: but while enjoying her obscurity, a party of officers suddenly emerged from a winding path near her seat, and in passing it, they could not avoid observing her; they stopped as if involuntarily, and their eyes were immediately fastened on her. Confused by their ardent gaze, she was bending hers to the ground, when a gentleman, who had hitherto stood rather behind them, suddenly starting forward, exclaimed,

‘Good heaven! do my eyes really deceive me, or do I behold Mademoiselle Clermont?’

The heart of Madeline vibrated to his voice, and looking up, she beheld de Sevignie. The pleasure, the agitation of that moment cannot be expressed;—a pleasure, an agitation which, even in a greater degree he seemed to experience.

‘For once,’ cried he, taking her hand and pressing it between his, ‘for once has chance been my friend!—oh, how often have I wished for such a moment as this!—but hopelessly I wished—despairingly I sighed for it.’

Madeline blushed and trembled; she was not more confused by his manner, than by the looks of the officers, whom she perceived smiling significantly at each other: her countenance betrayed her feelings, and made de Sevignie recollect himself; he resigned her

hand, endeavoured to repress his agitation, and turning to his companions, asked them if they would join the dancers?

'That is to say,' cried one of them with a significant glance, 'that you wish us to do so.'

'Yes,' replied de Sevignie, colouring, and half smiling as he interpreted the glance; 'and to follow your example, if Mademoiselle Clermont is inclined, and will honour me with her hand—'

Not more unwilling from diffidence, than unable from agitation, Madeline in a faint voice, said she could not dance, but begged she might not prevent him.

'A wish to promote my own felicity will prevent me,' said he in a low voice; 'for oh, how much more delightfully will my minutes be spent if you permit me to devote them to you.'

The officers now moved on; but their yet more expressive glances as they did so, so shocked Madeline, that, unable to bear the idea of being thought anxious for a *tête-à-tête* with de Sevignie, she rose abruptly and walked towards an avenue crowded with company; de Sevignie followed.—'Do you fly me then?' said he, 'after so long a separation, so unexpected a meeting, do you refuse me a few minutes conversation? ah, Madeline, you once permitted me to call myself your friend,—a permission which, I fear, you have now forgotten. You once promised to remember me;—a promise which, like too many in the world, was made I fear without thought, and forgotten without remorse!'

Those were reproaches poor Madeline did not merit; and the soft melancholy and confusion of her looks too plainly told him so; he caught her hand, and attempted to lead her back to the seat she had just quitted.

'I cannot go,' said Madeline, struggling to disengage her hand; 'your companions will think it so strange if they see us there.'

'They are too much engrossed by their amusement either to observe or think about us: and of this be assured,' cried de Sevignie, 'you cannot be more tenacious about every thing which concerns your delicacy than I am, and ever shall be.'

Madeline no longer opposed him; even if inclined to do so, her emotions were almost too violent to have permitted her; and he led her back to the bench, which they found deserted by the company they had left upon it. De Sevignie now enquired particularly for Clermont, for whom he expressed the warmest esteem and gratitude; and then to what fortunate circumstance he owed his present happiness.

Madeline briefly informed him a friend of her father's had taken her under her protection; and in turn enquired whether he resided at V—?

'No,' he replied, 'chance merely brought him to it, and hospitality and kindness detained him in it. By accident,' said he, 'I got

acquainted with the officers quartered here soon after my arrival, and they introduced me to the inhabitants, whose politeness and attention have from day to day induced me to put off my departure.—And for once,' glancing at Madeline, 'I have reason to be happy at following the bent of inclination. Though I never dared to think,' said he, 'of again intruding on the hospitality of Monsieur Clermont, yet a thousand times on the airy wings of fancy I have been transported to his cottage, to the side of his Madeline, listening in imagination to the soft pathos of that voice, which had power to thrill through every fibre of my heart: oh, happy and delightful days when I was not indebted to illusion for the sound! never has the remembrance of them been absent from my thoughts; compared to them, how insipid appear those I now pass. Tell me,' he continued, gazing on her with the most impassioned tenderness, 'did your father, or did you ever condescend to bestow one thought upon me after we parted?'

'Yes, sometimes,' said Madeline hesitatingly and blushing, 'my father has talked of the unlucky accident you met with, and expressed his hopes of your having quite recovered it.'

'A more unlucky accident indeed,' said de Sevignie, laying his hand expressively upon his heart, 'than he was aware of.'

'I am sorry for it,' cried Madeline, who, though she understood his meaning, wished to appear ignorant of it.

'His simples, for once, were unsuccessful,' resumed de Sevignie; 'yet, notwithstanding their failure, through his means only I could expect the wound completely cured.'

Madeline could no longer disguise her confusion; and averting her eyes to avoid his, to her infinite surprise and embarrassment, beheld the Countess de Merville at a little distance attentively observing her: covered with blushes, she snatched away her hand from de Sevignie, and starting from her seat, hastened to the Countess.

'I have been seeking you every where, Madeline,' said her friend in a grave accent, 'and was disappointed at not finding you amongst the dancers.'

'I should be particularly honoured,' exclaimed de Sevignie, who had followed Madeline, and conjectured this to be her protectress, bowing as he spoke, 'if Mademoiselle Clermont would permit me to lead her to them.'

Madeline bowed, but refused; she thought to dance with him now would be to acknowledge a wish of receiving his attentions; and delicacy made her shrink from any conduct which could excite such an idea.

'We will go into a more frequented walk then,' said the Countess.

There was something in her manner which made Madeline believe she was not quite pleased with her; and she bitterly regretted

having staid with de Sevignie against her better judgment. He seemed in some degree to share her distress and confusion; and attempted not again to address the Countess, who had merely noticed him by a slight inclination of her head.

'I presume,' cried she to Madeline, when they had got some yards from him, 'you are well acquainted with that young gentleman.'

'Yes, madam,' replied Madeline.

'And pray by what means?' asked her friend.

Madeline, as well as her confusion would permit, related the accident which had introduced him to the notice of her and her father.

'Is he agreeable?' enquired the Countess.

'Yes—very—that is, I mean rather so,' answered Madeline, blushing, and bending her eyes to the ground.

They now reached a large party, amongst whom was Mademoiselle Chatteneuf. She rallied Madeline for having so long hidden herself;—'you certainly did so,' said she, 'to teaze and mortify those who wished to engage you to dance: were you not a total stranger, I should suspect that you and some sighing swain had been courting the rural shades together.'

The Countess smiled significantly at Madeline, who, oppressed by consciousness, turned away her head.

Mademoiselle Chatteneuf now introduced a gentleman who wished to engage her for the ensuing dance. Madeline hesitated how to answer, not merely to avoid dancing, but on de Sevignie's account, to whom she considered herself engaged, though she feared saying so before the Countess. De Sevignie, however, had followed her down the walk, and now stood near her; he therefore, on perceiving her situation, stepped forward, and asserted his prior right to her hand. 'Is this the case, Mam'selle?' asked the other. She replied in the affirmative: and expressing his regret at his late application, he retired.

The dancing soon commenced again; and Madeline, notwithstanding her diffidence, had too much real taste not to acquit herself with elegance; the harmonious symmetry of her form, the charms of her face, heightened by the glow of modesty, and the grace and animation of every movement, excited universal admiration; and all who had not before seen, were anxious to learn who she was. When the cotillion was over, the Countess contrived to have her seated by herself, and thus precluded all further conversation of an interesting nature between her and de Sevignie: he still remained, however, near his lovely partner, and by his eyes expressed his feelings: but even the little pleasure derived from a restrained conversation, and those glances, he was soon deprived of; for as the Countess rose to repair to the banqueting-house, a

party of her friends surrounded her and Madeline, and rendered all his efforts to rejoin the latter unsuccessful. The gentleman who had been prevented by him from dancing with Madeline, now led her in triumph to the supper-table, and seated her between the Countess and himself. Had the mind of Madeline been less occupied by its own immediate concerns than it now was, she would have been delighted with the scene exhibited to her view; the beautiful foliage that crept through the roof of the building was intermixed with lights which glittered like so many stars amongst it; and its drooping boughs were carelessly intermingled with festoons of coloured lamps that hung between the pillars, through which a grand perspective of illuminated arches were seen terminated in a dark grove, from whence the softest music stole, and seemed to keep time to the murmurs of a fountain which played directly before the banqueting-house.

Madeline perceived she was attentively watched by the Countess, and endeavoured to appear amused; but the scene had no charms for her. She could not prevent herself from stealing a glance at de Sevignie, who sat opposite to her; she caught his eyes at the moment, and hers were instantly withdrawn, yet not without observing a pensive expression in his face, which seemed to say his gaiety, like hers, was only assumed.

She felt pleased, as if about being relieved from a disagreeable restraint, when the company broke up; as she was quitting the banqueting-house with the Countess, de Sevignie contrived to approach and enquire, in a low voice, whether she returned to the chateau that night. She replied in the negative, having just been informed by the Countess it was her intention to continue in town till the next morning. He then begged to know whether she would permit him to wait upon her the ensuing day at Madame Chatteneuf's. The emotion those words gave Madeline, almost took from her the power of granting him the permission he requested. The moment he had obtained it, he bade her adieu.

The ladies were too much fatigued to continue long together after their return to the house. Madeline was delighted when she found herself alone; in the privacy of her chamber she could uninterrupted indulge the pleasing ideas which had taken possession of her mind; ideas which her second meeting with de Sevignie had given rise to: never before had his language been so expressive of love, consequently her hopes relative to him had never before been so sanguine; every word, every look, now declared her ascendancy over him, and prospects of felicity opened to her view which she had scarcely ever before permitted her thoughts to dwell on;—prospects which, if realized, would elevate her to the summit of her wishes; and that they would, she now began not to doubt: the words, the looks of de Sevignie, above all the interview he had re-

quested, flattered her hopes, and her expectations. 'Ah, how little did I think,' cried she, 'when I left the chateau of the happiness that awaited me! how little think that, ere my return to it, I might be—' She paused, she blushed, —yet felt that if indeed she was, ere her return to it, the affianced wife of de Sevignie, she would be one of the happiest of her sex.



'I thank you for your obliging offer,' replied the Countess; 'but I can neither let you relinquish an amusement you have sufficient health and spirits to enjoy, nor give up my determination of returning to the chateau this day: and I am too well convinced of Madeline's regard, to think she will feel any other regret in accompanying me, than that which proceeds from quitting you.'

'Certainly, madam,' said Madeline, recollecting herself at these words, and endeavouring to dissipate all appearance of chagrin, 'I should be ungrateful if I did.'

'Do not suppose, my love,' cried the Countess, 'from bringing you home to-day, that it is my intention to make you refuse every invitation which I do not choose to accept myself; no, such conduct would be unreasonable in the highest degree; on the contrary, I shall be happy sometimes to let you mix in the diversions of this town, with your amiable friends here, who have already requested to let you now and then pass a few days with them for that purpose.'

Madeline bowed, and thanked her friends for their obliging wishes to promote her happiness.

It was now settled, that in three days Madame Chatteneuf and her daughter should call for Madeline. They had just arranged this matter, when a footman entered with a letter, which he presented to Madeline; saying, 'Mam'selle, the Chevalier de Sevignie's servant waits for an answer.'

Madeline started up in universal trepidation: she forgot, in the agitation of the moment, the inference that might be drawn from her manner: she forgot, in short, that there was any being to observe her. She believed that she held a letter containing a full explanation of de Sevignie's sentiments; and that belief drove every idea not connected with it from her mind. She turned to a window, and, eagerly breaking the seal, read as follows:—

M. de Sevignie presents his most respectful compliments to Mademoiselle Clermont; he is extremely concerned he cannot have the honour of waiting on her this morning: but, though prevented by very particular business from making personal enquiries after her health, he still flatters himself he shall hear that she is well, and perfectly recovered from any fatigue that might have attended the amusements of last night.

Such a letter from de Sevignie, so cold, so formal, instead of the one she expected to receive from him, gave a shock to Madeline that almost annihilated every pleasing hope, every pleasing expectation. She sighed,—she leaned pensively against the window;—'I was mistaken then,' said she to herself, 'in imagining de Sevignie had any thing important to say to me when he requested an

interview; he only meant to have paid me what it seems is a customary compliment.'

'The servant waits, my dear,' said the Countess at length, rousing her from her reverie.

Madeline started, and felt ready to sink with confusion, as she thought, for the first time, of the remarks she had probably excited.

'If that letter requires an answer,' cried the Countess, 'you had better give one directly.'

Madeline again glanced at it; she thought, or rather wished to think, that the last lines expressed something like anxiety about her; and, judging of de Sevignie by herself, supposing, like her, he would be delighted to receive even a line from a beloved hand, she determined to answer the letter, and went to a table, on which was an open writing desk, for that purpose.

'What are you going to do, Madeline?' asked the Countess.

'I am going to write, madam,' answered Madeline.

'Does your letter require a written answer?' again asked the Countess, in an accent of surprise, 'young ladies should be very careful how they write to gentlemen.'

Madeline dropped the pen she had taken up. She began to think that to write to de Sevignie, without consulting the Countess, or shewing her his letter, was not only a breach of respect to her, but of duty to her father, who had put her under the care of his friend, with a firm conviction, that she would never follow her own judgment without having it first sanctioned by hers. She took up the letter, and, going to the Countess, put it into her hand. 'Will you have the goodness, Madame,' said she, 'to tell me what answer I shall send?'

'It does not require a moment's consideration to determine that,' cried the Countess; 'bless me, child, could you ever imagine this letter required more than a verbal answer? tell Monsieur de Sevignie's man,' continued she turning to the servant, 'that Mam'selle Clermont is well, and thanks his master for his polite enquiries after her health.'

Madeline sat down in a state of the most painful confusion, from which she was soon, in some degree, relieved by the entrance of the officers: they were immediately introduced to her and the Countess; and then requested the honour of their company for the evening. The Countess politely thanked them for their attention, but declined their invitation; and their mortification at her doing so, was evident. The conversation, however, soon grew lively, and was supported by all but Madeline with the utmost spirit.

'Pray,' asked Mademoiselle Chatteneuf, during the pause of a minute, addressing one of the officers, 'what is become of de Sevignie to-day? I think he is generally your companion in your morning visits and rambles.'

'I met him,' replied the officer, 'not many minutes ago, and told him where I was coming; but I could not prevail on him to give up a solitary walk he was going to take to the mountains.'

'Oh, shocking!' cried Olivia, 'to prefer solitude to our society; I really shall not readily forgive his want of gallantry.'

A pang of wounded pride and mortified tenderness now touched the heart of Madeline. She felt equally surprised and hurt to hear, that he had in reality no business to prevent his coming to see her; and that he had even refused an invitation to do so.—How ill did such conduct agree with the delight he had evinced the preceding evening at their unexpected meeting, with the anxiety he had expressed to see her again. The hopes, the expectations which that delight, that anxiety, had given rise to, and which his letter had damped, not suppressed, now entirely vanished like the fleeting pleasures of a dream; and she began to fear he had either feigned or forgotten the sentiments he expressed for her.

She saw she was observed by the Countess and Olivia with an earnestness that seemed to say they wished to develop her feelings; and she immediately forced herself into conversation; but never before was one so painful to her; her thoughts were perpetually wandering from the subject; and she rejoiced when the officers rose to depart.

The Countess then ordered her coach; and she and Madeline were just going to it, when M. Chalons (the gentleman who had wished to dance with Madeline the preceding evening) appeared: finding the ladies on the point of departing, he regretted the lateness of his visit, and paid his compliments in a manner so pleasing to the Countess, that she invited him to accompany her friends whenever they paid their promised visit at the chateau; an invitation which he accepted with rapture, and a glance to Madeline, as if he wished her to think the exquisite pleasure he derived from it, was owing to the idea of seeing her again.

His glance, however, was lost upon Madeline, so much was her mind engrossed by its own concerns; and the moment the carriage drove off, she forgot such a being existed.

The Countess's motives for hurrying Madeline back to the chateau, is perhaps already understood. She thought, indeed, she should ill fulfill the sacred trust reposed in her by Clermont, if she did not particularly enquire about the commencement, and try to discover the strength of the attachment it was so obvious his daughter entertained for de Sevignie, that she might be timely guarded against indulging it, till assured (if that was not already the case) that she never would have reason to repent it: and as she could not (at least without interruption) make those enquiries, or give those cautions she wished at Madame Chatteneuf's, she brought her away for the purpose of doing so.

'Well, Madeline,' said the Countess, first breaking silence after they had proceeded a few yards, 'you were agreeably amused last night.'

'Yes, madam,' replied Madeline.

'And agreeably surprised,' cried the Countess.

Madeline blushed, faltered, and at length answered in the affirmative.

'Will you oblige me,' said the Countess, 'by giving me now a more particular account of your first acquaintance with Monsieur de Sevignie than you did this morning?'

Madeline wished to gratify her friend; and she thought she could do so without betraying the feelings of her heart; but this was a mistaken idea. As she described her first introduction to de Sevignie, and the scenes she had passed with him, she involuntarily revealed her sentiments: but while she discovered the tenderness of her heart, she so fully proved its simplicity and integrity, that she was rather raised than lessened in the esteem of the Countess.

When she had concluded,—'Your narrative, my dear,' said her friend, 'convincing me more than ever of the innocence and sensibility of your disposition; and woe be to the man who should ever seek to beguile one, or pain the other!—That a being exists who could be capable of hurting either, perhaps you doubt; but, alas, I am sorry to say, too many are to be found who would little scruple doing so! 'Tis unpleasant to hold up objects of a disagreeable nature to the view of youth; yet 'tis necessary to do so, in order to instruct it whom to shun. They who have made a perilous voyage, would be inexcusable if they did not caution those they saw about undertaking the same, of the dangers which lay in their way, that, by being timely apprised, they might endeavour to shun or at least acquire skill to overcome them.

'I, my dear Madeline, have made this perilous voyage, and against its dangers I wish to warn you: to none is the young, the lovely, the inexperienced female so particularly exposed as to those which proceed from a sex, ordained by heaven for her protectors, but of whom too many seem to forget, or rather disregard their original destination. Yes, my love, there are beings who make it their study, sometimes their boast, to ensnare the unsuspecting, and entail shame and sorrow upon her who would never perhaps have known either, but for a too fatal confidence in their honour. Others there are of a nature scarcely less hateful to virtue or injurious to society, who from a mere impulse of vanity, seek to gain the affections, which are no sooner won than disregarded; while they triumph aloud over the credulity and weakness that afforded them such a conquest.

'That you have never met, never may meet, with such characters

I believe and trust: but liable as we all are to be mistaken, too much caution cannot be observed in receiving attentions which have a chance of touching the heart. In short, my discourse has only been (as I make no doubt you already guess) to lead to the subject of the Chevalier de Sevignie; his eyes declare love and admiration, and his language I dare say accords with their glances: but oh, my dear Madeline, fortify yourself against such seductive eloquence, except convinced his intentions are serious; if they are, believe me they will be speedily divulged; if not, if his situation prevents their being so, he will quickly cease to be particular, except destitute of honour and sensibility; for the man who possesses these, though he may, from the impetuosity of passion, be unhappily led into expressions of admiration, will never persevere in a line of conduct that may inspire tenderness which cannot properly be returned.'

'Your precepts, your advice, my dear madam,' said Madeline, 'I will treasure up as I would the means of felicity: oh, how gratefully do I feel your kind solicitude about me.'

By this time they had reached the chateau, and its gloom and stillness formed a melancholy contrast to the gaiety and splendour of the preceding evening, and increased the dejection of Madeline's spirits; a dejection partly owing to her conversation with the Countess. She was shocked to hear of the depravity of mankind; and shuddered least she should find de Sevignie one of the worthless characters the Countess had described to her. 'Yet, no,' she cried to herself, trying to dispel the horror such an idea gave rise to, 'tis impossible; vice could never lurk beneath an appearance of such integrity and candour.'

She was unable to converse as usual with the Countess; and her friend was too delicate to notice her dejection, any otherwise than by an increased attention; an attention which at last had the desired effect. Madeline no sooner perceived the efforts made to amuse her, than she felt ashamed of the weakness which had rendered such efforts necessary, and rallied her spirits; she tried to cheer, to tranquillize them, by reflecting that, in a few days, in all probability she would again behold de Sevignie; and that, as she had been taught a criterion whereby to judge of him, her suspense relative to him must soon be terminated. So soothing was this idea, that almost as soon as conceived, it dissipated her melancholy; and she was again able to converse and enjoy the conversation of the Countess. She wrote to her father an account of her meeting with de Sevignie; but she could not bring herself to tell him the agitation that meeting occasioned. The Countess also informed him of it, and the observations she had made; but charged him not to give way to uneasy sensations in consequence of them; assuring him that she would watch over Madeline as she would have done over her own

daughter if she had been in a similar situation: and also that, from Madeline's disposition, she was convinced she could easily be made to give up the object of her affections, if once assured by prudence and experience greater than her own (because more tried), that he was unworthy of them.



who, on reaching home, proposed a walk upon the ramparts of the town, the fashionable promenade of the place. Thither they all accordingly repaired, except Madame Chatteneuf, who felt somewhat fatigued. The sun was already set, and all was soft, serene and lovely: beneath the ramparts lay a delicious plain, scattered over with clumps of thick and spreading trees, a few neat cottages, and groups of cattle now reposing in sweet tranquillity. The river, that flowed in beautiful meanders through the plain, had already assumed the sable hue of evening, and thus heightened the brilliancy of the stars it reflected. The majestic Alps bounded the prospect, their feet hid in gloomy shadows, and their summits just beginning to be touched by the beams of a rising moon, which, as it ascended higher in the horizon, partly dissipated those shadows, and revealed in some degree, the romantic recesses they had concealed.

The company were just beginning to leave the ramparts; but the fineness of the night prevented Olivia and her companions from following their example, and they were soon the only party on them. As they proceeded, admiring the sublime and beautiful prospect they beheld, which touched their hearts with a kind of pensive pleasure, they nearly overtook a gentleman who walked before them, with downcast looks and folded arms, as if in deep and melancholy meditation: his air, his figure, had a strong resemblance to de Sevignie's; and Madeline was almost convinced it was him; but she feared saying so, lest she should betray the agitation the idea had excited. Olivia, however, free from all such emotion, instantly declared it was him; and, quickening her pace, found she was not mistaken. He started at the sound of her voice, and betrayed the greatest confusion while attempting, vainly attempting, to return her raillery: he caught a glimpse of Madeline, who had hitherto stood rather behind her friend: again he started; and, leaving unfinished what he was saying to Olivia, he took the trembling hand of Madeline with one equally tremulous, exclaiming, 'This is indeed an unexpected pleasure.' The soft beam which stole from her eye at that moment, convinced M. Chalons, who watched her with the most critical attention, that the fate of her heart was already decided; and he rejoiced at having made the discovery ere his own affections were more entangled, resolving from that period to pay her no other attentions than what common politeness demanded, that the world might have no reason to rank him in the list of unfortunate lovers.

De Sevignie appeared no longer dejected; his eyes sparkled with their wonted fire; and he was able to answer the raillery of Mademoiselle Chatteneuf with his accustomed spirit. He accepted her invitation to supper; and never had minutes been so delightful to Madeline as those she passed at it. In his looks, as well as words, there was a tenderness, whenever he addressed her, which con-

vinced her of his sincerity. 'The tongue,' said she to herself, 'might be taught the language of deceit, but the eyes could never be instructed in it; they have ever been famed for telling truth.'

The next morning after breakfast, she and Olivia walked out for the purpose of seeing some of the town, and purchasing some things which she wanted to wear at a large party to which she was to be taken in the evening, and which the Countess had amply given her the means of procuring. They had not proceeded far ere they met de Sevignie.

'Well you are a good creature,' said Olivia, 'for I presume you are coming to pay your devoirs at our house, as I meet you in the high road to it.' He made no reply; and she continued, 'you shall not however be disappointed of the pleasure of our company; we are going to take a ramble, and will permit you to be our escort.'

'Your permission honours me,' said he; 'but I am unfortunately prevented by very particular business from availing myself of it.'

'Go, go; you are a shocking creature I declare,' cried Olivia; 'this business is the same with that which prevented your waiting on Mademoiselle Clermont the other morning according to your promise.' His letter had been shewn, and the reason of it explained to Olivia and her mother.

De Sevignie coloured highly, and looked confused. 'You speak sometimes from supposition I fancy,' said he to Olivia.

'Not now I can assure,' replied she; 'I know very well that what you have just said to me, is a mere pretext as well as what you wrote to Mam'selle Clermont the other morning.'

'Well, allowing that you are right,' cried he, 'what can you infer from my trying to avoid her company and yours? but that I am sensible of the danger I run in being with either; and that, unlike your military heroes, I rather fly from it than brave it.'

'You should always have that apprehension of danger about you then,' said Olivia, 'and not ask a lady's permission to wait upon her, and then send a frivolous excuse.'

'We are not always collected,' cried he, 'and the reflection of the morning often destroys the resolution of the night.' He then bowed and walked away.

The solemn accent in which he had delivered the last words shocked Madeline as much as the alteration in his looks and manner had already done; he was pale and languid; and his eyes, instead of anxiously seeking, assiduously avoided her; while a cool salutation was the only notice he took of her.

'De Sevignie is really one of the most altered beings within those few days I ever knew,' said Olivia, as they pursued their way; 'his conduct is really quite incomprehensible: was he an unfortunate lover; one might be able to account for it; but of that,' continued she, looking archly at Madeline, 'there is little danger.'

The pale cheeks of Madeline were instantly crimsoned over; and the distress and confusion she betrayed, precluded all farther raillery from Olivia.

In pity to her companion, who she saw scarcely able to stand, she hastened their return home; and, hoping solitude would enable her to recruit her spirits, under the pretext of dressing, proposed retiring to their respective chambers; a proposal which, as she imagined, was eagerly embraced.

The moment Madeline was alone, the tears, which pride had suppressed in the presence of Olivia, burst forth: but while she wept the alteration in the conduct of de Sevignie, her heart secretly applauded it as a convincing proof of his honour and sensibility. 'Either his reason or his situation does not sanction his attachment to me,' said she, 'and he thus delicately, thus feelingly tries to suppress mine by remitting his attentions.

'Never does he now address me with tenderness, but when we accidentally meet, as if thrown off his guard at those moments by surprise: for whenever a meeting might be expected, he shuns it with anxiety; and if it does take place, treats me with the coldest indifference. Oh, let me,' she continued, 'aid his efforts; let me endeavour to expel from my heart an attachment which, it is evident, can only end in unhappiness. Nor is it my own peace alone I shall consider by doing so; no, the peace of my father, dearer to me than life, is also concerned. I promised to my benevolent friend to resist the indulgence of feelings which had a tendency to embitter my tranquillity, and I will not wilfully violate that promise;—no, ye dear and revered preceptors of my youth! ye who, like benignant spirits, have watched over your Madeline, she will not make so ill a return to your care as to yield herself unresistingly a victim to sorrow—if she cannot attain, she will at least try to be deserving of the felicity you wish her!' She sighed heavily as she spoke; certain that that felicity never now could be hers; and that her efforts to conquer her attachment would be vain; when, at the very moment she wished to make them, the object of it was raised higher than ever in her estimation.

She thought not of dressing till Mademoiselle Chatteneuf tapped at her door to know if she was ready: she opened it with much confusion; and, apologizing for her tardiness, hurried on her clothes, and was soon able to attend her to dinner.

The entertainment to which they went in the evening, was pretty much in the style of that given by Madame Chatteneuf: all the officers and most of the fashionable people in town were assembled; but de Sevignie was not to be seen; his absence did not surprise, but it pained Madeline; she was sure ere she went, that he would not be present, from a fear of meeting her; and she sighed to think a sad necessity existed for his wishing to avoid her. She would

not have danced, but from a fear of appearing particular if she refused. Her partner was a stranger; for though M. Chalons was present, he did not, in conformity to his resolution, attempt to engage her; he fought, indeed, to avoid as much as possible the fascination of her looks, which had already made too deep, and, he feared, too lasting an impression on his heart.

The next morning she went with her friends in their coach to pay visits, and take a survey of the town; and the charms of their conversation, joined to the novelty of every thing she saw, insensibly beguiled her sadness. A select party assembled at dinner; de Sevignie was invited, but sent an excuse; the first, Olivia said, they had ever received from him, though they had frequently asked him, as he was not only a favourite of hers, but of her mother.



the summer months. Winter,' she continued, 'winter, my dear young lady, is my season of happiness, for then I have all my family assembled about me, and we enjoy together the earnings of industry.'

Olivia now led Madeline into the house, the interior neatness of which perfectly corresponded with that of its exterior; and from thence into the garden, a wild and romantic spot, which, with a small vineyard, stretched midway up a steep ascent, broken into a variety of grotesque hollows.

*Moss-lin'd, and over head,  
By flowering umbrage shaded, where the bee  
Stray'd diligent, and with th' extracted balm  
Of fragrant woodbine fill'd his little thigh.*

Oh how noble, how sublime did the prospect appear which Madeline now viewed! she felt struck with astonishment and veneration as she cast her eyes towards the summits of the congregated mountains piled before her; and her heart was more exalted than ever towards the author of such glorious, such stupendous works,

*The Parent of good, Almighty*

Her fancy pictured the exquisite pleasure which would be derived from exploring their sequestered solitudes; or, on the wings of the morning, penetrating to their innermost recesses. With mingled curiosity and enthusiasm, her mind soothed and delighted, she wandered about, till followed by the nurse, entreating her to sit down and partake with Mam'selle Olivia of the fruit and cream she had brought out for them.

She complied with the entreaties of the good woman, and seated herself by her friend in one of the little hollows already mentioned, which was impregnated with the most delicious fragrance from the herbs that grew about it.

The dun shades of twilight were now beginning to steal o'er the prospect, and touched it with a sombre colouring, which rendered its beauty more interesting, and its solemnity more awful: the gloom, however, was still a little cheered by a yellow track of radiance which the sun, as it revealed its sinking orb between two parted cliffs above, cast along the projection of the hills; but by degrees this radiance faded away, and then the damp and dreary shadows, that had been gathering below, began to ascend; and, as if warned of their approach, the distant tinkling of sheep bells was immediately heard from the heights, intermingled with the rustic melody of shepherds' pipes. Delighted with those pastoral sounds, the enthusiasm of Madeline's soul revived; and with the eye of fancy she beheld the grand, the wonderful, the luxuriant spots

from whence they descended. She saw the simple herdsman penning his flock for the night; while his dog, the faithful partner of his toil, as if endued with more than common instinct, watched beside, that none should straggle from the fold. She heard with the ear of fancy the neighbouring shepherds enquiring how each had fared throughout the day; and beheld some hastening to their romantically situated cottages; while others laid them down beneath the shelter of embowering pines; the last beams of the sun glimmering o'er all, as if loth to quit such scenes of innocence and beauty. It was now indeed a time particularly adapted for such fancies as she indulged; a time when all

*The fragrant hours, and Elves  
Who slept in flowers the day,  
And many a nymph who wreaths her brows with sedge,  
And sheds the fresh'ning dew; and lovelier still,  
The pensive pleasures sweet,  
Prepare the shadowy car of eve.*

A tender melancholy began to steal over the mind of Madeline; nor was Olivia's entirely free from it: 'twas a melancholy in unison with the scene, and which taste and sensibility are so apt to feel and to indulge; as the landscape, that charmed by day, gradually fades upon the sight, and, to the moralizing mind, presents an emblem of the transitory pleasures of life. Silence had returned many minutes ere Olivia or Madeline thought of stirring; they were at length rising for the purpose of departing, when they were again rivetted to their seat by the soft breathings of an oboe, which seemed to come from some cliff above them at no great distance. The air was simple, tender, and pathetic; and played in a stile which evinced exquisite taste and feeling in the performer.

'How soft, how sweet, how melodious,' cried Mademoiselle Chateneuf, during the pause of a minute, for till then she and Madeline had been wrapt in attention too profound to permit them either to speak or move, 'what pathos, what masterly execution: but hark! the echoes revive the strains which we imagined had utterly died away; they seem celestial strains, and almost tempt one to believe the tales of the poets, and ascribe them to the genii of these mountains.'

'Lord a mercy, my dear young lady,' said the nurse, who only caught the last sentence, 'what a conceit! from a *genius* indeed; no, they come from a poor young gentleman, who frequently rambles about the heights, playing such mournful ditties as often and often makes me and my girls weep; and we think, to be sure, he has been crossed in love, and that nothing else could make him so melancholy, and so fond of being alone, and sitting for hours together in the deepest solitude by himself; and a pity it is he should have met

with any thing to trouble him, he is so gentle and so handsome, and looks so good.'

'Do you know his name?' asked Olivia, whose curiosity was strongly excited.

'No, Mam'selle; but I know he comes from V—, for I asked him one day if he did not, and he said yes.'

'And pray how came you to have any conversation with him?' enquired Olivia.

'Why one day, Mam'selle, about a fortnight after I had first noticed him, as he was passing the cottage, he appeared very much fatigued; so I asked him, for I was sitting before the door at work, if he would be pleased to walk in and take some whey; he thanked me courteously, and accepted my invitation, and sat a good bit with me chatting, for all the world with as much affability as if he did not think himself a bit better than me; so, from that time, he seldom comes this way without giving me a call, and frequently takes whey and fruit in the cottage; for which, indeed, in spite of all I can say, he will always pay more than they are worth.'

'Is it possible to get a glimpse of him?' asked Olivia.

'Dear heart yes, if you stay a little longer; this is about the time he generally returns to town, and he almost always descends by the path near this recess.'

'I will stay a few minutes longer to try if I can see him,' said Olivia.

'Pray do not,' explained Madeline, laying her hand, which trembled violently, upon Olivia's arm; 'the darkness increases fast, and if we stay much longer, we shall be quite benighted.'

'No, no, there's no danger of that,' replied Olivia; 'but if you wish it I will return immediately: dismiss however, I beseech you, the terrors you have conjured up to alarm you; for if you tremble in this manner, you will scarcely be able to reach the chaise.'

It was not any apprehension of danger however which agitated the soul of Madeline, it was the agony of thinking that de Sevignie was the sad and solitary mourner to whose sweet and melancholy strains she had been listening; for in the air she heard she perfectly recollected one she had taught him during his visit at her father's house; and she wished to avoid his presence, least she should betray the emotions a knowledge of his dejection had inspired. Again she pressed Olivia to depart; who, in compliance with her wishes, was moving from the spot, when the nurse hastily exclaimed, 'Stop, Mam'selle, stop, he's coming now, for there's his dog. Ah, 'tis a good-natured soul,' cried she, patting the head of a large spaniel which suddenly sprung into the garden, and fawned about her; 'he is a faithful companion to his poor master, and attends him in all his rambles: there he sits for hours at a time, upon a point of rock beside him, looking up in his face while he plays upon the

oboe, like any christian, as if he knew his sorrows, and pitied them.'

'I think I know that dog,' said Olivia.

'Aye, like enough,' cried the nurse; 'and see there comes his master.'

Olivia raised her eyes; but the light was too imperfect to let her discern the features of the person descending: but in a few minutes, as he drew nearer, she started, and exclaimed—'Gracious heaven, de Sevignie!' Madeline withdrew her hand involuntarily from Olivia, and reseated herself.

'I thought, indeed,' said Olivia, 'it could be no other than de Sevignie, when I heard of an eccentric being always wandering about those solitudes. Pray,' continued she, while overpowered by confusion and surprise, he stood transfixed to the spot where he had first beheld her, 'have you yet chosen a cell for your retirement? for I suppose you will soon renounce the world and its vanities for ever. But seriously, de Sevignie, 'tis rather unfortunate that you and I should lately have only met at periods when (at least) one of us wished to avoid the other.'

His confusion, if possible increased; he knew she alluded to his conduct the last time they had met. 'If I ever harboured such a wish,' said he, 'it was because, as I have already told you, I apprehended danger in your company.'

As he spoke, his eyes glanced round as if in search of another object, and at last rested on the recess where Madeline sat, whose white robe rendered her conspicuous.

'Mam'selle Clermont,' said he, 'is it not—' advancing to her. She rose at his approach; and, withholding the hand he attempted to take, passed him to Olivia, and again entreated her to return home.

Her curiosity gratified, Olivia no longer hesitated to comply with this entreaty; and they directly left the garden, without taking any farther notice of de Sevignie. Olivia was too much offended, and Madeline too fearful of betraying her feelings, to bid him farewell. That fear, however, was soon lost in the superior one she felt at the idea of his going the solitary road that lay between the cottage and the town by himself; and she stood hesitatingly at the door of the chaise; wishing to declare her apprehensions, yet dreading to do so, least she should betray her feelings.

De Sevignie, in the mean time, heart-struck by the manner in which she had declined his notice, remained some minutes fixed on the spot where she had left him. 'Oh, Madeline!' he sighed, 'is it thus you heighten the pangs, the anguish you have caused me. Yet, alas,' he continued, 'why do I accuse her? unwillingly she caused that anguish; and how, without knowing, can she pity it: but am I assured her pity would follow that knowledge?—no; her averted looks give me no reason to suppose it would.' Slowly he

quitted the garden, and, passing through the cottage, to his infinite surprise, found she was not yet departed. Hurt, however, by her coldness, he merely bowed to her and Olivia; and was hastening away, when the latter, who saw through the motives of Madeline's delay, and determined to gratify her, though somewhat offended with de Sevignie, exclaimed, 'so you are decamping, without having the gallantry to offer your protection.'

'The assurance, you should say,' cried de Sevignie, returning, 'conscious as I am that I have (though heaven knows how unintentionally), offended you.'

'Well, I'll forgive you this once; so you may hand us into the chaise, and take a seat yourself.'

'But will your friend, Mam'selle Clermont, be equally generous,' asked he.

'Oh, I dare say she will follow a good example; what say you, my dear,' cried Olivia, turning to her?

'I cannot pardon, because I have not been offended,' said Madeline in much confusion, too clearly perceiving that Olivia suspected the state of her heart.

'Nor never may you be by me,' cried de Sevignie, with fervour, and taking her hand, 'for then I should be wretched indeed. Oh, Madeline!' he continued in a low voice, 'though I dread your smiles, I could not bear your frowns.'

He handed Olivia first into the chaise; and thus contrived to have Madeline next to himself; something he would have said to her after they were seated in a low voice; but she turned her head from him, and entered into conversation with Olivia. Her hand he took however in spite of her efforts to withstand it; nor resigned it till they stopped at Madame Chatteneuf's. After handing them into the house, he bade them adieu; but it was a most unwilling adieu; for he hesitated as he spoke, and lingered on the threshold instead of departing. He was at length turning from it, when Olivia suddenly invited him to supper; and it struck Madeline that she had only delayed doing so for the purpose of teasing him. He accepted the invitation; and they all repaired to the banqueting-house, where Madame Chatteneuf and her friends were still engaged at cards, and enjoying the fragrance and refreshing coolness of the evening air.

Olivia gave an account of their excursion; and made de Sevignie colour highly by hinting at the manner in which they had met him, and at what she had heard from the nurse concerning him.

The light gave Madeline an opportunity of observing the strong expression of grief his countenance betrayed: he seemed even more altered than when she had before seen him. Pale and languid, the fire of his eyes was fled, and the discomposure of his hair, which the mountain breeze had blown carelessly about his face, heightened its sad expression. He appeared no longer desirous to shun her; on the

contrary, he betrayed the strongest anxiety to be near her: but, notwithstanding her pity, her affection for him, pride determined her to avoid attentions which she imputed to the mere impulse of unguarded tenderness: for she could not bear to be one day the object of his particular notice, and the next of his pointed neglect. She accordingly placed herself at the card-table, in such a manner as to prevent his sitting by her; and, with a look of unutterable disappointment, he turned away, and entered into conversation with Olivia, if that could be called conversation, which consisted, on one side, of laconic answers, and, on the other, of questions relative to the motives which made him so fond of solitary rambles.

Unable to bear the dejection of his looks, Madeline fixed her eyes upon the card-table, as if intently watching the game, though in reality she knew not what was played. But she could not, by this measure, save her heart from one pang; for, though her eye was averted from the melancholy of his countenance, her ear was still open to the soft melancholy of his voice; and scarcely could she conceal the emotions it gave her. The entrance of a servant with a letter to her, that instant come from the Countess de Merville, somewhat relieved her from this painful situation. She started up; and, retiring to a little distance from the table, read as follows:—

TO MADEMOISELLE CLERMONT

Will my dear Madeline return to-morrow to solitude and her friend? She may accuse me of selfishness for so soon recalling her; and perhaps with justice, considering the pleasure and benefit attending her return will be so materially on my side: but, as it is a failing so prevalent among mankind, I trust, from its being so general, it may be excused. I cannot, as I intended, call for her; but shall hope and expect to receive from the hands of Madame Chatteneuf, and her amiable daughter, the precious charge I entrusted to her care. The natural eloquence of my Madeline will, I trust, prevent any disappointment; who, in believing me her sincere friend, will only do justice to

ELVIRA DE MERVILLE

Madeline guessed the purpose of this letter ere she opened it, consequently it gave her no surprise. She placed her friend's anxiety for her return to the account of de Sevignie, whom she knew she wished her to avoid; a wish she felt it necessary to comply with, if she desired the return of tranquillity.

She handed the letter to Madame Chatteneuf; who, fearful it contained some unpleasant tidings, had laid aside her cards the moment it was brought in. Her regret and Olivia's at losing her so soon, was expressed in the most flattering terms; and they promised to attend her to the chateau the next morning. A heavy sigh from de Sevignie at this moment reached her ear. She involuntarily

raised her eyes, but again bent them to the ground, on perceiving his fastened on her with the most melancholy earnestness.

The Countess's servant she was told waited for an answer; and she now hastened to the house to give one. In the hall she met him, and had the satisfaction of hearing that his lady was well. Her answer finished, she would have preferred retiring to her chamber to returning to the company, so oppressed was her heart, but that she knew her doing so would excite enquiries, and perhaps unpleasant remarks.

Slowly she pursued her way back to the banqueting-house, and had reached the centre of the long and darkly shaded walk which led to it; when a sudden rustling among the trees on one side, made her pause, from a sensation of fear, and an uncertainty whether by advancing or retreating she should put herself more in the way of danger, if indeed, any threatened her; the pain of suspense was however terminated in a minute by the appearance of de Sevignie. She started; and his thus seeming to watch for her, gave her emotions which agitated her whole frame; she tried however to check them, and was again proceeding when he stopped her—

'Will you not bid me farewell then,' said he in a reproachful voice, 'ere we part?'

'Part!' repeated Madeline, 'don't you sup with Madame Chatteneuf?'

'No; I feel myself extremely ill, and have just apologized to her. You return then to-morrow,' he continued, 'to the chateau; and you know not perhaps when you may revisit this town?'

'No,' said Madeline, 'I do not.'

'To me indeed, it is of little consequence to know,' cried he, 'for I propose to leave it soon myself; would to heaven I had done so some days ago. Yet how can I tear myself from a place where I know there is a chance of beholding you:—oh, Madeline, to do so requires a resolution I am scarcely master of.'

'I dare say,' exclaimed Madeline, endeavouring to rally her spirits, and disengage the hand which he had taken between his, 'you'll not find any great difficulty in acquiring such a resolution.'

'You doubt my sincerity then,' still detaining her; 'oh! would to heaven I could, I durst convince you of it: yet, alas, why do I utter such a wish, when I know not whether that conviction would be of any consequence to you; know not, do I say?—your altered manner too plainly assures me that it would not.'

'Pray let me go,' cried Madeline, inexpressibly agitated; 'I am impatient to return to Madame Chatteneuf, for I know she will wonder at my long absence.'

'Go then, madam,' said de Sevignie, instantly dropping her hand;—'go, madam to the happy beings you regard, and excuse my having detained you so long from them: I see you are displeased at my

having done so; I see my society is hateful to you. There was a period when—' he paused, then again proceeded—'when I imagined Madeline Clermont would rather have sought to mitigate than fly from the sorrows of a friend; would have enjoyed an exquisite pleasure in fulfilling the claim, the sacred claim, which misery has upon compassion.'

'Oh, de Sevignie,' thought Madeline, 'how little do you know my heart when you thus reproach me. Your society hateful to me!—alas 'tis infinitely too precious for my peace.'

'I am sure,' said she, speaking with almost as much agitation as he had done, 'I am sure—I wish—I should be happy was it in my power, to remove, to lessen any sorrow you may feel.'

'You wish—you should be happy'—he repeated in a softened voice, as if touched by her gentleness.—'Yes, Madeline,' again taking her hand, 'I am convinced of the sincerity of that wish; and nothing, no, nothing but a degree of madness could have tempted me to reproach you as I have just done;—could have tempted me to ask your pity for feelings which I wished, from principles of honour, gratitude, generosity, to conceal from you. Oh, Madeline, I cannot ask your pardon, for I cannot myself pardon my conduct to you.'

'Unasked would I give it,' cried Madeline, 'had I been offended, but that be assured is not the case.'

At this instant a distant step was heard; both started; and Madeline instantly attempted to disengage herself.

'Do not leave me yet,' cried de Sevignie, 'it may be long ere we meet again; long do I say? alas, we may never, never meet again!—Spare a few minutes longer to me; let us turn into this walk,' pointing to the one he had just emerged from, 'and we shall not be observed; though I said but an instant ago, I would not solicit your pity, yet my heart now tells me, that an assurance of it can only mitigate its wretchedness.'

'Receive that assurance then,' said Madeline, making another effort as she gave it to withdraw her hand; for, though she wished, she feared to comply with his request. Her reason opposed her inclination for doing so, by representing the folly, the impropriety of any longer listening to the dictates of a passion which she had cause to believe a hopeless one. 'But excuse me,' she continued, 'from staying any longer with you; the step which alarmed us approaches, and I should be sorry we were seen together.'

'Farewell! then,' he exclaimed, 'most lovely and most beloved; I regret, but cannot murmur at your refusal: may the happiness you deserve be yours, and be not only pure as your virtues, but lasting as your life: may every change in that life, be to raise you to still higher felicity: and when you make that great that important change which will fix its destiny;—when you give the precious

hand I now hold to some happy, some highly-favoured mortal, some peculiar favourite of heaven,—oh, may you then meet with a heart as tenderly, as firmly devoted to you as de Sevignie's.' These last words were spoken almost in a whisper; and Madeline felt by his hands the tremour of his frame. 'Farewell!' he cried, after the pause of a minute; 'if I have pained, if I have disturbed you, let the idea of my never more intruding into your presence banish all resentment for my having done so.'

He rested his cold cheek for a moment upon her hand; then suddenly letting it drop, he instantly darted amongst the trees and disappeared.

An icy chillness crept through the frame of Madeline, at the idea of seeing de Sevignie no more. She listened with fixed attention to the sound of his steps, till they could no longer be distinguished; then, starting, she wrung her hands together, and exclaimed—'He is gone, and we shall never, never meet again!'

Every hope relative to him now become extinct; hopes which, notwithstanding the alteration in his manner, had lingered in her heart till this moment; hopes which had cheered her in the long period that separated them, by making her look forward to a second meeting, in which he should disclose sentiments he had before only revealed by his eyes. That meeting had taken place,—those sentiments had been disclosed; but, instead of promoting her happiness as she expected, had, for the present at least, destroyed it; and she wept that crisis to which but a few days before she had looked forward with the most flattering expectations.

Yet not for herself alone she wept, her tears fell also for the wretchedness of de Sevignie; and she regretted having refused to stay a little longer with him, falsely imagining their parting, if less abrupt, would have been less painful. 'He prayed for my felicity,' she cried; 'but, oh, de Sevignie, except assured of yours, how unavailing must that prayer ever be!'

The voice of Mademoiselle Chatteneuf calling on her, now roused her from her melancholy musing. She instantly conjectured it was her step which had driven off de Sevignie; and, wiping away her tears, advanced, though but slowly, to meet her.

'Why you must have written a volume instead of a letter, if you have been all this time employed in writing,' said Olivia the moment she saw her; 'but the truth I suppose is, that de Sevignie intruded disagreeably upon you, and delayed you.'

'No, he did not I assure you,' said Madeline.

'You have seen him however, since you quitted the banqueting-house.'

'Yes; I met him as I was returning to it.'

'And you stopped no doubt,' cried Olivia, 'to wish him good-night.'

'Well, supposing I had, would there have been any thing extraordinary in such a common act of civility?'

'No to be sure, nor in his detaining you almost an hour to thank you for it: though he pretended to us the moment you were gone, that he was taken so ill he could scarcely speak or stop another moment. Pray, Madeline, did he tell you the nature of his malady?'

'I never enquired,' answered Madeline, blushing.

'But he might have told you without asking; and I shrewdly suspect he did. Pray did he ask you to prescribe for him?'

'Prescribe for him!' said Madeline, pretending not to understand her meaning, 'do you suppose he took me for an old nurse?'

'No indeed,' replied Olivia, 'I suppose no such thing; but I am not so certain that he would be wrong in taking you for a young nurse.'

'I have not spirits to answer you,' cried Madeline; 'so be generous, and do not take advantage of my inability.'

'And pray to whose account may I place your dejection,' asked Olivia.

'To whose you please; I may as well have the pleasure of giving you a latitude which, whether I please or not, you will take.'

'Well, I won't tease you any more,' said Olivia; 'but let us quicken our pace, for supper waits.'

They accordingly hastened to the banqueting-house, and the whole party then sat down to supper.

'I am sorry,' cried Madame Chatteneuf, 'that de Sevignie could not stay with us to-night. Poor fellow, he looked extremely ill; but indeed I think he has done so for some days past.'

'Yes, and so do I,' said Olivia. 'I trust, however, his malady is not of an incurable nature'; and she glanced archly at Madeline.

'Heaven forbid it was,' cried her mother, who took her in a serious light; 'I know few people whom, on so short an acquaintance, I should so much regret as de Sevignie; there is an elegance, a sweetness in his manner, which declare a soul of benevolence and refinement; he does not by slow degrees conciliate esteem, but, on the first interview, excites a pre-possession in his favour; which, upon a greater knowledge, you have the pleasure of finding no reason to regret; so that though an interesting, he is not a dangerous, acquaintance.'

'Let us ask Mademoiselle Clermont's opinion as to that,' cried Olivia. 'Why do you blush, my dear; you know you have been acquainted with the Chevalier a much longer period than my mother has, and of course can better determine whether he is or is not a dangerous creature.'

'No one I am sure,' said Madeline, endeavouring to suppress her confusion, 'can ever doubt the justness of Madame Chatteneuf's discernment.'

'Ah, Madeline,' cried Olivia in a low voice, 'I see you can sometimes be guarded.'

'Would to heaven I had been so in matters more material than the present,' thought Madeline.

When she found herself again alone in her chamber, she again regretted not having stayed a little longer with de Sevignie. 'It was a last request,' said she, 'and I might on that account have complied with it; he might then have opened his whole soul to me: he might then have revealed the whole circumstances which oppose his wishes:—yet, alas! of what use could it be to know them, since separated it could give little consolation to know by what means.'

But, notwithstanding those words, Madeline wished to know them; it was with a wish however which, she was convinced, would never be gratified; for, though she was sure de Sevignie had no reason to blush in avowing them, she was equally sure he never would do so.

Madame Chatteneuf's coach was ordered the next morning at an early hour, as she wished to spend a long day with her friend; but an unexpected circumstance retarded her journey to the chateau till a late hour. Just as she was setting out, a letter arrived from Verona, from a sister of her deceased mother's, who had married an Italian nobleman, and had long been settled in Italy, informing her, that her lord was no more; and that, finding herself oppressed in spirits, and declining in health, she ardently longed for the society of her niece, feeling herself rather forlorn, now that she had lost her husband, in a place where she had no connections of her own about her. Moreover, that as he had left every thing in her power, and she intended making a will in favour of her niece, it was absolutely necessary she should be with her at the time of her death.

Affection for her aunt, whom she tenderly esteemed, and consideration for her daughter's interest, to whose fortune the possessions of her aunt would make a very splendid addition, determined Madame Chatteneuf to accept this invitation without delay; and she immediately ordered preparations to be made for her journey the ensuing day; and, in overlooking those preparations, and arranging domestic concerns, was detained at her house till within a short time of the Countess de Merville's usual dinner hour.

Amidst all the bustle that was going forward, Madeline sat motionless, and in the deepest dejection. She regretted the intended departure of her friends, not only as a means of depriving her of the exquisite pleasure she enjoyed in their company, but as a means of destroying her hopes of again beholding de Sevignie; for, notwithstanding what he had said, she was convinced he would continue a little longer at V—; and she had flattered herself that the

Countess would again have permitted her to visit Madame Chatteneuf, and thus have afforded her once more an opportunity of seeing him; an opportunity she could not help sighing for, though now assured their attachment was hopeless.

In their way to the chateau, Olivia made her promise to correspond with her; a promise which Madeline gave with pleasure, yet with diffidence from a fear that she might not prove as entertaining a correspondent as her friend expected.

On entering the chateau, a presage of ill struck her heart at not beholding the Countess, who generally came forward to the hall with a smiling countenance, like the genius of hospitality, to welcome her friends.

'Where is your lady?' asked Madeline, turning to one of the servants.

'Above, Mam'selle, in her dressing-room; she has been rather indisposed to-day.'

Madeline heard no more. Heedless, or rather forgetful at that moment of all ceremony, she instantly flew up stairs, leaving Madame Chatteneuf busy in ordering her servants to have the coach ready at an early hour, and found her friend sitting, or rather reclining, in a great chair, with an appearance of illness and dejection, which equally surprised and alarmed Madeline.

'Oh, madam!' said she inexpressibly affected, and taking her hand, which she pressed to her lips and her bosom, 'why, why did you not send for me before?'

'Because I did not wish to break in upon your happiness,' replied the Countess returning the pressure of her hand, while her heavy eyes brightened with a sudden ray of pleasure, and a smile broke through the gloom of her countenance.

'Alas, madam,' cried Madeline mournfully, 'you could not have broken in upon my happiness, for I experienced none; at least none,' said she, suddenly recollecting herself, 'which I could have put in competition with that of attending you.'

'I am truly sensible of your affection, my love,' cried the Countess, 'and am grateful for it.'

'You must have been indisposed longer than to-day I am sure, madam,' said Madeline?

The Countess acknowledged she was right in thinking so.

'And why, madam,' said Madeline, 'did you permit your servant to deceive me last night by saying you were well?'

'I did not wish to give you pain while it was possible to avoid doing so,' answered the Countess.

'Ah, madam,' said Madeline, with an involuntary sigh, 'pain is doubly great when not expected.'

Madam Chatteneuf and her daughter now entered, and both, by their words and looks, expressed their regret for the illness of the

Countess. The former tenderly reproached her for not having immediately acquainted them of it.

'Why you may know,' said she, 'by the short stay which Madeline has made with you, that I have not long concealed it from you. I was only taken ill the evening after she left me; and, had I grown better, I should yet a little longer, in compliance with your wishes, have debarred myself the pleasure of her company. But do not distress me,' she continued, raising herself in her chair, and looking round with her wonted benignancy, 'by this melancholy; I am already better; your presence, my friends, like a rich and precious cordial, has revived me.'

The exertion she made cheered her friends; and the conversation soon took a more cheerful turn. Madame Chatteneuf apologized for not coming at an earlier hour, by assigning the reason of her delay; and the Countess sincerely congratulated her on an event which had given her such pleasure.

'From the prospects of my friends,' cried she, 'I must now derive my chief satisfaction.'

'If they are as bright as your own,' said Madame Chatteneuf, 'they must be pleasing ones indeed.'

The Countess sighed deeply, but spoke not.

Olivia saw dejection again stealing round, and rallied her spirits to drive it away. No very difficult task indeed for her, as she was delighted with the idea of her journey to Italy. She talked of the conquests she expected to make; declared nothing less than a Marquis would satisfy her: and said the moment she was settled in her palace, she should invite the Countess and Madeline to it.—'And we will then try,' she continued, 'whether our fair friend will follow my example, and give her little French heart in exchange for an Italian one.'

'Seriously,' cried Madame Chatteneuf, addressing the Countess, 'if we stay any long time at Verona, I shall flatter myself with a hope of having the pleasure of your company and Mademoiselle Clermont's.'

'Do not indulge such a hope,' said the Countess; 'for, be assured, my good friend, it would end in disappointment. There is but one journey which I can now look forward to.'

The solemnity of her voice and manner, gave them no room to doubt the nature of the journey she alluded to.

'My dear friend,' cried Madame Chatteneuf, 'you will really infect me with your gloom, and I shall begin my long and fatiguing journey with quite a heavy heart. At your time of life you may well look forward to many years. And, as I know of none whose continuance in life is more anxiously desired, so neither do I know of any who should more fervently desire that continuance themselves than you should, possessed as you are of every blessing which can

render it happy—affluence—universal esteem—the consciousness of deserving it—and an amiable daughter who adores you, and is settled as happily as your fond heart can wish her to be.’

‘I am truly sensible of the blessings I possess,’ cried the Countess, ‘and truly grateful for them, impute my melancholy not to discontent, but to illness.’

Dinner was now served in the dressing-room; and, soon after its removal, Madame Chatteneuf rose to depart, having many important matters yet to arrange at home. She assured the Countess, but for the material reasons she had for hastening to Verona, she would have put off her journey thither till she saw her perfectly recovered. This was a measure the Countess declared she never would have consented to, and one by no means necessary to prove the strength of her friendship.

Madeline attended her friends down stairs, and in the hall received their adieu. She wept as they gave it; for their pleasing manners and kind attentions had inspired her with the truest regard.

‘Farewell! Madeline,’ said Olivia, tenderly embracing her; ‘remember your promise of constantly writing; and may heaven grant us all a happy meeting to make amends for this melancholy parting.’

‘Amen!’ said Madeline in a faint voice as she followed her to the coach, where Madame Chatteneuf was already seated, and which now drove off without any farther delay.

Perhaps no sound strikes the heart with greater melancholy than the sound of the carriage which conveys from us the friends we tenderly love, in whose society we have been happy, and whom we know not when we shall behold again. At least Madeline thought so; and her tears were augmented as she stood listening at the hall door to the heavy rumbling of Madame Chatteneuf’s coach wheels. ‘Heaven grant we may have a happy meeting,’ cried she, repeating the words of Olivia: ‘and yet, was I to give way to the present feelings of my heart, I should little expect such a meeting; but I will not,’ continued she, turning from the door to rejoin the Countess, ‘I will not deserve evil by anticipating it.’



'that some secret sorrow preys upon your heart; a sorrow which, perhaps if I knew, I might be able, if not to remove, at least to lessen.'

'Oh, no, madam,' exclaimed Madeline with involuntary quickness, terrified at the idea of revealing her hopeless passion.

'Then heaven forbid,' cried the Countess, 'I should seek to probe a wound I could not heal.'

'Forgive me, madam,' said Madeline, 'I spoke unthinkingly. I know of none more qualified to heal the sorrows of the heart than you are; but—but my feelings,' continued she, hesitating and blushing, 'require more the exertions of my own reason, than the sympathy of a friend; and—and be assured, madam I, to the utmost of my power, will use those exertions.'

'I trust so, my love,' said the Countess, who guessed the sorrow of Madeline proceeded from the disappointment of her hopes relative to de Sevignie.

'I trust so, my love; not only on your own account, but your father's, who, from your happiness, hopes to receive some consolation for the numerous, the dreadful, the unprecedented calamities of his youth.'

'Ah, Heavens,' cried Madeline, starting, and forgetting, in the horror and agitation of the moment, the resolution she had once formed of never attempting to discover the nature of those calamities, 'you shock my very soul by your words. Oh, why, why is there such a silence observed as to his former life!—a silence which makes me tremble lest some heavy misfortunes, in consequence of the events of it, should still be hanging over him.'

'Madeline,' said the Countess in a solemn voice, 'in my concern for your father, I spoke unguardedly; and I already repent having done so from the situation I see you in: but, as some atonement for doing so, I will take this opportunity of cautioning you against all imprudent curiosity; let no incentive from it ever tempt you to seek an explanation of former occurrences; be assured your happiness depends entirely on your ignorance of them: was the dark volume of your father's fate ever opened to your view, peace would for ever forsake your breast; for its characters are marked by horror, and stained with blood.'

Madeline grasped the Countess's arm in convulsive agitation;—'I swear,' said she, raising her other hand, and looking up to heaven, 'from this moment, never, by any means, direct or indirect, to try and discover ought that my father wishes to conceal.'

'I rejoice to hear this resolution,' cried the Countess, kissing her cheek; 'I rejoice at it on your own account. And now, my love, let us change this discourse. You have promised,' she continued, 'to try and recover your spirits; and I shall attentively watch to see whether you fulfil that promise. Oh, Madeline, grief in the early

season of youth, is like frost to a tender flower, unkind and blighting; and no tongue can describe, no heart, except a parental one, conceive the bitter, the excruciating anguish which a parent feels at seeing a beloved child wasting the bloom of youth in wretchedness,—pining, drooping, sinking beneath its pressure.—From such wretchedness may heaven preserve your father! Oh, never, never may the distresses of his child precipitate him to his grave!

Madeline almost started, she looked earnestly at the Countess; and fancied that the energy with which her words had been delivered, declared a self-experience of the sorrow which she mentioned. The idea however was but transitory; and as she dismissed, she wondered she had ever conceived it. 'No,' she said to herself, 'the Countess has felt no sorrow but what the common casualties of life have occasioned.'

Both were silent for some minutes; Madeline at length spoke:—'It grows late, my dear madam, and I fear your staying longer in the night air may hurt you.'

The Countess instantly rose, thanked her for her kind solicitude about her; and, leaning on her arm, returned to the house; they supped together in her dressing-room, and parted soon after for the night.

Madeline retired to her chamber deeply affected by the incidents of the day,—incidents which had increased the dejection she felt in consequence of those she had experienced at V— to a most painful degree. Instead of undressing, she sat down to indulge her melancholy thoughts, but was soon interrupted by a tap at the door; on desiring it to be opened, Floretta, one of the Countess's women, entered.

Whenever attendance was necessary, it was she that waited upon Madeline, who liked her much for her liveliness and good-nature; she had been in the Countess's suite at the time she stopped at Clermont's, and was daughter to an old and favourite deceased waiting-woman, whose place since her death she had filled.

'I was longing, Mademoiselle,' said she with a smile and a courtesy, 'for an opportunity of welcoming you back to the castle. I hope you had a pleasant time at V—; but indeed I dare say you had, for Madame Chatteneuf sees a power of company they say; and she is in the right of it—company is the life of one; besides, it gives her daughter a chance of being married soon; I warrant she has a number of admirers; and I make no doubt but you, Mam'selle, came in for your share.'

'You are mistaken indeed Floretta,' said Madeline smiling.

'Not entirely, Mam'selle: Lord, didn't Jacques and Philippe tell me the first evening you went to Madame Chatteneuf's, there was no one there half so much admired as you were; and how you danced with the handsomest gentleman present who looked so

tender on you, Monsieur—lord, I forget his name, but I dare say you recollect, Mam'selle.'

Too well, thought Madeline. She sighed, but made no reply; and, rising, began to undress in order to conceal the agitation which the mention of de Sevignie had excited in her mind.

'You are come back to a dismal house, Mam'selle,' said Floretta, echoing her sigh, which she imputed to regret for past pleasures, 'to a dismal house indeed,' shaking her head, 'now that my poor lady is ill.'

'Its gloom on that account will soon be dissipated I trust,' cried Madeline, 'but the perfect restoration of her health.'

'Alas! I fear not,' said Floretta with a greater seriousness than Madeline had ever before remarked in her countenance, 'her mind is too much disturbed to permit me to think it will.'

'Disturbed!' repeated Madeline in an accent of the greatest surprise, and turning to her, 'why what has happened to disturb her mind?'

'Lord, don't you know?' asked Floretta with a kind of eager stare.

'No, I can't even conjecture,' said Madeline.

'Well, I could never have supposed my lady would have been so secret with you,' cried Floretta, after the pause of a minute; 'though after all it does not surprise me, for I know it shocks her to have any one suspect his wickedness.'

'Whose wickedness?' asked Madeline eagerly, 'you astonish me beyond expression by your words.'

'Aye, and I could astonish you much more, Mam'selle,' said Floretta, 'if I was to tell you all I know; for, from my mother's being a favourite with the Countess, and from my being always in her service, I know more of her affairs than perhaps any other person except Agatha does; often and often she has made me promise to keep them all profoundly secret; and to be sure so I have, and would always, except,' continued Floretta, whose passion for telling secrets was equal to her passion for hearing them, 'except with a little hesitation, to such a friend as you are to her.'

Highly as the curiosity of Madeline was raised, she instantly recoiled from the idea of learning the Countess's private affairs through the channel of a servant.

'No, Floretta,' said she, 'except from the Countess, I can never hearken to such secrets as you would impart; had she wished me to know them, she would have communicated them herself. Had I been surprised into listening to them, I should have blushed to-morrow when I beheld her face, from the consciousness of having acted meanly and basely towards her; and so would you I am confident, at the idea of having violated your promise, and betrayed

what should be ever sacred to you, the confidence of your Protectress and friend.

'But I am sure,' she continued, seeing the cheeks of Floretta covered with blushes, while she trembled so she could not stand, 'you spoke without thought, or perhaps from an idea that the disclosure of the secrets you hinted at would have gratified me; but be assured, Floretta, that would not have been the case, for I early learned, my good girl, that pleasure could never be attained by acting contrary to truth and virtue; and I hope you either do or will in future believe the justness of that saying as firmly as I do.'

'Yes, that I shall to be sure, Mam'selle,' cried Floretta, somewhat recovered from her confusion, and again raising her head. 'As you have said, Mam'selle, nothing indeed but an idea that I should have gratified you by revealing my lady's secrets could ever have tempted me to mention them.'

Madeline did not appear to doubt her, but said she would no longer detain her. Floretta therefore curtesied, and retired with great humility.

Left to herself, Madeline reflected on all she had heard, and the more she reflected, the more she was astonished at it: to surmise how or by whom the Countess was distressed, was impossible.—'But to know the source of her grief could scarcely, I think, augment my regret for it,' cried Madeline; 'alas! what an aggravation of my sorrow is it to know that the two beings I love best in the world, are oppressed by griefs which, by concealing, I must suppose they deem too dreadful for me to be acquainted with it.'

She continued in melancholy meditation till the whole castle was wrapt in silence. She then retired to bed; but her rest was broken and disturbed by distressing dreams; and she longed for the return of morning to chase away the gloomy horrors of the night. She arose at an earlier hour than usual, before any of the family, except some of the inferior servants, were stirring, and walked out upon the lawn to try if the freshness of the air and exercise would revive her spirits. A solemn stillness reigned around, and the dewy landscape was yet but imperfectly revealed; but by degrees its grey veil was withdrawn, and the stillness interrupted by the twittering of birds and the carol of the early peasant. Madeline sighed at the contrast she drew between the cheerfulness of the scene and the sadness of her own mind.

'And oh, when,' she cried as she saw the gloomy vapours of night flying before the beams of a rising sun, 'oh, when shall the clouds that involve my prospects be dispersed!'

After walking about some time, she sat down beneath the shelter of the chesnut, where she and her friend had rested the preceding night; and as she looked at the opposite but distant mountains, she thought of Madame Chatteneuf and Olivia, who had fixed on this

morning to commence their journey; and her regret at their departure was augmented by believing that their presence would have been a comfort and relief to the Countess.

Full of the idea that they had already begun to ascend those stupendous precipices, which together they had so often viewed with mingled awe and veneration; she gazed upon them with a melancholy kind of pleasure, as if by doing so she could once more have beheld the travellers.

She remained thus engaged, till Agatha called to her from a window, and informed her the Countess was up. She directly returned to the house, and, going up to the Countess's dressing-room, met her just as she was entering it.

With the most anxious solicitude she enquired how she found herself. 'Somewhat better,' the Countess replied. But whether the imagination of Madeline was affected by what Floretta had said the preceding night, or whether it really was the case, she thought there was no alteration in her countenance to support this assertion; the same look of languor and dejection prevailed; and she involuntarily repeated her enquiry with an earnestness that intimated the doubt she harboured, and hinted a wish of having a physician sent for.

'I thank you for this kind anxiety about me, my dear girl,' said the Countess; 'but I can with truth assure you I am better; and even if I was not, I should never think of sending for a physician; medical skill,' continued she in a low voice, 'could be of little avail in my malady.'

'Ah!' thought Madeline, 'this is indeed a confirmation of all that Floretta told me; she gives me to understand by those words, that her malady is upon her mind;—would to heaven I could alleviate it!'

They sat down to breakfast; the table was laid near an open window, from whence they inhaled the sweetness of the morning air, and beheld the dewy landscape gradually brightening to their view,—beheld along the forest glades the wild deer trip, and often turning, gaze at early passenger: grey smoke arose in spiral columns from cottages scattered about its extremity, painting the rural scene with cheerful signs of inhabitation: and soon the industrious woodman was beheld commencing his toil, and the careful shepherd driving his bleating flock along the grassy paths to taste the verdure of the morn, while on every side

*Music awoke*

*The native voice of undissembled joy,  
And thick around the woodland hymns arose.*

'Oh, how lovely is this scene!' said the Countess, 'this is Nature's hour for offering up her incense to the Supreme; and cold and unamiable indeed must be that heart which is not warmed to devotion

by it. What real enjoyment do the children of indolence and dissipation forego by losing, in the bed of sloth, those moments when every blooming pleasure waits without: how cheering even to the soul of sadness itself, is the matin of the birds! how reviving to sickness or to languor this pure breeze, which, as it sweeps over the tall trees of the forest, bends their leafy heads, as if in sign of grateful homage to the great Creator.'

'It is an hour which I particularly love indeed,' cried Madeline, 'one in which some of my most delightful rambles have been taken; with my father I have often brushed the dews away, and on the side of some steep and romantic mountain, caught the first beams of the sun, and watched the vapour of the valley retiring before them.'

'Our friends,' continued Madeline, after the pause of a few minutes, 'have ere this, I dare say, commenced their journey; by this time they have probably got a considerable way, and at this very moment perhaps may be sitting down to breakfast in the cottage of some mountaineer, attended by him and his family with assiduous hospitality; or else beneath the shadow of some cliff, o'er which the light chamois bound, and tall pines cast a solemn shade. Oh, how delightful must such a situation be!—how delightful, how elevating to the mind to be surrounded by the noblest works of nature,—by scenes which bring the heroes of other days to view!—how pleasing to listen to the soft melody of shepherds' pipes, to the bleating of his numerous flocks, intermingled perhaps with the lulling sound of waterfalls, and the humming of bees, intent on their delicious toil!'

'You speak like a poet, Madeline,' said the Countess, smiling.

Madeline blushed at this observation, and wondered, when it was made, that she could have given such latitude to her imagination.

Fatigued by talking, the Countess lay down upon a sofa after breakfast. This debility, in a mind so nervous and a frame so active as hers had hitherto been, gave the most painful apprehensions to Madeline; and, under a trifling pretext, she left the room in order to communicate them to Agatha, and enquire from her whether she did not deem some advise requisite for her lady.

Agatha shook her head mournfully on hearing them; but relative to her enquiry, answered in the negative, saying that rest and quiet were all that was necessary for the Countess, 'if those don't do her good,' said she, 'nothing can.'

'Alas!' cried Madeline, as she turned from her, ' 'tis too true! 'tis sorrow that undermines her health, and medicine could not reach her malady. Oh! what, what is this sorrow which so dreadfully affects her,—which is so carefully concealed that even her most intimate friends know it not, for such I know Madame Chatteneuf and her daughter to be, and they, I am confident, are ignorant of it?'

When she returned to the dressing-room, the Countess requested she would read to her; and thus employed, except at short intervals, when her ladyship made her pause to rest herself, she continued till dinner was served, at which the Countess was unable to preside; she grew better however in the evening, and again entered into conversation with Madeline.

The discourse turned upon the time she had passed at V—; and the Countess now requested to hear a particular account of it. This was a request which Madeline, if she could, would gladly have declined obeying; for, in almost every amusement, almost every scene she had partaken of, or mixed in while there, de Sevignie was so principal an object, that to describe them without mentioning him, she feared would be scarcely possible; to mention him without emotion, she knew she could not; and to betray such emotion would be, she was convinced, to confirm in the Countess's mind the suspicions she knew she already entertained of her attachment to de Sevignie; and now to have them confirmed, now, when not a hope remained of their being ever more to each other than friends, she felt would be humiliating and distressing in the extreme.

She attempted however to comply with the request of the Countess, but she faltered in her talk; and, by trying to omit what she wished to conceal, rendered what she would have told almost unintelligible.

The Countess saw and pitied her distress; she pitied, because she guessed the source from whence it proceeded. She was now more convinced than ever, from the dejection of Madeline, her confusion, and a few involuntary expressions that dropped from her, that all hope relative to de Sevignie was over, and, since terminated, she meant not to enquire concerning him, certain as she was that that termination was owing to no impropriety in the conduct of Madeline, or in his either, else she would not thus regret it. Time and kind attention, she trusted, would heal the wound which disappointed affection had given to the bosom of her youthful friend.

By degrees she turned the conversation to one more pleasing to her; and they both parted after supper with more cheerfulness than perhaps either had expected.

The next morning Madeline had the exquisite pleasure of meeting her beloved protectress at breakfast, with a greater appearance of health and spirits than she had witnessed the preceding day.

No attentions which could contribute to render this change a permanent one, were wanting on the part of Madeline; her assiduities were indeed unremitting, and the Countess received them with every indication of gratitude. A week saw her restored to her usual looks and serenity; and thus happily did the storm which had threatened the peace of her friends and family, appear overblown.

Occupied by attention and anxiety about her friend, Madeline,

during her indisposition, had had no time to ruminate over past scenes; but now that her recovery allowed her more leisure, they arose in gloomy retrospection to her view. She saw herself deprived of all those hopes which had hitherto cheered her mind, assured, almost solemnly assured, that her destiny and de Sevignie's could never be united; and sad and solitary in the extreme she anticipated her life would be after such a disappointment, for de Sevignie she considered as her kindred spirit, and could not hope, or rather deemed it utterly impossible, she should again meet with one so truly congenial to her own.

Another week elapsed without any thing material happening, during which the Countess heard from her daughter; she gave the letter to Madeline to read, and the vivacity with which it was written, and the assurance it contained of her own health and happiness, clearly proved that Madame D'Alembert was entirely ignorant of her mother's late illness and disquietude.

The wonder of Madeline was increased at finding she concealed this disquietude even from her daughter. Surely, she thought, its source must indeed be painful when she thus hides it from those who are most interested about her.

In vain she tried to assign some cause for it in her own mind; the more she thought upon it, the more impossible she found it to conjecture from what or from whom it proceeded, and that she never would know, she was convinced; and now that she saw her friend had (apparently at least) overcome it, her curiosity was somewhat abated.

In about ten days after Madame D'Alembert's letter, she received one herself from Olivia (as did the Countess from Madame Chatteneuf), written in the most lively and affectionate manner, and containing a particular account of their journey over the Alps, their reception from her aunt, who was not quite in so declining a state as they apprehended, and the amusements they partook of at Verona.

She concluded by charging Madeline to write immediately; and said she expected to hear from her all that had happened in and out of the chateau since her departure, and particularly whether she had since seen de Sevignie. 'But that you have, I cannot doubt,' she added; 'and, jesting apart, believe me, my dear Madeline, I hope to learn from you that every little uneasiness which lurked in your mind, and his, is removed by the mutual acknowledgment of a passion which, to the penetrating eyes of friendship, it was evident you entertained for each other. Blush not, my dear; the secret which friends discover is guarded by them as sedulously as their own; and, should concealment be necessary, be assured of mine. But I will not harbour an idea that it is; no, I will not believe that de Sevignie will be contented with the mere possession of your

heart:—ere this, perhaps, preparations are making; ere this, perhaps, the happy knot is tied; if so, accept my sincerest congratulations; every one who regards you, will congratulate you and themselves on such an event; for the wife of de Sevignie must, if not her own fault (which can never be your case), be completely happy.'

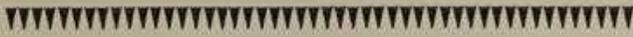
Madeline's whole soul felt agitated as she read those lines; since hopeless, she was distressed that her attachment should be known; and she sighed with the heaviest sadness at the contrast which she drew between her present feelings, and what they would have been, had her friend's conjectures relative to de Sevignie and her been just.

She felt shocked at the idea of being asked to shew this letter (which she had read in her own chamber) to the Countess; but that lady, perhaps from surmising some of the contents, gave not the smallest intimation of a wish to read it.

But though her fears respecting it were removed by this silence, her dejection continued. The surmises of Olivia hurt and embarrassed her; and she feared, when she declared their fallacy, that she should be regarded as a slighted object; and to pride, youthful pride, perhaps no idea could be more mortifying.

To complete her sadness, the Countess seemed relapsing into melancholy; and, though they both conversed, conversation in both appeared but as the faint effort of feeling to try and beguile the sadness of each other.

The efforts she made to converse during the day were painful in the extreme; and when the Countess retired in the evening, as was her usual custom, to the ruined monastery in the valley, for the purpose of prayer and meditation, Madeline hastily threw a scarf around her, and went out upon the lawn, as if she had feared a longer continuance in the house would subject her to society, which, in the present agitated state of her mind was irksome to her.



# Clermont

VOLUME TWO







immediately above them rose a wood of solemn verdure, which reached half way up the ascent; the rest of the mountain was rocky and bare of vegetation. The beauty and sweetness of the shrubs; the lovely prospect it commanded of the lake and skirting woods, and the solemn shadows cast upon it by the trees above, rendered the grotto a delightful place for retirement.

*In shady Bower,  
More sacred or sequester'd tho' but feign'd,  
Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph,  
Nor Fauns haunted.*

From this cavity, through an irregular but not inelegant arch, formed by a chasm in the rock, was an entrance into another, in the centre of which a deep and spacious bath had been contrived many years back, which was constantly supplied by the cold limpid streams of the mountain; this bath, like the grotto, received its only light from apertures in the roof, from whence wild shrubs hung in fantastic wreaths; and about it were smaller caves that answered the purpose of little dressing-rooms; but those caves, the bath, and grotto, had been long neglected: for since the death of the Count, who had constantly resorted to them for health and pleasure, the Countess had never been able to bear the idea of approaching them. Her desertion confirmed the superstitious stories, which had long been in circulation amongst the servants and peasantry, of their being haunted by some of the former inhabitants of the chateau; nor would one of them venture near the mountain after sun-set, for almost any consideration.

Hither, as I have already said, Madeline now wandered, almost without knowing whether she was going; but when she found herself at the grotto, feeling a little fatigued, she sat down upon a moss covered stone at its entrance: the present scene was perfectly adapted to her feelings, and like the poet she might have said,

*Those woods, those wilds, those melancholy glooms  
Accord with my soul's sadness, and draw forth  
The voice of sorrow from my bursting heart.*

The grotto behind her was now involved in utter darkness, and the lake, which lay before her, tintured with the gloom of closing day, appeared black and dismal; except where it reflected one of the beautifully chequered clouds of evening, or the scattered stars that alternately glittered and disappeared: as if unwilling to disturb the silence of the hour, it stole with gentle undulations to its green banks; and no sounds, but those of its soft murmurs, the melancholy rippling of the water within the grotto, and now and then a hoarse scream from a wild-fowl on the lake, could be distinguished.

The thoughts of Madeline were therefore not interrupted; and fancy again represented de Sevignie rambling about the gloomy heights, whose outlines she could just discover: She shuddered at the idea of the dangers to which such conduct exposed him.

'Oh, de Sevignie!' she cried aloud, speaking in the agitation of her soul, 'would to Heaven we had never met, since by meeting, we have only become sources of wretchedness to each other; painful as is our separation, that pain to me would be mitigated, did I know you were in any degree happy; but while I imagine you miserable, peace must continue a stranger to my breast.'

She paused, for at this instant a deep sigh, from the innermost recesses of the grotto, pierced her ear, and made her start with terror from her seat. Though she had early been taught to contemn the weakness which gives rise to superstition; and, though in the hour of composure she derided it, yet there were moments when her spirits were exhausted, such a moment as the present, in which it found admission to her breast.

Every fearful story, which she had heard of the grotto and other caves of the mountain, now recurred to her memory, and she almost feared the spectres they described would start to her view; for of a human creature being in the grotto at an hour of darkness, such as the present she had not an idea, from the dread she knew entertained of it. She was hastening away as fast as her trembling limbs could carry her, when the sound of an approaching step took from her all power of motion, and she sunk to the earth in an agony of fear; almost instantly, however, she was snatched from it, while a voice to which her heart vibrated, the soft the tremulous voice of de Sevignie, assured her of her safety.

'Madeline!' he exclaimed, while he prest her to his throbbing heart, 'my Madeline! can you forgive the terror I involuntary caused you.'

'Good heaven!' said Madeline, raising her head from his shoulder, 'do I really behold,' as if doubting the evidence of her ears, and eyes, 'do I really behold de Sevignie,—why,' she continued, 'why, for what purpose did you come hither.'

'Ah, Madeline!' he said, 'cannot your own heart inform you; have you no idea of the sympathy which drew me hither, to wander round the mansion you inhabit; to indulge my feelings by treading, or fancying I trod, in the paths you frequented. Oh, Madeline! what to happiness would be trifles, are to sorrow and despair matters of importance.'

While he spoke, the tremors of Madeline had somewhat subsided; but emotions different from those of fear, though not less painful, still agitated her mind; emotions which delicacy, dissatisfied with itself, had given rise to; she did not desire, nor ever had attempted to conceal her friendship for de Sevignie, but situated as they were,

she did not wish him by any means to know, it was of so fervent a nature as her expressions in the grotto must have implied; and overwhelmed with confusion at the idea of them, she endeavoured, as soon as she could move, to disengage herself from his arms, in order to return home.

'Against your inclination I will not detain you,' said he, 'and yet,' contradicting his words by still holding her to his breast, 'to part with you so soon, at such a moment as this, is more almost than I can bear; oh Madeline! to affect ignorance of what you said in the grotto, would be to betray insensibility; I have heard you,' he continued, with a voice of rapture, 'I have heard you in accents which pity might acknowledge her's, pronounce my name. Think then, Madeline, and excuse my doing so, whether at a moment which has given me the sweet assurance of being sometimes thought of, sometimes pitied by you, I can without the utmost reluctance let you depart immediately.'

'You have heard me, de Sevignie,' cried Madeline, trying to speak in a collected voice, 'but on your honour, on your delicacy I rest, to bury in oblivion what you heard.'

'In my heart eternally,' said de Sevignie.

'You must promise to forget it,' proceeded Madeline, 'that I may try to be reconciled to myself.'

'Forget!' repeated de Sevignie, 'no Madeline, never will I give a promise which my heart protests against fulfilling; the memory of what I have heard I will cherish; I will treasure, as all that can give pleasure to my existence; in all my wanderings, amidst all my cares, I will recur to it for comfort and support; for never can I feel quite forlorn, never utterly miserable, while I imagine I am regarded, I am thought of by you.'

Madeline sighed, and averted her eyes from his, in order to conceal the feelings his language excited. Reason opposed a longer continuance with him, by convincing her a lengthened conversation would only add to her subsequent anguish when they parted: but her heart recoiled from the idea of quitting him so soon, so abruptly when perhaps they might never meet again; she wished too, to stay a few minutes longer, to caution him against the dangers which his wild and solitary rambles exposed him to.

For this purpose, after a little irresolution, she ceased to make an effort to leave him, and opened her lips but her voice faltered; and she felt that she could not express her apprehensions for his safety, without betraying the tender interest she took in it. Suddenly, therefore, she broke from him and moved on.

For a minute he stood transfixed to the spot where she had left him; then starting, he exclaimed thus, 'thus, do I ever find my happiness transient! oh, how exquisite was that, which but a few moments ago pervaded my soul at the idea of your pity;—a pity,

which your abrupt departure convinces me you either wish to disavow or suppress.'

'Alas!' cried Madeline, involuntarily pausing, and turning to him, 'of what avail would be my pity.'

'Oh, it would sooth my cares; it would assuage my sorrows: Repeat, then, my Madeline, repeat the sweet assurance of it, and spare a few minutes longer to wretchedness and me.'

'No,' said Madeline, who ashamed of her past weakness resolved to give no farther proof of it, 'it grows late, and I must quit this place; to continue much longer here, would, I am convinced, occasion a search after me, and consequently might subject me to the reproach of carrying on clandestine proceedings.'

'Go then, Madam!' exclaimed de Sevignie, in passionate accents, 'go, Madam! obey the rigid rules of propriety, and disregard my sufferings; sufferings, which you yourself have caused. Yes, Madeline, 'tis on your account my youth is wasted, my hopes o'erthrown, my comforts blasted: but go—no assurance of pity now would sooth me; for I am now convinced, what you feel for me is not a settled feeling, but a mere involuntary impulse, such as any son of sorrow may equally excite.'

He turned abruptly from her, and with quick, yet tottering steps hastened to the grotto, against whose side he suddenly flung himself, as if for support.

At another time to be accused of insensibility might well have inspired Madeline with resentment; but now she could only feel compassion and tenderness for him, whose pale and disordered looks gave such melancholy evidence of his sufferings. Not more affected by his words, than terrified by his manner, to depart without seeing him in some degree composed, was impossible, and she walked slowly towards him, trusting, that at her approach he would rise, and that she might then be able to prevail on him to quit the Forest. He did not move however, and after standing a few minutes by him she ventured softly to pronounce his name. Still he continued silent and motionless, and her alarm increased; she stooped down, but could not hear him breathe,—his hand lay extended from him, she gently raised it, but almost immediately let it drop with horror at finding it cold and lifeless.

He was dying perhaps, and she had not power to assist him. 'Oh, de Sevignie!' she exclaimed in the agony of her soul, 'de Sevignie! speak to me for heaven's sake, or I shall sink with terror.'

He started, as if the vehemence of her words had roused him; turned and surveyed her for a minute with a vacant eye. His recollection then returned, and with it all his gentleness.

'I have been ill,' he said, 'extremely ill; I never was so disordered before, but 'tis the effect of weakness; this is the first day I have been able to come out since we last parted.'

'Good heavens!' cried Madeline, 'what imprudence to come hither; oh, de Sevignie, what can make you act in a manner so injurious to yourself, so distressing to your friends.'

The energy of her voice, the paleness, the wildness of her countenance, proved to de Sevignie the alarm he had given her.

'Ah, Madeline,' said he, taking her soft trembling hand in his, 'I seem fated to give you uneasiness; but be composed I beseech you, and also be assured, I never more will intrude into your presence;—to-morrow, I leave V— for ever. Too long indeed have I persecuted you; I blush at the recollection of my impetuous conduct; to apologize for it as I wish is impossible; but never, never, shall I cease to regret it. Permit me,' he added 'to leave you near the house, the way to it is solitary, I will then depart.'

'No,' replied Madeline, 'there is no danger in my going alone; besides, if I permitted you to accompany me, I should bring you out of your way: for this path near the grotto is the shortest one to the road.'

'Farewell, then,' cried he, pressing her hand to his cold lips, 'farewell,' he repeated as he resigned it, 'but as this is the last time we shall probably ever meet, let me have the comfort of hearing from you, that you do not utterly detest me for the uneasiness I have caused you.'

Madeline attempted to speak, but her voice was lost in the emotions of her soul, and she hung her head to conceal the tears which trickled down her cheeks. They did not, however, escape the penetrating eyes of de Sevignie: he again took her hand, 'I cannot leave you,' said he, 'in this situation; you weep, you tremble; oh, my Madeline, rest upon me,'

'No!' cried she, resisting the effort he made to support her. 'I am now better; let us therefore part, and part for ever.'

De Sevignie repeated the word, then yielding, or rather overcome by the anguish of his heart, he fell at her feet; he implored the choicest blessings of heaven for her; he besought her forgiveness for the rashness, the impetuosity of his conduct. 'The remembrance of such forgiveness may at some future period,' he continued, 'a little alleviate the pain of separation.'

How unnecessary for Madeline to assure him by words, of that forgiveness which her looks express; with streaming eyes she hung over him; yet not their separation alone caused her tears. His broken health and spirits were subjects of yet greater regret, and scarcely,—scarcely could she prevent herself from kneeling on the earth beside him, and supplicating that heaven he had so recently address on her account to restore them; but though the supplication did not burst from her lips, it was breathed from the very depth of her heart.

In a moment of agitation like the present, the feelings of that

heart could no longer be suppressed, and de Sevignie now beheld the strong hold he had of its affections.

But the confirmation of her affection could not lessen his wretchedness, on the contrary, it seemed to increase it: He arose from her feet.

'Oh, Madeline!' he said, 'how inconsistent is the human heart; but a few minutes ago, and I fancied the assurance of your pity and regard would render me in some degree happy; now when you have permitted me to receive it, I feel myself more miserable than ever, and think, since the obstacles to our union cannot be conquered, I should have been less so had I still imagined you indifferent.'

Madeline shuddered, 'would to heaven!' cried she, emphatically, 'we had never met.' Scarcely was she able to forbear asking what those obstacles were which he alluded to, but propriety checked the question; she regretted bitterly, regretted the divulgement of her sentiments, and the consciousness of its being an unpremeditated divulgement, could scarcely mitigate her regret for it; anxious to avoid the imputation of total weakness, either from de Sevignie or herself, she now summoned all her resolution to her aid, and after the silence of a few minutes, address him in a collected voice.

'Let us,' said she, 'endeavour to reconcile ourselves to an inevitable necessity, the efforts of fortitude and virtue can never fail of being successful, and how can they be more nobly exercised, than in trying to repel useless sorrow. Let us from this moment, that no interruption may be given to such efforts, determine sedulously to avoid each other.'

'Yet we shall meet again;' exclaimed de Sevignie in a passionate accent, and grasping her hand, 'our souls were originally paired in heaven; and though now separated by a wayward destiny, they will, my Madeline, be re-united in that heaven.'

A tear, in spite of her efforts to restrain it, strayed down her pale cheek, but she wiped it hastily away. 'Ere we part for ever in this world,' she proceeded with a softness she could not repress, 'let me entreat you, de Sevignie, to exert that fortitude, which from reason, from education, from principle, you ought, nay you must if you please, be master of. 'Tis an injustice to yourself, to society; above all, to that divine Being who implanted such noble faculties in your mind as I know you to possess, to let them be destroyed by sorrow; besides, what grief must not the conduct which impairs your health and weakens your mind, give to all your connections.'

'My connections!' repeated de Sevignie, looking steadily at her, 'my connections'; and his eye loured on her.

'Yes,' replied Madeline, 'to your connections, if their feelings are at all like mine. Oh, de Sevignie! if you really regard my tranquillity, promise, ere we part, to try and conquer your dejection,

and to give up your solitary rambles; the idea of the dangers to which you expose yourself by them terrifies me.'

'Ere we part,' said de Sevignie, who seemed only to have attended to those words, 'Oh! what a death-like chill comes over my heart at the idea of doing so. Never—never, Madeline, if honour, if gratitude permitted, would we separate.'

'If they are combined against us,' cried Madeline, 'it were not only foolish but criminal to think of acting otherwise than we are now doing.'

'They are!' exclaimed de Sevignie, 'for would it be not dishonourable, ungrateful in the extreme, to attempt leading the daughter of Clermont—he to whose compassionate care, under heaven, I perhaps owe the preservation of my life; would it not, I say, be base, to attempt leading her from ease, security, the enjoyment of all that affluence can give, into care, danger, and obscurity. No, Madeline, I am not selfish; I am not a villain: I would not, for the mere gratification of my own passion, involve the woman I adore in trouble; nor should I gratify it by such conduct:—that storm which I could brave alone, I should sink beneath with her.'

The obstacles which he had alluded to, seemed now explained: from fortune, want of fortune, Madeline was convinced they sprung. Charmed by the noble, the generous conduct of de Sevignie; ignorant of the difficulties and sorrows of life, when unpossessed of a competence; and believing, firmly believing, that her attachment for him could never be conquered, she was almost tempted to offer him her hand. To assure him ease, security, the enjoyment of all that affluence could give, would gladly be relinquished by her for the sake of sharing his cares, dangers, and obscurity; but delicacy, that celestial guardian of her sex, checked the rash impulse of romantic tenderness. She suddenly recollected herself, and recoiled, from the idea of the action she had been about committing, as if from a precipice.

'Gracious heaven!' she exclaimed within herself, 'how mean how despicable should I have appeared in his eyes, who can so nobly triumph over his own passion. Had I followed the impulse of mine, and offered my hand unsolicited, unsanctified, by the approbation of a parent or a friend. Ah, Madeline, you may well blush for your weakness.'

Lest she should betray that weakness, she determined not to stay another minute with him, and bidding him a hasty adieu, she walked on. De Sevignie in a few minutes followed her, but he continued many by her side, ere he again spoke to her; at last he stopt, and taking her hand to detain her—'Madeline,' said he, as if hitherto absorbed in profound meditation, 'do you think, if I could render my situation more prosperous than it at present is, that your

friends, if you had the generosity to desire it, would permit our union.'

'I do,' cried Madeline, hesitating, yet not able to repress this acknowledgment of tenderness, 'I think they would not oppose what would contribute to my happiness.'

A sudden smile, the smile of rapture, illumined the countenance of de Sevignie; he clasped her hands in his; he raised them to heaven.—'Oh, what transport!' he said, 'to be able to contribute to your happiness; grant, heavenly powers, such blessedness may yet be mine! May I detain you Madeline, a few minutes longer to acquaint you with the plan, which I have just conceived, for conquering the obstacles that at present impede our wishes.' Madeline could not reply in the negative, and de Sevignie began:

'To another—' said he.

At this instant an approaching step was heard, and in the next, the shrill voice of Floretta, calling upon Madeline.

Provoked by this interruption, de Sevignie attempted to lead Madeline amongst the trees which bordered the path; but though as much disappointed as he could be, she resisted the effort.

'No,' said she, 'I cannot go, 'tis the Countess, I am convinced, that has sent after me, and she would be terrified if I could not be found; besides if her servant discovered me trying to avoid her, what might she not say. Some other time must do for the explanation which you were about giving, and which I will confess, you could scarcely be more anxious to utter than I to hear.'

'What time,' asked de Sevignie, 'I shall be all impatience, all suspense, till we meet again; to-morrow evening you may surely come hither.'

'Perhaps,' said Madeline.

'No perhaps,' cried de Sevignie, 'you must give me a positive answer.'

'Well then, you may be confident, if in my power I will come.'

'Adieu, then,' cried he; again pressing her hand to his lips, then suddenly darting into the nearest path, he was out of sight in a moment.

Madeline paused on the spot where he had left her, to reflect on all that he had said, and congratulate herself on the prospect of felicity which was now opening to her view.

Her pleasing meditation was soon, however, interrupted by the appearance of Floretta. 'Well, I am sure,' cried she, 'I am glad I have found you. Lord bless my soul, Mam'selle, how can you venture into such lonely places by yourself. I am sure nothing but compulsion could make me do so.'

'I hope none has been used to-night,' said Madeline, as she proceeded with her towards the chateau.

'That there has, indeed, nothing but the absolute commands of

my Lady could have made me come hither; I wonder, I am sure, what could make her fix on me to look for you. She might have known it was not proper to send any girl by herself into such wild places.'

'Your Lady knew there was no danger,' said Madeline, 'as none but her own peasants and servants are about them.'

'Why, I don't say Mam'selle, there is any danger of meeting thieves, but there is of meeting much worse. Ah, Mam'selle, you know well enough what I mean; and you must be either very incredulous or very hardy, to venture near the grotto, after the horrid stories you have heard in the chateau about it; besides those stories, I could tell you others of it, which if you heard, would frighten you so much, that I dare say you would not be able to move.'

'If you think they would have that effect upon me, pray don't tell them at present,' said Madeline, 'for I want to make haste to the chateau.'

'Indeed I don't intend to do so,' cried Floretta, 'the very telling them would frighten me, and I am sure I am sufficiently terrified already.'

'Why did you not get some one to accompany you,' asked Madeline.

'A likely thing indeed, that any one would accompany me in the dark to such places; not but I tried, I can assure you. The butler was the first I asked; but no truly, he was getting his knives and spoons ready for supper. Then I entreated Mr Jacques, the coachman, but he was just going to visit the horses; and as to the footmen, I know I might as well try to bring the pillars of the hall along with me. I tried the maids also, but one was going to settle the chambers, and another wanted to help the cook to get supper ready; and another—but in short they had all some frivolous excuse or other.'

'Well,' said Madeline, 'though you did come alone, you met with nothing to frighten you.'

'That shall never prevail on me, however, to venture again to such a place by myself, if I can help it.'

By this time they had reached the chateau, and Madeline being informed by a servant, whom she met in the hall, that the Countess was in the supper parlour, directly repaired thither.



was a fear, that a premature discovery might make the Countess imagine she had meant to carry on a clandestine correspondence, and, consequently lessen her in her esteem.

'I see, Madam,' said she, after the pause of a minute, bashfully raising her eyes from the ground, 'I see that you suspect something, and I acknowledge you are right in doing so; but oh! dearest madam, do not think me ungrateful, do not deem me imprudent, do not suppose to chance alone you owe the discovery of my thoughts or situation; I only deferred acquainting you with both; I only delayed opening my heart to your view, till I had something more satisfactory than at present to inform you of.'

'Unbosom it now,' said the Countess, 'and trust me, my dear Madeline, I would not desire the communication, did I not mean to take as great an interest in your affairs as a parent would. Unbosom your heart to me as to a Mother; and be assured, if my advice, my assistance, my friendship, can in any degree forward your happiness, I shall derive real satisfaction myself from doing so.'

Thus kindly urged, Madeline rather rejoiced than regretted being surprised into the relation; for she had long sighed, though withheld by diffidence from desiring it; for the counsel of a person more conversant, more experienced than herself in the intricacies of the human heart. To elucidate every circumstance which had happened in her interview with de Sevignie, it was requisite to mention those which had past at V—.

She began, but it was with the involuntary hesitation of modesty; and from the same impulse she tried to pass over, as lightly as possible, the pain she had experienced on de Sevignie's account; but though her language might be unimpassioned, her looks plainly indicated what her sufferings had been.

Her relation ended, the Countess sat many minutes without speaking, as if absorbed in profound meditation. She then broke the silence, by thanking Madeline with the most gracious benignancy for the confidence she had reposed in her.

'Your narrative, my dear Madeline,' she cried, 'confirms the opinion I entertained, since the evening I saw you together, of the strength of your attachment for de Sevignie;—nay, do not be confused, my dear; love, excited by merit, we have no reason to be ashamed of.

'It will please you, no doubt, to hear, that I think his attachment as tender as your own; but it is one, with which his reason is evidently at variance. Why it is so, the latter part of his conversation this evening seems to me to explain. A distress situation has hitherto pointed out the necessity of his trying to conquer his passion; but I own it appears to me strange and mysterious that a man of his elegant appearance and enlightened education, should be in narrow circumstances and obscurity. If however, he can pro-

perly account for this obscurity and want of fortune; if the one proceeds neither from ignoble birth nor dishonourable conduct; and the other from no idle extravagance, no degrading folly, we will not wait for the realization of his plan, be it what it may, to realize his happiness. You are perhaps surprised,' she continued, 'to hear me speak in this positive manner, as if I had an absolute power to dispose of you; but know my dear, that in me your father vested such a power. As soon as I understood your situation with regard to de Sevignie, I communicated to him all I thought concerning it, and requested his advice; he answered me immediately, and begged in future, I might never apply to him on the subject, but depend entirely on my own judgment; he entreated me to do this, he said, from a firm conviction that I would watch over you with as much solicitude and scarcely less tenderness than he would himself. His confidence was not, I trust, misplaced.'

Madeline would have spoken in the fullness of her heart, but the Countess motioned her to silence.

'To contribute,' she resumed, 'to the happiness of his child, will, as I have already said, impart the truest satisfaction to me; should we therefore, receive from de Sevignie the satisfactory explanation we desire, I shall immediately give to the adopted daughter of my care, that portion, which from the first moment I took her under my protection, I designed for her; a portion, which though not sufficient to purchase her all the luxuries, is amply so to procure her all the comforts of life; and, to a soul gentle and unassuming as is my Madeline's, those comforts will, I think, yield more real felicity than all its luxuries or dissipations could do. Should the little portion I can give her, be a means of procuring for her that felicity which she deserves and I wish her;—blessed—thrice blessed, shall I consider the wealth consecrated to such a purpose.'

She stopt, overcome by her own energy; Madeline was many minutes before she could speak; but she took the hand of her benefactress, she prest it to her quivering lip, her heaving heart, and dropt upon it tears of gratitude, affection, and esteem.

'Oh, Madam!' she at length exclaimed, 'well might you bid me unbosom my heart to you as to a mother; sure, had I been blest with one, I could not have experienced more tenderness; language is poor, is inadequate to express my feelings.'

'Then do not attempt expressing them,' said the Countess, with her usual benignant smile, 'but let us resume our, to you to be sure, very uninteresting conversation. You say, to-morrow evening you promised to meet de Sevignie.'

'Yes, Madam,' replied Madeline, with some little hesitation.

'Inform him then,' continued the Countess, 'that you have made me your confidant, also what I said concerning him, and my

intentions; if he can give the required explanation; but remember Madeline, you tell him, that it must be an explanation so clear,—so full, that not a shadow of doubt shall remain after it; that, except every thing mysterious is fully elucidated, Madeline Clermont and he, must in future be strangers to each other.'

'I shall obey you in every respect, Madam,' replied Madeline, 'and indeed,' unable to conceal the high opinion she entertained of de Sevignie's virtues, 'I have not a doubt but we shall receive as satisfactory an explanation as we could desire.'

'Heaven grant you may,' cried the Countess, 'but till you do—till there is some certainty of your being united to de Sevignie, I shall not again mention him to your father, who now imagines from a late letter of mine, that every hope relative to him is over; and I will not undeceive him, except I can do so with pleasure to him and myself.'

They soon after this separated for the night; but not to rest did Madeline retire to her chamber: joy is often as wakeful as sorrow; and joy of the most rapturous kind she now experienced; alternately she traversed her apartment, alternately seated herself to repeat all that had past between her and the Countess, to ruminate over her felicity; felicity which now appeared insured; for that de Sevignie could give such an explanation as would rather raise than lessen him in the estimation of her friend, she did not harbour the smallest doubt of.

So sanguine is the youthful heart—so ready to believe that what it wishes will happen. Alas, how doubly sharp does this readiness render the barb of disappointment.

Oh, how great was the raptures of Madeline, to think she should be enabled to put de Sevignie in possession of a competency; every feeling of generosity of sensibility, was gratified by the idea, and she implored the choicest blessings of heaven for the benevolent woman, who had been the means of occasioning her such happiness. 'May heaven,' she cried, with uplifted hands, 'remove from her heart all sorrow, as she removes it from the hearts of others.'

How light was the step—how bright was the eye—how gay was the smile of Madeline when she descended the next morning to the breakfast parlour, where she already found the Countess seated; the appearance of every thing seemed changed, the awful gloom which had so long pervaded the apartments, was banished; and in the landscape before the windows Madeline now discovered beauties which had before escaped her notice. The weather had been remarkably fine for some weeks, yet Madeline thought the sun had not shone so bright for many days as on the present.

Such is the magic effect of joy, which, like the touch of an enchanter, can raise a thousand charms around us.

With her friend she took a delightful ride about some of the most

delightful parts of the domain after breakfast; and the remainder of the day was past in social converse together.

As soon as twilight began to shroud the earth, the Countess dismissed her to her appointment. 'Do you think, Madeline,' cried she with a smile, as she was retiring from the room, 'it would be amiss if I ordered Jerome to lay an additional plate on the supper table to-night.'

'Perhaps not, Madam,' replied Madeline, blushing. She thought indeed, it was probable that de Sevignie would immediately wish to express his gratitude to the Countess.

Chapter 3

*My lab'ring heart, that swells with indignation,  
Heaves to discharge its burden, that once done  
The busy thing shall rest within its cell.*

ROWE

EXPECTING EVERY MOMENT TO BEHOLD HIM, SHE TOOK THE path to the grotto; but reached it without having that expectation fulfilled. Surprised and disappointed she stopt before it, irresolute whether to return to the chateau directly or wait a few minutes there; she at last resolved on the latter, and seated herself on the moss covered stone at its entrance. The deep gloom of the grotto made her involuntarily shudder whenever she cast a glance within it, but in spite of terror she continued on her seat, till the dark shades of night began to involve every object, and warned her to return home: as she arose for that purpose an idea darted into her mind, that illness or some dreadful accident, had alone prevented de Sevignie from keeping an appointment so eagerly desired, so tenderly solicited, and regretting the time she had wasted in expectation, she now rather flew than walked to the chateau, in order to entreat the Countess to send a servant to V—, to enquire about him; she had not proceeded many yards, however, when her progress was impeded by the object who had caused her apprehensions and solicitude. So little did she now expect to see him, that as he slowly emerged from amidst the trees, she started back, as if he had been the last creature in the world she had thought of seeing. Ere she could recover sufficiently from her agitation to speak, de Sevignie, rather negligently bowing, said, 'he hoped he had not been the means of keeping her out to so late an hour.'

'The officers,' continued he, but without looking at her, 'to whose hospitality and politeness I have been so much indebted, since my residence at V—, insisted on my dining with them to-day, and though I wished and tried to leave them at an early hour, they would not suffer me to do so, nor to depart at the one I did, had I not promised to return immediately to them.'

The coldness of his manner, the frivolous excuse he made for his want of punctuality, and the intention he avowed of quitting her directly, without any reference to their conversation of the preceding night, all struck Madeline with a conviction, that his sentiments were totally changed since that conversation had taken place: for a change so sudden, so unaccountable, tenderness sug-

gested an enquiry, but pride repelled it, and she would instantly have quitted him with every indication of the disdain he seemed to merit, had her agitation permitted her to move.

'Will you allow me, Mademoiselle Clermont,' cried de Sevignie, still looking rather from her, 'to attend you to the castle, 'ere I bid you adieu; and also to hope, that at some other time, I may have the honour of seeing you.'

'Never'—said Madeline, recovering her voice, and summoning all her spirits to her aid, 'never—no sir.—No, de Sevignie, except in the presence or the house of the Countess de Merville, never more will I permit you to see me.'

'In her house,' repeated de Sevignie with quickness, and turning his eyes upon her. 'How could I attempt seeing you in the house of the Countess, unacquainted as I am with her.'

'The Countess,' replied Madeline, 'would never be displeased at my seeing any one in her house whom I considered as my friend. Besides—besides'—added she, hesitating, doubtful whether to stop or to go on, 'besides'—after the pause of a minute, 'she gave permission to have you introduced to her.'

'When, on what account did she give that permission;' demanded de Sevignie, with yet greater quickness than he had before spoken, 'did she discover, or did you tell her that we had met.'

'I told her,' said Madeline, with firmness, and looking steadily at him. 'The Countess is my friend;—she is more. She is the guardian to whose care my father has consigned me, and concealment to her would be criminal. I told her we had met. I told her every circumstance of that meeting: every circumstance prior to it; I communicated every thought, I revealed my whole soul.'

'I admire your prudence,' exclaimed de Sevignie, in an accent which denoted vexation, whilst the melancholy of his countenance gave way to a dark frown, and the paleness of his cheek to a deep crimson.

'I rejoice at it,' cried Madeline, 'my friend will strengthen my weakness, will confirm my resolves, will give me a clue to discover the dark and intricate mazes of the human heart.'

Her language seemed to penetrate the soul of de Sevignie, he turned from her with emotion, then as abruptly turning to her again, 'for what purpose,' asked he, 'did the Countess give you permission to introduce me to her.'

'For the purpose—' Madeline paused, she had been on the point of saying, for the purpose of promoting our happiness, but timely checked herself. And ah, thought she at the moment, from the altered manner of de Sevignie, I cannot believe that his happiness could be promoted by the intentions of the Countess.

'Tell me, I entreat, I conjure you,' said de Sevignie, with earnestness.

Madeline hesitated.—Yet 'tis but justice (she thought) to my friend, to de Sevignie himself, to confess her intentions; if the alteration in his manner is occasioned by finding the plan he recently conceived impracticable, the divulgment of her generous intentions will again set all to rights; catching at this idea, and flattering herself it was a just one, she briefly related the conversation which had past between her and the Countess; de Sevignie listened with fixed attention, but continued silent many minutes after she had ceased to speak, as if in a profound reverie; then suddenly raising his eyes from the ground he fastened them on her with an expression of the deepest melancholy, and thus address her:

'Great,' cried he, 'is my regret, greater than language can express, at being unable to avail myself of the high honour the Countess designed me; but though unable to avail myself of it; though unable to profit by her noble her generous intentions, my inability to do so, has not suppress my gratitude for them.

'Why, why, that inability exists, I cannot explain; but let me do myself the justice of saying, that candour would not err in putting the most favourable construction on it. In this moment, when declaring the renunciation of every hope relative to you, I would apologize for the presumption, the impetuosity, the inconsistencies of my conduct to you. Could I do so as I wish, but as that is impossible, I must, without pleading for it, cast myself upon the sweetness of your disposition for forgiveness. I often, before this period, declared I would never more intrude into your presence; I now solemnly repeat that declaration, for I am now thoroughly convinced of the folly of my former conduct, and he who is sensible of his error, yet perseveres in it, is guilty of weakness in the extreme; such weakness is not mine. In future, I mean to avoid every pursuit, to fly from every thought which can enervate my mind.'

His voice faltered, and a deep sigh burst from him. 'Farewell, Mademoiselle Clermont,' said he, after the pause of a moment, 'too long have I detained—too long have I persecuted you—with my last adieu receive my best wishes for your happiness, may they be more availing than those I formed for my own.' He cast another lingering look upon her, then turning into a winding path, disappeared in a moment.

Every flattering hope, every pleasing expectation of Madeline's, was again crushed, without the smallest prospect of their being ever more revived; like the unsubstantial pageants of a dream they faded, nor left a wreck behind. Oh, what a vacuum did their loss occasion in the heart of Madeline: at first, she almost fancied she had dreamt the conversation of the preceeding night, and that it was only now, the illusions of that dream were flying from her. But by degrees, her thoughts grew more composed, and then every wild or soothing suggestion of fancy died away, and she began to recon-

sider the conduct of de Sevignie. His last words had not been able to make her think favourably of it. 'No,' she cried, 'I am convinced, without some motive for doing so, which he durst not avow, he never would have with-held the confidence he was so kindly invited to repose in the most amiable of women. And yet—' she continued, after pausing some minutes, 'he with-held it, perhaps, not from having any improper motives to make him wish concealment, but because his sentiments were altered respecting me.—Though no,' she proceeded, after another pause, 'that could not be the case; 'tis impossible in one night so great an alteration could have taken place. 'Tis evident then, too evident, that a cause exists for concealment, which he either fears or is ashamed to acknowledge; and also, that his coldness this evening, sprung from a wish of trying his power over me, for they say neglect is the test of affection;—but de Sevignie, your artifice caused you no triumph, and never—never more, shall you have an opportunity of exercising it on me; like you, I will in future avoid every pursuit, fly from every thought which can enervate my mind.'

The striking of the castle clock now reached her ear, and she hastily walked to the chateau; alarmed on finding the usual supper hour over, least she should by her long stay, have again given uneasiness to the bosom of her friend.

On reaching the chateau, a servant informed her, that the Countess was in her dressing-room: slowly Madeline ascended to it; she felt ready to sink with confusion at the idea of the mortifying explanation she must make to the Countess. 'She will think,' cried she, 'that I have hitherto been the dupe of my own fancy; and that de Sevignie, but in my own imagination, has been amiable.' She paused at the door for a minute, from a vain hope that by so doing, she should regain some composure.

'Well,' said her friend, smiling as she entered, 'I find, Madeline, by your long stay, that you could not withstand the pleasures of a *tête-à-tête*; but where is the Chevalier de Sevignie,' she continued, on seeing Madeline shut the door, 'were you afraid to bring him, least I should rival you.'

'He is gone, Madam,' answered Madeline, in a faint voice, as she sat down on the nearest chair, unable any longer to support herself.

'Gone!' repeated the Countess, in a tone of amazement, 'but bless me, my dear, you look very pale, are you ill.'

'No madam,' Madeline attempted to say, but her voice failed her, and she burst into tears.

'Gracious heaven!' exclaimed the Countess, rising, and going to her, 'you terrify me beyond expression. Madeline, my love, what is the matter.'

'Nothing, madam,' replied Madeline, 'only, only,' sobbing as if

her heart would break, 'that I think, I believe—the Chevalier de Sevignie, is not quite so amiable as I once imagined.'

'Try to compose yourself and speak intelligently my dear,' said the Countess, 'for I cannot support, much longer, the fears you excite.' The tears she shed somewhat relieved the full heart of Madeline; and the Countess taking a seat by her, she was able in a few minutes, to relate the conduct of de Sevignie, and acknowledge the sentiments it had inspired her with.

'His behaviour is strange, is inexplicable, indeed,' said the Countess, 'and I perfectly agree with you in thinking, that he is an unworthy character; too undeserving to have an effort made to solve the mystery which he has wrapt himself in; had he any sensibility, had he any nobleness, he never would have wounded your innocent, your ingenuous heart as he has done. Had he respected, had he regarded you properly, he never would have regretted your making me your confidant; that regret confirms my belief, notwithstanding his solemn protestations of seeing you no more, that he still entertains designs concerning you; designs, I am sorry to shock your nature by saying so, of a dishonourable nature. Should he therefore, again throw himself in your way, as I apprehend, shun him, I entreat, I conjure you, my Madeline; as you value your happiness, your honour, the peace of your friends, the esteem of the world.'

'Ah, madam,' cried Madeline, 'I hope you do not doubt my resolution;—my tenderness is wounded, my pride is roused, and thinking as I do of him, could I now permit an interview with de Sevignie, I should be lessened in my own eyes.'

'I do not doubt your resolution, my love,' replied the Countess, kissing her cheek, 'and I beg you to excuse the caution, the unnecessary caution of age.' She now expressed her pleasure at not having written to Clermont, since things had taken so different a turn from what was expected. 'I rejoice to think,' continued she, 'that he will not know how unworthy de Sevignie was of the kindness he shewed him.'

Madeline sighed deeply at those words, the violence of offended pride was abated, and in this moment of decreased resentment, an emotion of softness again stole o'er her heart, and made her regret having exposed de Sevignie, by her own animadversions, to the still severer ones of the Countess. She regretted, because from this returning softness she was tempted to doubt his deserving them, and to impute the inconsistencies of his conduct, to difficulties too dreadful perhaps to relate; and she shuddered at the idea of having, in addition to his other misfortunes, drawn upon him the unmerited imputation of baseness; but from this idea, torturing in the extreme, reflection soon relieved her, for when she re-considered his conduct, she could not help thinking he deserved that imputation.

'Yet is it possible,' she cried to herself, 'that de Sevignie, he who

appeared possessed of the nicest delicacy, the most exalted honour, the steadiest principles of rectitude; is it possible that he can be unamiable? Alas, why cannot I doubt it still;—but no, let me rather rejoice than regret not being able to do so; rejoice, that passion no longer spreads a mist before my eyes: to endeavour to doubt his unworthiness now, would be to try and blind my reason, and weaken my resolves.'

But notwithstanding what she said, she still fluctuated between resentment and tenderness, candour and distrust,—alternately acquitted, alternately condemned him.

With the utmost gentleness, the Countess tried to sooth and steal her from her sorrow; she did not, like a rigid censor, chide her for weakness in indulging it. She knew what it was to have the projects of youthful hope overthrown; the anguish which attends the shock of a first disappointment, and that time must be allowed to conquer it. That time, aided by reason, would heal the wound which had been given to the gentle bosom of her Madeline, she trusted and believed.

On retiring to her chamber, Madeline could not suppress her tears at the contrast she drew between her present feelings and those of the preceeding night; and again she began to fancy de Sevignie more unfortunate than unamiable; when suddenly recollecting her resolution of expelling this idea, she hastily tried to divert her thoughts from it.

'That we are separated, I am assured,' cried she, 'and to ascertain whether I have reason to esteem or condemn him, (though soothing perhaps to my feelings to think the former) can now be of little consequence to me.'



ness and wisdom of that Being, from whose hand proceeds alike the cup of good and evil.

'Think not,' she continued, 'as too many perhaps might do, that I preach what I do not practise; or, that my lessons are those of a woman, who herself, untried by disappointment, can exhort others to that submission which she never knew the difficulty of acquiring. This, believe me my dear Madeline, is not the case; I know what it is: when we extend our hand for the rose to gather the thorns—when we open our bosom to hope, to admit despair—when we bask in the sunshine, to be surprised by the storm, and have it burst with fury o'er our unsheltered heads.'

'Oh, from every adverse storm may you be sheltered!' exclaimed Madeline, with uplifted eyes.

As she spoke, Father Bertrand, confessor to the Countess, and officiating priest to her household, stopt before the window: he belonged to the community which has been already mentioned, and frequently rambled at the close of day from his convent, to the wild solitudes of the wood surrounding the chateau. He was upwards of sixty, and one of those interesting figures which cannot be viewed by sensibility without pity and veneration; his noble height still gave an idea of what his form had been, when unbent by infirmity; and that form, like a fine ruin, excited the involuntary sigh of regret for the devastations time had made upon it. His hairs were white, and thinly scattered over a forehead, more deeply indented by care than age; and the sad, the solemn expression of his countenance, denoted his being a son of sorrow, and proved his thoughts were continually bent upon another world, where alone he could receive consolation for the miseries of this.

'How fares the good ladies of the castle this evening,' cried he, leaning upon his staff, as he stopt before the window.

'Why not so well, father,' replied the Countess, 'but that we might be better; here we are, like two philosophers descanting upon the vanities of life; and when women talk philosophy, the world says, they must either be indisposed or out of temper.'

'Well, I shan't pretend to contradict what the world says,' cried the good man, smiling, 'nor since so well employed shall I longer interrupt you, ladies.'

The Countess asked him to come in and take some refreshment, but he refused, and after chatting a little longer, rambled away to the wildest parts of the wood.

'The story of Father Bertrand,' said the Countess, as he retired, 'is a striking proof to all that know it, that we should never be too eager in the pursuit of our wishes. As it is short, and rather applicable to what we have been talking about, I will relate it.—

'He was son to a gentleman of good family, but still better fortune, who lived in the vicinity of this chateau: the large patrimony

he was to inherit, made his parents anxious to give him such an education as should teach him to enjoy it with moderation and elegance.

'After learning every thing he could learn in his native country, he was sent abroad to improve himself by visiting various courts, and acquiring that knowledge of men and manners, which is so requisite for those destined to mix in the great world, and which in a fixed residence it is almost impossible to obtain. In the course of his travels he paid a visit to England; and here, in a small town in that kingdom, he became acquainted with a young lady, who at an early age was left an orphan and a dependant on an old capricious aunt, whose only motive for keeping her in the family, was, that on her she could vent that spleen and ill-nature which no one else would bear from her. The fair orphan and Bertrand frequently met each other at different houses; and the beauty of her person, the soft dejection of her manner, and the patient sweetness with which she bore her situation, soon gained a complete conquest over his heart; nor did hers retain its liberty.

'The declaration of his attachment Bertrand would have accompanied by an offer of his hand, had not duty and respect to his parents prevented his taking such a step without their knowledge and approbation: he wrote to them for their consent; but instead of receiving it, he received a pressing entreaty to return home immediately; and also an acknowledgment from them at the same time, that they could not bear the idea of his marrying a foreigner and a protestant, as was the lady he paid his addresses to. Bertrand did not attempt to write again, or disregard their entreaty; his duty to them, and his consideration for his own happiness, prompted him to return home without delay, for he knew their hearts, and was convinced, when he once pleaded his cause in person, he would not be refused: calming the inquietude of Caroline by this assurance, and pledging to her vows of unalterable love and fidelity, he embarked for his native country, and as he expected, succeeded in his suit. It was then the depth of winter, and his parents dreading his undertaking a voyage in that inclement season, conjured him to defer, till the ensuing spring, going to England for Caroline, whose marriage they insisted on having celebrated in their own house, from an idea, that if their son was married according to the forms of her church, (which they knew would be the case if his nuptials took place in her country) some heavy calamity would befall him in consequence of that circumstance.

'But the wishes of Bertrand were too impetuous to comply with theirs; he rallied their fears, opposed their arguments, and returned, without delay, to England. The friends of Caroline; for her friends increased when fortune began to smile, now tried to detain her and her lover in England, as his parents had tried to detain him

in France, till a more favourable season, but they tried in vain; the youthful pair dreaded no dangers, or rather overlooked the idea of any, in their impatience to quit a place which retarded the wishes of one, and brought continually to the mind of the other, a thousand cruel slights and mortifications. They accordingly embarked, elated with hope and expectation; the ship was bound to Normandy, near whose coast Bertrand had some friends settled, who promised, on his landing there, to accompany him to his father's house, in order to be present at his wedding; the weather continued favourable till they had nearly reached their destined port, when it suddenly changed, as if to mock their hopes, and teach the heart of man no certain felicity can be expected in this life. The sailors endeavoured to make for the shore, but in vain, the storm raged with violence, and after tossing about a considerable time the ship at length bulged upon a rock; the long-boat was immediately thrown out, though from the fury of the waves it afforded but little chance of deliverance: this chance, however, was eagerly seized—Bertrand calling upon every Saint in heaven to preserve her, bore the fainting Caroline into it, the sailors crowded in numbers after them, and it almost directly upset. The shock of that moment separated Bertrand and Caroline for ever in this world,—the waves cast him upon a rock, from whence, almost lifeless, he was taken up by some fisherman and conveyed to a hut; here his friends, whom the expectation of his arrival had drawn to the coast, discovered him. Their care, their assiduity, soon restored his senses—but with what horrors was that restoration accompanied,—the deepest moans, the most piercing, the most frantic cries, were all, for a long time, he had the power of uttering: he then insisted on being taken to the waterside, and here attention alone prevented his committing an act of desperation, by plunging himself amidst the waves which had entombed his love! one day and one night, he sought her on the "sea beat shore"; the second morning her body was discovered on the strand; but how altered, by the cloaths alone it was known to be that of the Caroline he had lost. Kneeling on the earth, Bertrand solemnly vowed, by the chaste spirit of her o'er whose remains he wept, never to know another earthly love, but to devote the remainder of his days to heaven. His friends conveyed him and the body to his parents, who endeavoured to prevail on him to cancel his vow, but in vain, and as soon as the necessary formalities could be gone through, he took the religious habit.

His parents, disappointed in their hopes relative to him—their hopes of seeing a little smiling race of his prattling about them, pined away, and were soon laid beside the bones of her, who had been the innocent cause of their trouble.

Bertrand then gave up the house of his forefathers, and the greatest part of the fortune appertaining to it, to a near and distant

relation; by this time the turbulence of his grief had abated, and he soon after became, by his benevolence and strict, but unostentatious piety, one of the most respected members of the community he had entered into: his story interested me, and on the death of the old monk, who had been my confessor and chaplain, I appointed him to those offices. But though time and reason have meliorated his sorrows, there are periods when all their violence is revived.

'When the rough winds of winter howl round his habitation, and bend the tall trees of the mountains by which it is surrounded, 'tis then the remembrance of past events swells his heart with agony; 'tis then he thinks he hears the plaintive voice of Caroline mingled in the blast, and fancies he beholds her shivering spirit stalking through the gloom, and beckoning him away.

The wedding garments, which the pride and fondness of his mother prepared for his intended bride; the picture, which, on their parting in England, she gave him, he still treasures, as the hermit would treasure the relics of a saint. I have beheld them—I have wept over them—I have exclaimed within myself, as I have gazed on these *mementos* of lost happiness—"Oh, children of the dust! what folly to place your hopes, your wishes, on a world whose changes are so sudden; whose happiness, even while it appears in our view, even while we stretch out our arms to enfold it, flies never to return."

'Oh, Madeline! as Bertrand has shewn me the ornaments designed for his Caroline, and told me their hapless tale, while the big tear of tender recollection and poignant regret has rolled down his cheek, I could only quiet the strong emotions of my heart, by saying, like the holy man himself:

"Father of heaven! thy decrees must surely be for the wisest purposes, else thou wouldst not thus afflict thy creatures; thy will, therefore, not our's, be done." The sorrows of Bertrand, resumed the Countess, after pausing a minute, 'were heightened, by thinking himself accessory to them, in consequence of not regarding either the supplications of his parents or friends for postponing his voyage till a more settled season: so true is it, that those who yield to impetuous passions, will sooner or later have reason to repent doing so.'

The mind of Madeline was insensibly calmed, and drawn from its own cares by the discourse of the Countess; for the precept of wisdom, the tale of instruction is ever pleasing to the children of virtue.

But with that quick transition of feeling, so peculiar to the youthful mind, she felt, with returning composure, a kind of distaste to a world, which daily experience convinced her teemed with calamity.

Soon after the Countess had concluded her little narrative, she

requested Madeline to take her lute—a request, which Madeline attempted not to refuse. In the present state of her mind sad or solemn strains were alone congenial to her feelings, and she selected a hymn to the Supreme Being, celebrating his goodness, and the happiness prepared for those hereafter, who patiently support the trials of this life. Just depressed by a conviction of its sufferings, Madeline derived a kind of divine consolation from words, which gave so consoling an assurance of their being rewarded. At first her voice was weak, and her touch faint and tremulous; but by degrees, as if animated by the subject, her voice regained its strength, and her hand its steadiness; and high on the swelling notes her soul seemed ascending to that heaven, whose glories appeared opening to her view, when a deep sigh, or rather sob, suddenly startled her. Her hand involuntarily rested on the strings, o'er which it was lightly sweeping, and she cast an eager glance towards the Countess. How great was her surprise—her consternation, to see her fallen back, pale, and weeping in her chair. The lute instantly dropped from Madeline, and starting up, she instinctively flung her arms round her benefactress, exclaiming, 'Good heavens! Madam, what is the matter.' Then, without waiting for a reply, she was flying from the room for assistance, when the voice of the Countess made her stop.

'Return, my dear,' said she, raising herself on her chair, 'I am now better. It was only my spirits were overcome. Your solemn strains awoke in my mind recollections of the most painful nature; the hymn you were playing was a favourite of my lord's. The evening preceding the illness which terminated his life, as pale and languid he sat by me in this very room, he requested me to play it for him; his words, his looks, while he listened, as afterwards considered by me, have since convinced me that he knew his end was approaching, and that he fixed on this hymn as a kind of requiem for his departing spirit. In that light I have ever since regarded it.'

Madeline shuddered; she thought there was a ghastly paleness in the countenance of the Countess. 'Oh, Madam!' said she, 'why did you not prevent my playing it?'

'Because, my love,' replied the Countess, 'though it pains, it also pleases me. I am now better,' she continued, 'and will retire to the chapel for a little time.'

'Ah! Madam,' said Madeline, 'permit me to accompany you to-night, for perhaps you may be again taken ill.'

'No, my love,' cried the Countess, 'there is no danger of my being so. I thank you for your kind solicitude about me, but I cannot let you come with me; my composure I know will be perfectly restored by visiting the chapel. Tell Floretta, therefore, to bring me my scarf.'—Madeline obeyed, but with a repugnance she could not conquer,—and the Countess wrapping it about her, departed,

assuring Madeline she would hasten back to supper, and would then expect to find her cheerful.

Madeline, left to herself, strolled out upon the lawn. It was now the dusky hour of twilight, and solitude and silence reigned around. Her thoughts, no longer diverted by conversation, again reverted to past subjects, and deeply ruminating on them, she continued to walk till it grew quite dark: she then returned to the castle, and not finding the Countess in the room where they had parted, she rung for a servant, to enquire whether she was yet come back; the man replied she was not. Her long stay, after promising to return so soon, filled the mind of Madeline with terror, lest her delay should be occasioned by a return of her illness: and going directly to Agatha, she communicated her apprehensions to her, and entreated her to accompany her to the monastery—an entreaty the faithful creature readily complied with.



'Oh, my lady! my dearest lady!' exclaimed Agatha, 'some evil, I fear, has befallen her.'

'Oh, heavens!' cried Madeline, trembling so she could scarcely stand, 'what evil do you apprehend? who is that stranger? why, if he knew you, as I suppose he did from your knowing him, did he fly from you?'

'Because he is a villain,' replied Agatha, as she rushed into the chapel followed by Madeline, whose terror and amazement were beyond language to express. The moon then at its full, aided by the twilight of summer, gave a full view of the interior of the chapel; and as they entered it, they beheld another man darting out of a small door opposite to them. Madeline involuntarily caught the arm of Agatha, and both pausing, strained an eye of agony and terror after him: they paused however but for a moment; for a deep groan reaching their ears, made them hastily rush up the aisle from whence it proceeded, where, with feelings too dreadful to relate, they beheld their friend, their benefactress, lying stretched before the monument of her husband, apparently lifeless, and a small stream of blood issuing from her side. A shriek of mingled grief and horror burst from Madeline, and, unable to stand, she sunk beside her and clasped her trembling arms around her. Agatha, though equally afflicted, was not so much shocked as Madeline; for from the moment she beheld the stranger whom she had addressed outside the chapel, she had from secret reasons of her own been almost convinced, on entering it, she should behold a sight of horror. From being in some degree prepared for it, she was in some degree collected; and kneeling down, soon discovered that her lady still breathed, and trusted, that from the small quantity of blood which issued from it, her wound was not of a very dangerous nature. She now called upon Madeline to assist her in staunching it, ere she went to the castle for some of the servants to assist in carrying her thither.

The almost fainting senses of Madeline were recalled by her voice, and starting up, she wildly demanded if the Countess lived.

'Thank heaven! she does,' said Agatha.

Madeline dropped upon her knees in a transport of joy. 'Gracious heaven!' she exclaimed, 'receive my thanks.' Then hastily rising, 'had I not better fly to the castle,' said she, 'for assistance.'

'First help me to bind her wound,' cried Agatha. Madeline was habited in a lawn dress; she now instantly tore it from her waist, and giving it to Agatha, supported the head of the Countess upon her bosom, while a bandage was bound round her. The motion of raising her and binding her wound, served to bring the Countess to herself; as she regained her sensibility, with a deep groan, and without opening her eyes, she extended her hand, and made a feeble effort to push away Agatha, exclaiming as she did so—

'Murderous ruffian, forbear! 'tis not in mercy to me, but to your unnatural employer I ask you to spare my life; for never will peace or joy revisit his heart, if my blood rests upon his head.'

'Oh! my friend, my more than mother,' exclaimed Madeline, pressing her cold cheek to the yet colder one of the Countess, 'no murderous ruffian is now near you.'

The Countess sighed heavily, and opening her dim eyes, looked round her some minutes before she spoke, as if doubting the reality of what she saw; then in a faint voice, but one that evidently denoted pleasure, she cried, 'Great and glorious Being, I thank thee—I shall not die far from those I love, beneath the cruel hand of an assassin.'

'Dearly shall he, who raised that hand against you, rue his crime,' exclaimed Agatha; 'I know the villain—I discovered his accursed confidant near the chapel, and I will bring him to punishment, though my own life should be forfeited by doing so.'

'Mistaken woman,' said the Countess in a hollow voice, 'how would you avenge me? is it by exposing to infamy and death those more precious to me than life—by giving to my heart a deeper wound than my body has sustained?'

'This spot I will not quit!—no aid will I receive—on this cold marble will I die—except you promise to give up such an intention—except you swear, solemnly swear, within those consecrated walls, never to divulge to mortal ear the author of my injuries.'

'My dearest lady,' cried Agatha, terrified by her expressions, 'though to see vengeance executed on the wretch who attempted to take away your life, would rejoice my very soul, I will do but what you please; I will promise what you wish.'

'Swear then!' exclaimed the Countess.

'I do,' replied Agatha, 'by all my hopes of happiness here and hereafter, to lock within my heart, from every human ear, all I know concerning this black transaction.'

'And you, Madeline,' resumed the Countess, 'must do the same.'

'She knows not,' said Agatha, interrupting her lady, 'by whom the atrocious deed has been committed.'

'Thank Heaven!' cried the Countess, 'even from her, though I might confide in her prudence, I would conceal him—conceal my having a relative, who, from self-interest, could be tempted to take away my life. But Madeline, my love,' continued she, looking at her, 'will you not quiet my troubled heart by the assurance I desire, from every being, I except not even your father; you must conceal my wound being occasioned by premeditated treachery; you must, like Agatha, to all my household, to all who shall enquire concerning it, declare it owing, as I myself shall do, to some unknown and wandering ruffian.'

'Hear me swear, then,' said Madeline with energy, 'by every thing

precious to me in heaven or on earth never to disclose what you have desired me to conceal.'

'Enough,' cried the Countess in a weak voice; and the next instant, as if overcome by the exertions she had used, she fainted away.

'Fly, my dear young lady,' said Agatha to Madeline, 'our efforts to recover her without other assistance will be vain.'

Madeline started up, and walked with hasty steps half way down the aisle; she then paused—paused from the most horrible suggestions of fear. 'Should the murderers return'—cried she, gasping for breath at the very idea—'should they return before assistance can be procured, and complete their dreadful design; or should they be still lurking about the chapel, will they not seize me as I go for that assistance, and sacrifice me to their own safety!'

In an agony of fear—an agony which took from her all emotion, she leant against a pillar;—a deep groan from the Countess in a few minutes roused her from this situation. 'Oh heavens!' she exclaimed, rushing forward, 'she expires through my means.' She instantly quitted the chapel—'If I die,' said she, as she did so, 'I die in the cause of friendship.' A cold dew hung upon her temples, and she could scarcely drag her trembling limbs after her; every yard, almost, she involuntarily stopped to listen, and to cast her fearful eyes around: ready at the first intimation of danger, to retreat to the walls of the monastery. But she received no such intimation, and when she came within sight of the garden, her courage revived; her strength returned with her courage, and, like an affrighted lapping, she then almost flew to the house, and, scarcely touching the ground, rushed into the servants' hall. A figure as terrific as the one she now exhibited, they had never, either in reality or imagination, seen; her face was pale as death, her hair dishevelled, and her cloaths torn and stained with blood. She attempted to speak, but her voice died away inarticulate; in about a minute she made another effort, and, in a voice so hollow, that it seemed issuing from the very recesses of her heart, exclaimed, 'Fly!—your lady—there's murder in the chapel!'

Struck with terror, the servants eagerly crowded round her to know what she meant. 'Ask no explanation!' she cried, in almost breathless agitation, 'a moment's delay may be fatal.' The men no longer hesitated to obey her, and unable to endure her suspense till they returned, she went back with them to the monastery; but by the time she had reached it, she grew sick with apprehension that the ruffians had returned and finished their bloody work; and whilst the servants entered it, she was compelled to clasp her arms round a pillar at its door for support. Whilst she leant here, a cry of horror reached her from the chapel, and her spirits grew fainter. 'She is gone for ever!' she exclaimed, sinking upon the earth, no longer able

to stand from the tremor that seized her. In a few minutes she heard the servants approaching; she then raised her head, and beheld two of them bearing out their lady. 'Does she live?' asked Madeline.

'Live,' repeated the weeping Agatha, 'yes, dear Mam'selle, she still lives, and notwithstanding this dreadful accident, will live, I trust, for many years to come.'—Relieved from the horrible fears which had overwhelmed her, Madeline again recovered her strength, and was able immediately to return with the servants to the castle.

By the time they reached it the Countess had regained her senses; and as soon as she was laid on her bed, she commanded, whoever went for a surgeon not, on any account whatsoever, to inform him for what purpose he was sent for till he came to the castle; and that at the peril of being dismissed from her service if they disobeyed her. Her domestics should strictly conceal what had befallen her from every one out of her house, assigning as a reason for this command, that if known, she should be teased by enquiries about it; but to Agatha and Madeline, it was evident it proceeded from a fear of having the ruffian detected if his atrocious crime was mentioned. The servants promised obedience to their lady, and two of the men directly set out for the nearest town to procure a surgeon, whilst another went to the convent for Father Bertrand, who on every emergency was the counsellor and consoler of the family; he came without delay, and the moment he entered the Countess's chamber, who had sent for him, she dismissed every other person from it.

Nothing but the solemn promise which Madeline knew Agatha to have given, to conceal the author of the Countess's sufferings could now have prevented her from asking who he was. The more she reflected on the horrible affair, the more mysterious it appeared to her, and the more astonished and perplexed she felt. How strange that a woman of the Countess's benevolence, whose temper was gentleness itself, whose heart was the seat of charity, and whose liberal hand ever kept pace with the wishes of that heart, should have provoked the enmity of any one. Yet not enmity alone provoked the attempt at her life; her words in the chapel on first regaining her senses, declared its being also prompted by some view of self-interest.—This was another mystery to Madeline, for she knew of none but Monsieur and Madame D'Alembert, that could be materially benefited by the death of her benefactress.

Agatha left her soon after they had quitted the Countess's room, to prepare things for her lady against the surgeon came. But Floretta continued with her, in hopes of having her curiosity, which exceeded both her sorrow and surprise, gratified by hearing the particulars of the attack made upon the Countess by the robber, as she and all the rest of the servants supposed the assassin to be.

'Lord Mam'selle,' cried she, interrupting the deep reverie of Madeline, 'you must have been terribly frightened when you first beheld the villain. I protest it was well it was not I but Agatha who went with you, for I should certainly have dropt down dead at once upon the spot; I dare say he was a frightful looking creature.'

'I do not know,' said Madeline, 'for I did not see his face.'

'Lord, I am very sorry you did not, for then if you ever met him again, you might have sworn to him at once, and have had him taken up. Well, to be sure, I always thought my lady would come to some harm by going to that old ruin; I wish with all my soul it was all tumbled down, I don't know any thing it is fit for, but to enclose the dead or secret a robber;—many and many a time have I quaked with fear, lest my lady should have desired me to attend her to it. Certainly, 'tis a horrid thing to live in such a dismal place as we do; I dare say we shall all be murdered some night or other in our beds: we have nothing in the world to defend ourselves with, for the old guns are so rusty that I am sure it would only be wasting powder to try and do any thing with them. I think it would be a wise thing Mam'selle, if you would try and prevail on my lady, to send her jewels and plate away, for if the gang, to which no doubt the villain who attacked her in the chapel belongs, once heard a rumour of their being gone, and that they assuredly would from always having their spies about, they would never, I am sure, think it worth their while to break into the castle.

'Well, many men many minds, and many women I suppose the same. For I am certain if I was my lady, I would never live with the fine fortune she has, amongst these dismal woods and mountains. No, no, Paris would be the place for my money.'

'Do you think Floretta,' asked Madeline, who sat as pale as death, and almost motionless, 'that the surgeon will soon arrive.'

'Why that depends, Mam'selle,' replied Floretta, 'upon the haste Antoine and Jerome make in going for him, and the haste he makes in coming back with them. Though upon reflection indeed, I should not be surprised if none of them ever reached the castle; for 'tis extremely probable they may all fall into the hands of the gang, who no doubt are lurking about the castle.'

'I have not a fear of that nature,' said Madeline.

'I am sure I hope mine may be an idle one,' cried Floretta; 'poor fellows! they would die a melancholy death if such an accident befell them. Well, Mam'selle, I must now leave you; there is fortunately a sliding wainscot in my chamber, and I shall go directly and hide all my good clothes within it; I shall then try if I can't prevail on the men to see what can be done with the old fire arms. But after all, Mam'selle,' resumed she, after pausing a minute, 'if the rogues once broke into the house, what comfort could I receive from knowing my clothes were hid, for to be sure I should be killed

as well as the rest of the family, and what avails fine clothes or money, if one has no life to enjoy them.' She now retired, and Madeline remained alone in a state of the most dreadful disquietude, till the arrival of the surgeon. Father Bertrand then came to her, and Madeline eagerly enquired what he thought about her friend.

'With respect to her wound,' replied he, 'I cannot give an opinion, as I left her room the moment the surgeon entered it; but with respect to her mind I think her an angel.'

It instantly struck Madeline, that to this venerable man the Countess had imparted every secret of her heart, and that his warm, his energetic praise, proceeded from admiration at her mercy and forbearance, in not attempting to punish the monster who had injured her. 'To a much later date,' he continued, 'may heaven preserve the life of a woman, whose charities and example are so beneficial to mankind.'—'Oh! long, long may she be spared,' cried Madeline, with uplifted hands; 'who amongst the children of distress would have such reason to mourn her death as I should.'

Father Bertrand informed her, that as soon as he had seen the surgeon, he should go and write to Madame D'Alembert to come directly to the chateau.

'Poor lady!' cried Madeline, with a sigh, 'how dreadfully shocked and affected she will be, to hear of the injury her mother has received!'

'I do not mean to inform her of it,' replied he.

'But when she comes to the chateau, she cannot be kept in ignorance of it,' cried Madeline.

'Such precautions,' said the Father, 'will be used, that even then she will not know it. The sight of her amiable and beloved child will, I trust, have a happy effect upon the estimable mother.'

The surgeon now made his appearance; the faltering accents of Madeline were unequal to the enquiry her heart dictated; but Father Bertrand, more composed, soon learned, that the Countess's wound was not dangerous. 'My principal fears,' said the surgeon, 'arise from the fever with which she is threatened, in consequence of the agitation of her mind.' He then mentioned his intention of continuing at the castle till he had dressed her wound the next morning.

Madeline, no longer able to controul her strong anxiety to be with her friend, and certain that Agatha would have every proper attention paid to him, now bade him and Father Bertrand good-night, and repaired to the chamber of the Countess, where she resolved to continue till morning. All was quietness within it, for the Countess, exhausted by the pain she had suffered during the dressing of her wound, and her long conversation preceding it with Father Bertrand, had fallen into a slumber; and her attendants, Agatha and Floretta, fearful of disturbing her, would not move;—the latter,

however, could not avoid whispering to Madeline, that she had prevailed on the men to collect some of the fire-arms, and that they had promised to double-bar all the doors.

Deep groans frequently escaped the Countess, but she continued tolerably quiet for about two hours; she then, in a weak voice, called for drink; which the ready hand of Madeline instantly presented to her.

'Why, my love,' said the Countess, as Madeline, bending over her, raised her languid head, 'why do I see you here?'

'Ah! Madam,' said Madeline, 'the only comfort my heart can know is in watching by you.'

'I thank you for your tenderness,' replied the Countess; 'but I must now insist on your retiring to bed: nay, do not attempt to refuse doing so,' seeing Madeline about speaking; 'I will not go to sleep (and want of rest you may be sure will injure me), till you leave me.'

Those words conquered all opposition on the part of Madeline; and, after kissing her benefactress's hand, she withdrew, though with the greatest reluctance, to her chamber. She could not bring herself to go to bed, lest she should not in a moment, if called upon, be ready to attend her friend; she took off her torn garments, and putting on a wrapper, lay down; but though fatigued to a degree, her mind was too much agitated, too full of horror, to permit her to sleep: and, after passing a few restless hours, she arose as soon as it was light.



called her to her bedside, and, extending her hand, asked her how she was? deep convulsive sobs prevented all reply.

'Pray moderate this concern,' said the Countess; 'tis true it excites my gratitude, but it also gives me unutterable pain;—the soothing attention of a friend is the best cordial I can receive, but that cordial you will not be able to administer if you yield to those emotions.'

'Oh! Madam,' cried Madeline, sinking on her knees, and pressing the cold hand of the Countess between her's, 'Oh! Madam, I will try to repress them; I will try to do every thing which can give me the smallest power of serving you.'

'I am convinced you will, my love,' replied the Countess, 'and the conviction is soothing to my sick heart. Oh! Madeline, 'tis not my frame, so much as my mind, that is disordered.'

Weakness precluded farther conversation for the present, and Madeline seated herself beside the bed, nor stirred till absolutely commanded by the Countess to go into the next room to breakfast. She took but little, and quickly resumed her place by her friend.

About the middle of the day, the Countess had another fit. Apprized of its danger, the distress and terror of Madeline almost reduced her to the same extremity, and some of the servants were compelled to carry her from the room till their Lady had recovered. On regaining her senses, the Countess ordered Father Bertrand to be sent for; and, on his arrival, she dismissed every one else from the room. While he was shut up with her Ladyship, dinner was served in the dressing-room for Madeline, but served in vain; the grief and anxiety of her mind would neither permit her to eat nor drink, though pressed to do so by the faithful Agatha and the voluble Floretta, both of whom, but particularly the former, had a very sincere regard for her. She was informed by the latter on Agatha's quitting the room, as a great secret, that the surgeon had been requested by the Countess to bring a notary with him the next morning from the town where he lived, in order to make her will. 'We all guess, Mam'selle,' said Floretta, 'that 'tis on your account she is going to make one.'

'Heaven grant,' cried Madeline with fervour, 'that from her own hand alone I may ever receive any mark of her regard.'

'Why to be sure, Mam'selle,' said Floretta, 'that might be as pleasant a way as the other; but 'tis a comfort at any rate to be certain of it. One way or other, I am a great advocate for people making their wills; for you must know, Mam'selle, I lost a great deal by an old uncle of mine in Burgundy dying without one. He always promised to leave me every thing he had; but he was always of a shilly-shally disposition: so death whipped him off without his putting his promise into execution, and his property was then divided amongst all his relations. Had he kept his promise, little as

folks think of me now, I can assure you, Mam'selle, I should have been an heiress, for he owned two very fine vineyards and an excellent house, and several large flocks of sheep; and with all those I think I might have held up my head pretty high.'

'I think you hold it up high enough already,' said Agatha, who had entered before the conclusion of the speech.

'Not higher,' replied Floretta pertly, 'than I have a right to do.'

'That point might be disputed,' cried Agatha.

'Oh, not at present,' said Madeline, to whom every sound was irksome, that did not convey some tidings of the Countess.

Father Bertrand continued a considerable time with the Countess; and when he left her, he passed hastily through the dressing-room. Madeline then returned to the chamber, followed by Agatha, and resumed her station. The Countess did not appear worse; and desired they might be left together.

'You have heard, my love, I suppose,' said she, turning her languid eyes upon Madeline as Agatha closed the door after her, 'that Madame D'Alembert is sent for.'

'I have, Madam,' replied Madeline.

'I hope,' resumed the Countess, 'she may not arrive too late.'

'Heaven forbid!' cried Madeline shuddering; 'I trust when she arrives, she will find your Ladyship pretty well recovered.'

'Believe me, my dear,' said the Countess, ' 'tis on her account I principally desire to recover; she still chains me to a world, to which I am in a great degree grown indifferent, from the loss of several of my dearest connections, as well as many other heavy calamities;—but for her, I should look forward to the idea of quitting it with pleasure, as I should to a release from pain and trouble—should consider it with delight, as a means of re-uniting me to those whom, while on earth, I must for ever mourn.

'For the sake of my beloved child I wish to be spared a little longer; with increasing years, she may perhaps acquire that fortitude which I fear she would at present want to support my loss. But should my wish be disappointed—should she arrive too late to receive my last blessing, my admonition against a sorrow, not only useless, but inimical to every duty—to you, Madeline, I entrust that blessing, that admonition for her; certain that, as one will be delivered by solemnity, so the other will be enforced with sympathy. Should it be my destiny never more to open my eyes upon her in this world, to you, Madeline, I leave the task of consoling her;—a task not unacceptable, I am convinced, to your grateful nature, and one well suited to its gentleness. She is already prepared to love and to esteem you; and, from a predilection in your favour, will listen patiently to all you say. Represent, therefore, to her (if indeed it happens), that the event she regrets, could not, according to the laws of human nature, have been much longer delayed. And,

Oh! Madeline, I adjure you, never let her know how it was accelerated.'

'May Heaven only prosper me,' cried Madeline, 'as I keep inviolably from her knowledge the injury you received.'

'Excuse my betraying a doubt of your doing so,' resumed the Countess, 'after the solemn promise I have already received from you to that purpose; my fears for her urge me even to unnecessary caution. Oh! Madeline, great as was the pleasure I ever derived from your society, 'tis now heightened by considering you in the light of my child's comforter;—you will console, you will strengthen her, you will reconcile her to my loss.'

'Impossible! impossible!' exclaimed Madeline, in the fulness of her heart, and bursting into tears.

'Ah! Madeline,' said the Countess, affected by her emotion, 'do not embitter moments like these by a sorrow which will destroy all the hopes I entertained of your being a consoler to my child.'

'May every event,' cried Madeline, sinking on her knees, 'may every event,' with uplifted hands, 'which could place her in want of consolation, be far, far distant from her. But should such an event now happen, Oh! may Heaven grant me power equal to my inclination to give it to her!'

'After my death,' proceeded the Countess.

'Oh! Madam,' interrupted Madeline, 'do not talk of it—you stab me to the very soul by doing so.'

'Rather rejoice than grieve to hear me do so,' said the Countess; 'how much more dreadful, at the very moment when I stand, perhaps, upon the brink of the grave, to find me trembling, shrinking at the idea of dissolution! I have always tried to act so as to be prepared for it; I have always prayed, that I might be composed when it approached—might be able, in the last extremity of nature, to hold out my hands to my Creator, deprecate his wrath, and implore his mercy. Oh! my love, but for the precious ties I have still remaining, I should welcome it as a release from a world that teems with troubles. But I will not, by perpetually reverting to those troubles, cast a cloud over the youthful prospects of my Madeline.'

'Alas!' thought Madeline, 'they are already clouded.'

'Life,' resumed the Countess, 'is a checquered scene, and, by a proper performance of our duties, we may enjoy many comforts in it; 'tis the use we make of those comforts, and the manner in which we support their loss, that fixes the peace or misery of our last moments. Oh! happy are they,' continued the Countess, while a faint spark of animation was rekindled in her eye, 'Oh! happy are they, who can review their past conduct without regret! who can think, to use the language of a poet of a sister country, that when their bones have run their race, they may rest in blessings, and have a tomb of orphan's tears wept over them.'

'But to resume the subject you interrupted.—After my death, Madame D'Alembert, I am sure, will seek retirement; and the retirement of this chateau I am confident she will prefer to that of any other place, should Monsieur D'Alembert permit her to remain in it. Till more happily settled, I hope, and believe, your father will allow you to be her companion whenever she visits, and while she continues in it alone; for your society, I am convinced, will ever prove a source of comfort to her. But remember, I never desire you to be her companion, except she is without the company of Monsieur D'Alembert: and believe me, my Madeline, I am not so selfish as not to hope that you may soon have tenderer claims to fulfil than any she can have upon you. Let not the disappointment of your first expectations make you suppress all others; oppose reason to despondence, and the latter will soon be conquered. 'Tis a duty you owe your father as well as yourself, to try and do every thing which can promote your happiness; endeavour, therefore, to erase from your heart those impressions, which can only give you pain, and to prepare it to esteem and be propitious to some worthy man.

'Should chance again throw de Sevignie in your way, fly from him instantly, I conjure you, except he offers a full explanation of his conduct. Excuse me, my love,' on hearing a gentle sigh steal from Madeline, 'for mentioning a subject that is painful to you; but you are so innocent, so totally unacquainted with art, that too much caution cannot be used in guarding you against it. And even then,' continued she, returning to the subject of de Sevignie, 'if he should offer to account for his conduct, do not listen to him; refer him to your father to give the explanation; for an unimpassioned ear he cannot deceive. If by any chance you should ever discover him to be the amiable character you once fancied, you will find by my will, which I purpose making to-morrow, that want of fortune will be no hindrance to your union.'

Madeline could not speak, but tears, more eloquently than words could have done, expressed her feelings.

'But I am wrong,' resumed the Countess, 'in having suggested the idea of such an union to you—an idea which may counteract all I have before been saying.'

'No, Madam,' said Madeline in a low voice, 'it will not.'

'Please me, my Madeline,' cried the Countess after a pause, 'by saying that you will remember what I have said to you.'

'Remember!' repeated Madeline; 'Oh! Madam, could you think I could ever forget aught you said?—Remember!—I will do more—I will try to fulfil every injunction you have given me, if indeed,' in a scarcely articulate voice, 'it should be necessary to do so.'

'I thank you for saying so,' replied the Countess; 'I thank you not only for this, but for the many proofs of affection and attention

I have received from you. Your society has been a greater happiness, a greater comfort to me than I can express; it has frequently beguiled the cares which oppressed me—cares which the generality of people considered me a stranger to. I wished to be thought happy, and I endeavoured to appear so; but no tongue could describe the anguish which has long preyed upon my heart. Never, however, let this involuntary effusion of confidence escape you; let it be buried in your breast with all you know concerning the black transaction in the chapel—a transaction which I fervently hope may never be known to more than the few already unhappily acquainted with it;—from every eye I would conceal its author;—my forgiveness is his, and my earnest prayers are offered up to Heaven for its forgiveness also for him.’

The evening was now far advanced, and the Countess appeared exhausted by speaking. Madeline besought her to take a reviving cordial; she complied with the entreaty, and then said she would settle herself to rest. She charged Madeline to retire at an early hour to bed. ‘You look pale and agitated, my love,’ said she; ‘but cheer up—the mention of death does not make me nearer dying. Farewell! may good angels for ever watch around you!’ Madeline pressed her lips to her cheek; and then rising from her knees, closed the curtains of the bed, and withdrew. She sent Agatha and Floretta to the chamber; then retired to her own, where she offered up a fervent prayer to Heaven for the restoration of her valuable and beloved friend; after which, finding herself still very languid, and the rain being over, she descended to the garden, hoping the evening air might revive her.



chilled and fatigued her; as she returned to the chateau she saw on every side a blackening train of clamorous rooks seeking their accustomed shelter among the tall trees surrounding it, while, assiduous in his bower, the owl plied his sad song, and the water-fowl, wheeling from their nests upon the lake, screamed along the land.

Madeline slowly ascended the stairs, and repairing to the dressing-room, found Agatha and Floretta there; she eagerly enquired about the Countess, and they informed her, that she still slept, and had done so almost from the time she had quitted her. They also said, that her Ladyship had desired them to sit up in the dressing-room, as a light in her chamber was disagreeable to her. Madeline instantly declared she would keep them company, and felt rejoiced to hear of the repose of her friend, flattering herself it was a sign of her being better.

Every thing, which could give comfort to the night, was already provided. A cheerful fire blazed in the grate, the brightness and warmth of which were truly reviving to the depressed spirits and chilled frame of Madeline; and before it lay a table, covered with bread, meat, and rich wines. Madeline took a bit of bread and some wine, and seated herself beside the fire. It was now the hour at which the servants generally went to rest, and with light steps they were soon heard retiring to their respective chambers; a profound stillness then reigned throughout the Castle—a stillness, however, which was soon interrupted by the wind, that had now encreased to a tremendous degree. Sometimes it howled dismally through the long galleries; sometimes came in such sudden squalls against the doors, that it almost burst them open, whilst the forest was heard groaning beneath its fury; and ever and anon loose stones came tumbling from the battlements of the Castle.

The dejection of Madeline's heart returned—a dejection, which the account she received of her friend had a little dissipated, and with it a terror she could not suppress; she laid down the cup of wine, and casting her eyes upon her companions, perceived, by their countenances, they were equally affected.

'How mournfully the wind howls,' said Agatha, in a low voice; 'the Lord have mercy,' devoutly crossing herself, 'upon all who are at sea! many a stout heart will go to the bottom, I fear, to-night. 'Tis very odd, yet very true, that the night before my Lord the Count de Merville (Heaven rest his soul! again crossing herself) died, there was just such a storm as there is now; the noise it made throughout the house was just as if people had been fighting and shrieking about it. I thought at the time, the sounds were presageful ones; particularly as the birds kept such a screaming and fluttering about the windows, for their screams are always sure foretellers of death. Indeed they have not been very quiet to-night.'

'No,' cried Madeline, wishing to check the involuntary horror with which the words of Agatha had inspired her, 'because they are now, as they were then, disturbed by the storm; 'tis well known, that their screams not only foretel, but last during one. I have heard my father say, that people who live near the sea always take warning by them, and never (if possible to avoid doing so) venture upon it, while they continue.'

'I shall never be made, however, to believe that they do not forebode something more than a storm,' cried Agatha; 'no, Mam'selle, be assured they are certain prognostics of death; but such warnings as these are not confined to one family, like others that I know of: For instance, in the Castle of the Marquis de Vermandois, about two leagues from this, a great bell always tolls before the death of any one belonging to it; and there never was any change about taking place in this chateau that there was not a dreadful storm beforehand, accompanied by the fall of an old suit of armour, which hangs on the left side of the hall, nearly opposite the dining parlour, and which belonged to the founder of the mansion.'

'I know the suit you mean,' said Madeline; 'I have often examined it as a curious piece of antiquity; but the reason it falls, when there is a storm, is, because the wind then gets through the crevices of the walls, and blows it down.'

'You are very incredulous, Mam'selle,' cried Agatha; 'but you'll never be able to make me believe otherwise than I do now. Lord! I still tremble at the recollection of what I suffered, when I heard the armour fall with such a crash a few minutes before my Lord's death. I was alone with him, and that, to be sure, augmented my terror; for my lady, overcome by grief, had fainted, and was carried from the room by the other attendants.'

'I have heard say, indeed,' cried Floretta, who had hitherto listened to the words of Agatha with the most profound attention, 'that those warnings of death are very common.'

'God, of his infinite mercy,' said Madeline, 'may perhaps give such warnings to the wicked, in order to awaken them to repentance; but to the good, to those whose lives prepare them at any hour for his summons, I never can believe he does.'

'I shall enter into no argument about the matter,' cried Agatha; 'for nothing could persuade me out of my own opinion.'

'Yet what Mam'selle says seems just enough,' said Floretta; 'for why should the good, who need no preparation for death, be warned of it as well as those whose bad actions render it necessary they should, in order to have them brought to repentance.'

'Well,' replied Agatha, 'I have not a doubt but what they come to both?'

'What a dreadful thing it must be, to have a troubled conscience, when one is near dying,' resumed Floretta.

'Ay, or at any other time either,' exclaimed Agatha; 'many a foul deed has it forced people to reveal.'

'There is a memorable story told about that,' said Floretta, 'in the part of Burgundy I come from.'

'Well, tell it,' cried Agatha; 'it will help to pass away the time.'

'There stood, about fifty years ago,' began Floretta, drawing her chair closer to her companion's, 'near the village where I was born, an old mansion, which had for many years been uninhabited, for its owner, being given to travel in foreign parts, never gave himself any trouble at all about repairing it; so that, owing to his neglect, it went by degrees so much to rack and ruin, that two servants, who had been left in it, thought it unsafe to continue in it, and accordingly quitted it.'

'Well, in process of time, the unthrifty master of this old chateau died; and never having been married, it fell to a distant relation, who was delighted (as you may well think) to have the fine estate surrounding it become his: he was neither given to squandering nor gadding; and knowing what the comforts of a good home were, he directly ordered the ruin to be pulled down, that he might have another house built in its place. This you may be sure was a joyful order for the tenants; for 'tis the life of the poor souls to have a rich landlord live amongst them, particularly one that is generous and good, as was the gentleman I am speaking of. They set merrily to work, and soon demolished most of the building; for 'tis a true saying, that willing minds, like many hands, make light work.'

'As they were destroying the wall of a vault, which had once been used for family stores, they found, within a niche of it, against which a parcel of loose stones were piled, the skeleton of a full-grown person.—You may well conceive their consternation at such a sight; for it immediately struck them that this was the skeleton of a murdered person, else what should bring it there.'

'The discovery was soon spread throughout the village, and all the folks came flocking to the place. They were all of one opinion, that some one had been murdered in the house, and that the crime had been committed after it became deserted. They strove to recollect whether any person, within their memories, had been suddenly missed from their neighbourhood, but could not remember a circumstance of the kind.'

'While they were busy talking over the matter, there came riding by an elderly gentleman, well dressed, and of a grave and comely appearance; so seeing the crowd, he stopped his horse, as was natural enough, and alighting from it, entered the court-yard, and enquired what was the matter.'

'“A sad affair, master,” replied one of the oldest of the villagers; “we have just discovered that a murder was committed within the walls we have been destroying.”'

‘“A murder!” repeated the gentleman, changing colour; “a murder!—Pray, my good friend, how did you discover it?”

‘“Why, by finding a skeleton hid within a vault: you may be sure, if the person to whom it belonged had died fairly, it would never have been stuffed into such a place. They, to be sure, who committed the cruel act, thought they were secure enough of its never been found out by hiding it there, but you see they were mistaken. The watchful eye of God is over all; he seldom suffers murder to escape the punishment it merits: and indeed I can scarcely doubt that the discovery of the skeleton is but the forerunner of the discovery of the murderer.”

‘The old man and the stranger were standing by a wall, against which the skeleton was placed; but the latter had hitherto been kept from seeing it, by some women who stood between it and him; they now drew back, supposing that, like themselves, he would be curious enough to wish to examine it.—Scarcely had they done so, when, just as the old man had finished his last sentence, a violent gust of wind arose, which blew down the skeleton, and it fell plump at the stranger’s feet. He started back, as any one indeed might have done at such an accident, and attempted directly to leave the place; but some how or other, his foot was entangled by the skeleton, so that he could not move. Well, when he perceived this, he gave a deep groan, and sunk upon the ground. The people hastened to his assistance; he was lifted up—but it was many minutes ere he shewed any signs of life; and when he did, it was at first only by dismal sighs. At last opening his eyes, he took the old man’s hand, who helped to support him—

‘“Oh! my good friend,” cried he, “your words were but too true; the discovery of that frightful spectacle but foreruns the discovery of the murderer; in me you behold that guilty wretch.”—At this there was a general cry, and all praised the wonderful Providence of Heaven.

‘“You shall have,” he continued, “a full confession of my guilt; I no longer wish (even if it was possible to do so) to evade the punishment due to it.”

‘As he spoke, he fell into such agonies, that they thought he would have died, and were forced to get him some wine to take.

‘Being a little revived by it, he was seated on the grass, and thus began:—

‘“To the old, as well as the young, my story may be instructive; it will prove to the former, that their authority over youth should never be too much relaxed; and to the latter, that those who are disobedient to their parents or guardians, and waste the morning of their life in idleness or vice, may assuredly expect to end its evening in misery. I was born of reputable parents, in a small town in this province. The comforts they enjoyed, which were sufficient

to satisfy humble dispositions, were procured by their own industry, and, with the inheritance of the little property they had acquired, they trusted I would possess a spirit temperately to enjoy, and honestly to increase it; but their over-indulgence marred their wishes. I soon discovered their easiness of temper, and, in consequence of that easiness, grew importunate in my demands—demands which they soon lost the power of refusing; and I became, from their compliance, giddy and dissipated in the extreme. Too late my parents perceived their error, in allowing me such latitude as they had done, and in not checking, at the beginning, the propensities I early shewed to idleness and dissipation. Their remorse, together with the disappointment of their hopes relative to me, terminated their lives (while I was yet in the prime of my youth) and they died within a short period of each other. I felt some little compunction and regret; but the first call of pleasure drove them from my heart, and I resumed my former courses. A continuance in them soon dissipated the little property I possessed. I then resolved to abandon my native country, and seek subsistence in another part of the world. This resolution I imparted to a particular friend, a youth about my own age, and, like me, an orphan. Our attachment had commenced at the first dawning of reason, and a kind of infatuation seemed to bind him to me; he was ever ready to join me in my schemes, and often, latterly, assisted my declining purse. Through my means, his fortune had been considerably injured; but though his fortune was not wrecked like mine, he now declared he would accompany me to any part of the world I should like to go to; a declaration I rejoiced to hear, as he had the means of keeping me from hardships I otherwise, from the low state of my finances, expected to undergo. He accordingly gathered the remains of his wealth together, and we set out on foot (the better to conceal the distressed situation in which we left the place of our nativity) for Rochelle, from whence we purposed embarking for the West Indies, thinking that the best place for adventurers.

“About sun-set, the first day, we came within sight of this ruined mansion, and feeling extremely tired, we turned into it, and refreshed ourselves with the provisions we carried about us. We thought we could not find a better situation for spending the night in, and we had scarcely determined on doing so, when my companion, more fatigued than I was, fell asleep.

“Evil suggestions, which I had not grace to subdue, then rose in my mind. If the remnant of his wealth was mine, I cried, how much sooner could I realize the schemes I have formed for making my fortune. The idea was too tempting to be resisted, and, with the knife, with which but a few moments before he had helped me to bread, I pierced him to the heart; he never opened his eyes; one deep, one deadly groan, was all that escaped him; it still sounds in

my ears, and ascended to Heaven to call down vengeance on my head.

‘“After I had committed the execrable deed, I searched for a place to hide the body in; and having discovered a vault, I dragged it thither, and covered the traces of the blood with rubbish. Oh that the mouldering walls had crushed me to atoms, while thus impiously employed! Yet wretch as I am! Oh, why do I say so? Rather let me bless the Power, which mercifully granted me leisure to repent—which perhaps spared me then in order to warn others, by my narration and punishment, from crimes similar to mine.

‘“To be brief, my dear auditors, I pursued my original intention, and embarked for the West Indies, where every thing succeeded even beyond my expectations. It seemed as if Heaven allowed me to prosper but to prove how mistaken I was, in supposing wealth alone could give me happiness. Alas! dreadful mistake, to think any could be enjoyed from a fortune, whose foundation was laid in blood:—with riches, wretchedness, if possible, increased, ’tis now fifteen years since I murdered my friend; and from that period to this, peace has been a stranger to my breast. Remorse pervaded my soul; horror pursued my steps, and the blood I had shed continually swam before me.

‘“Having at length secured an ample independence, and being disgusted with the place where I lived, or rather, as is often the case with the wretched, imagining change of scene might alleviate my misery, I resolved on returning to my native country; but the abode of my youth I was destined never more to behold; my conscience would not suffer me to remain unconcerned on beholding the skeleton, and thus did Providence, I may say, make me call for justice on myself.”

‘In consequence of his confession,’ continued Floretta, ‘he was committed to prison, and soon after tried, condemned, and executed on the spot where he had committed the murder. A little time before his death, he deposited a sum of money in the hands of a priest, for the purpose of having mass said for the soul of his murdered friend, and a monument erected to his memory in our village church, where his bones were buried.

‘Often and often have I seen that monument, upon which, according to his desire, the priest had inscribed the particulars of his strange story, exactly opposite the churchyard; and at the side of the high-way he was interred himself:—his grave could plainly be distinguished when I was last in that part of the country, though all overgrown with grass and weeds, as was the stone placed at its head, to signify the reason he was denied Christian burial. Many and many a time, particularly after it grew dark, I have taken a long circuit to avoid passing it; for ’tis confidently said, and believed by our villagers, that his spirit, and that of the unhappy

gentleman he murdered, take their nightly rounds about the place moaning, lamenting, and uttering the most piteous cries. My poor old grandmother, from whom I have repeatedly heard the story, told me she was once almost frightened to death, from fancying she had a glimpse of them near the church-yard; and the servants in the house that was rebuilt, have often been almost scared out of their senses, by the noises they have heard within it.

'Thus,' continued Floretta, 'my story proves the truth of what we were saying, namely, that an evil conscience has often occasioned the discovery of foul crimes. It was owing to it that the stranger imagined the falling of the skeleton not an accidental circumstance, but one immediately ordered by Heaven, and from that idea did he betray himself.'

'True,' cried Agatha, who had listened with deep attention, and great delight, ' 'tis an old saying, and a just one, that a guilty conscience needs no accuser.

'Lord! if people were to allow themselves a little time to consider, half the bad actions that are committed would be left undone; for they would then reflect, that neither riches nor titles can make amends for that peace of mind which a wicked deed destroys. No person's lot can be truly miserable, who, on retiring to their beds, can lay their hands upon their hearts, and say within themselves, I may go to rest in peace, assured of the protection of Heaven, from never having wilfully injured man, woman, or child. Such a thought as this will support one through many distresses. May it support us at the hour of death!'—'and in the day of judgment!' cried Madeline, with involuntary fervour, and raising her hands and eyes to Heaven—'Amen,' rejoined Agatha.

'As one story begets another,' continued she, 'if you have no objection, Mam'selle, I can tell one something to the same purpose of that we have been listening to.'

'Objection!' repeated Floretta, 'Lord! no, to be sure she can't,' answering for Madeline; 'there is nothing, I think, can delight people more than hearing stories; many and many a winter's night I have passed in hearkening to my grandmother's, who had such a budget of them, there was not a great house for many leagues around us, that she could not tell something wonderful about, and she has frequently sent me to bed shaking with fear.'

'Well, Mam'selle,' asked Agatha, turning to Madeline, 'are you of Floretta's mind?'

'Yes,' replied Madeline, who saw that Agatha would be dreadfully disappointed, if not permitted to tell one of the wonderful tales in which she abounded.

*Breathing astonishment, of witching rhymes,  
And evil spirits; of the death-bed call*

*Of him who robb'd the widow, and devour'd  
The Orphan's portion; of unquiet souls  
Ris'n from the grave to ease the heavy guilt  
Of deeds in life conceal'd; of shapes that walk  
At dead of night, and clank their chains, and wave  
The torch of hell around the murderer's bed.*

'In the reign of Lewis the Ninth, commonly known by the title of St Lewis, from the holy war in which he engaged, there stood,' said Agatha, 'about a league from the boundaries of this chateau, a noble castle, the ruins of which are still visible upon a fine eminence, scattered over with wood; and I dare say, Mam'selle, in your way to Madame Chatteneufs, you have taken notice of them.'—'I have,' replied Madeline.

'This Castle, at the period I have mentioned,' resumed Agatha, 'belonged to a nobleman of an ancient family, and very large fortune; but notwithstanding his rank, which should have made him generous, his fortune, which enabled him to do so, and his having only one child to provide for, he was of a mean and miserly disposition, grudging to himself, and all about him, the necessaries of life; and treated his son, a fine noble youth, brave, generous, and accomplished—in short, his reverse in every respect, in such a severe manner, that he determined to leave him, if an opportunity offered for permitting him to do so, without having his real motives known; for though he could not esteem his father himself, he yet wished, if possible, to keep him from the censures of the world.

'The opportunity he desired occurred upon the King's determining upon a crusade; for it was natural, you know, that a youth of his prowess should wish to embark in so glorious a cause. He accordingly repaired, without delay, to the royal standard, and bade an adieu to his native country.

'His only regret, at doing so, was occasioned by his separation from a young lady, whom he had privately made his wife, and by whom he had a son, then some months old. She was an orphan, and the descendant of a good, but reduced family. He saw her at the house of the relation's, to whose care she had been consigned, and who, not caring to be burdened with her, determined to settle her in a cloister. They did not know each other long, ere a mutual attachment grew between them; and well knowing it would be vain to solicit his father's consent, or her relations, for fear of disobliging him, he stole her away, and, after their nuptials, placed her in a small house near his own residence, which he had taken for that purpose.

'The only person entrusted with the affair was his father's butler, an old man, who had lived long in the family; had often dandled him in his infancy, and was, he knew, faithfully attached to him.

To the care of this good creature, who respected the lady, and doated on the child, he left his treasures.

'He had but just reached the Holy Land, when his father died. Poor Peter, who, without authority, could not do any thing, apprized him, as soon as possible, of this event, and requested either his immediate presence, or orders how to act.

'So great was the anxiety of the noble youth, to see his wife and child, and have them publicly acknowledged as such, that without loss of time, he knelt before the King, and entreated his permission to return to his native country, in order to settle his affairs. This the King most graciously granted: but alack! he only returned to find a grave within it.

'Within a league of his castle, he was way-laid and murdered by two ruffians, masked; and the sad intelligence was conveyed to his expecting family by his faithful squire, then his only attendant, who, in attempting to save his life, received such desperate wounds, that he died in two days after.

'Peter was greatly grieved; but, alas! what was his grief to that of the poor lady's; she lost all relish for this life, and in less than a week after her husband's death, was laid beside him in the grave. In her last moments, as well as in those preceding them, she besought Peter to be a steady friend to her child, and see him, if possible, put into possession of his rights. Peter promised to do all he could, but that all, he feared, would be but little. The certificate of her marriage had been destroyed in a box, with many other valuables, by an accidental fire some months prior to her death; and Peter knew too much of the world to think the gentleman, who was heir to the estate, in case his master left no lawful issue, would take his single testimony for the legitimacy of her child, and thus give up a fortune he much wanted; being an extravagant spendthrift, addicted to every vice and folly, and who would for many years have been in the greatest distress, but for the bounty of his poor murdered relation. Well things turned out as Peter thought; the gentleman came from a distant part of France, where he lived, to take possession, and declared he did not give the smallest credit to there being any other heir than himself; he did not doubt, he said, the child being his cousin's, but his legitimate one, he was convinced it was not; and all poor Peter could prevail on him to do, was to allow a small stipend for its support. Peter, with the rest of the servants, was retained, and none of them had reason to complain of their master. For some time, he rendered the castle a scene of constant gaiety; but suddenly his spirits drooped; he shut out company, and appeared to have taken a dislike to all the pleasures he before delighted in; but though he avoided company, solitude seemed equally irksome to him, and he almost continually had one or other of the domestics in the apartment with him. The sudden

alteration in his manner, the involuntary horrors he sometimes betrayed, appeared strange circumstances in the eyes of Peter, and from them he drew an inference that shocked him. Determined to know whether it was, or was not a just one, he devised a scheme, which, when you hear it, you will say was a bold one.

‘He was the domestic his master generally selected to be near him, and, at the close of day, they frequently walked together up and down a great Gothic hall.—One evening, as they were thus engaged, Peter, whom his master allowed to converse familiarly with him, from his long residence in the family, and well-known attachment to it, said to him, with a solemn voice and countenance, “Sir, there is something of consequence which I wish to impart to you: last night I had a dream; indeed I do not know whether I can properly call it one, in which methought my poor young master, disfigured by wounds, and stained with blood, came to me, and told me I should, when I least expected it, have the pleasure of discovering his murderer, and bringing him to condign punishment.”—Peter paused, and looked steadily at his master, who betrayed the greatest agitation.

‘“Was any thing else said to you?” demanded he, in a faltering voice.

‘“Yes,” replied Peter, “I asked him by what means I should discover his murderer, and he told me he would betray himself.

‘“You will,” said he, “mention my murder before him, and his guilty conscience will make him, if not by words, at least by agitation, declare his crime. Besides, my troubled spirit will be near you at the time, and accelerate the discovery.”

‘Peter’s master now declared he was taken very ill, and must go directly to his chamber. Scarcely had he spoken, when the dreadful creaking of an iron door was heard, and a faint light flashed upon him, from the spiral stair-case of an old tower, that had for centuries been uninhabited, from an idea of its being haunted.

‘“Lord, defend me!” cried Peter; “I have the key of the iron door at the top of the tower in my possession, and no human hand could have opened it; the light, too, from the stair-case is quite a blue flame.”’

‘Hark,’ cried Floretta at this moment, with an affrighted countenance, ‘what noise is that?’

‘Noise!’ repeated Agatha, with an emotion of fear.

‘Oh! ’tis only the wind,’ continued she, listening a minute; ‘it often comes in this way against the doors, as if it would burst them open; but bless me, Mam’selle,’ looking at Madeline, ‘how deadly pale you are; I fear sitting up does not agree with you.’

The spirits of Madeline, weakened by grief, were indeed affected, in spite of her reason, with a kind of superstitious awe, by the stories of her companions.

'Let us mull some wine,' cried Agatha; 'it will do us all good.'

'Ay, do,' said Floretta, 'and I will make some toast.'

Madeline now said she would step into the Countess's chamber, and try whether she still slept. She accordingly stole into it, and bending over her pillow, had the satisfaction of finding she continued in a tranquil sleep. This somewhat cheered her; and after taking a glass of the mulled wine, she felt the gloom of her spirits pretty well depressed. Agatha then resumed her story.

'Scarcely,' said she, 'had Peter uttered the last word, when his master dropped senseless at his feet. Peter raised, and with difficulty recovered him. The moment he opened his eyes, he dropped upon his knees, implored the mercy of Heaven, and confessed he was the murderer of his cousin.

'Plunged into difficulties, he said, by his extravagance, which he was ashamed to avow, as soon as ever he heard of his cousin's expected return from the Holy Land, he laid the plan for destroying him, which succeeded but too well, and in which he was assisted by a servant, whom he afterwards murdered, for fear of his betraying him.

'Peter told him, if he would immediately resign the estate to the lawful heir, he would not give him up to the punishment he merited. This he readily consented to do; and every thing necessary being done, he retired to a monastery, where he soon after died of a broken heart. After his death, this story was divulged by the servant, whose assistance Peter had obtained for carrying into execution the scheme he had contrived for knowing whether or not his master had murdered his cousin.'

The tale concluded, on which Floretta made many comments, a general silence ensued; it was now about the middle of the night, or rather the beginning of the morning, and the storm still raged with unabated violence. Madeline went to a window, and opened a shutter, to see whether the scene without was as dreary as fancy within had represented it to be, and found it, if possible, more so. The faint dawn o'er the western hills was overcast by heavy clouds, and the trees of the wood tumultuously agitated by the blast, which seemed threatening to tear them from the earth.

'How dreadful, how appalling is this hurricane,' cried Madeline, as she leant against the window. 'If it strikes such terror into a heart conscious of no crime, what fears, what horrors must it excite in one burthened with guilt. To such an one the war of the elements must indeed be dreadful, as seeming to declare the anger of an offended God.—Like the Poet, Madeline thought that such a heart would think

*The tempest blew his wrath,  
The thunder was his voice, and the red flash  
His speedy sword of justice.*

Chilled by the melancholy prospect, she closed the shutter, and returned to the fire, before which her companions were now slumbering. In deep and pensive meditation, she sat a considerable time with her eyes fixed upon the crackling blaze, when the heavy crash of something falling in the lower part of the Castle, startled not only her, but her companions.

'Holy virgin!' exclaimed Agatha, turning pale, 'defend us—'tis the armour that has fallen.'

'You had better try,' said Madeline, in a faint voice.

'Try,' repeated Agatha; 'Lord, not for the world.'

'Nor I, I am sure,' said Floretta, 'if you could, or would give me a principality for doing so.'

'I will then,' cried Madeline, ashamed to propose what she would shrink from herself, 'I will go and endeavour to discover the occasion of the noise.'

She went softly into the Countess's chamber, to try if she was disturbed by it, and finding her still asleep, she took up a light, and descended (though with trembling limbs, and a palpitating heart) to the great hall, from whence the noise had sounded. The light she held but partially dispersed its awful gloom, and her tremor and palpitation increased, as she proceeded to the extreme end, at which hung the ominous armour. She found this in its usual situation, and she was hastily moving from it, too much depressed and agitated to think of searching elsewhere for the cause of the noise, when a door opposite to her (which led to a suit of rooms that had been appropriated solely to the use of the Count, and since his death, shut up), slowly opened, and a tall figure, clad in black, came forth.

Madeline started behind a pillar; the conversation of her companions had raised the very spirit of superstition in her breast, and, with eyes almost bursting from their sockets, she now stood immovable, gazing upon the terrifying object that presented itself to her view; but when she saw it approaching her, which it did, with a slow, but steady step, her faculties returned, and dropping the light, she fled to the stair-case; but ere she had ascended many steps, she fell, through her extreme haste; and the surrounding darkness, and the exquisite pain she suffered, in consequence of bending her foot under her at the instant, prevented her from making an immediate effort for rising. She lay for about two minutes in this situation, when a faint light gleaming behind her, made her turn her head with quickness, and she beheld the object of her terror within a step of her. A cold dew instantly burst from her pores, her heart almost died within her, and she covered her face with her hands.



upon the careering winds, will, I humbly trust, prevent their fury from being destructive.'

Madeline now enquired whether he heard the noise which had so much alarmed her and her companions. He replied in the affirmative, but said it had come from the gallery instead of the hall, and that he would now go up, and try to discover the cause of it, accompanied by Madeline. He accordingly ascended, and they soon discovered that it had been occasioned by the fall of the Countess's picture.

'Do you now, my child,' said the Father, 'retire, and try to take some repose; for your spirits have been much agitated. I rejoice to hear that the rest of our noble friend has been so good; 'tis a favourable symptom; may the morning light witness the realization of the hopes it has inspired!'

'Heaven grant it may!' fervently rejoined Madeline. She then bade the good man farewell, and begged he would, on descending to the hall, try whether the light she had dropped was extinguished.

The moment she re-entered the dressing-room, Agatha and Floretta eagerly enquired if they were right in their conjectures. She assured them they were not, and then informed them of the cause of their alarm.—This excited little less consternation than if she had told them the armour was fallen;—so prone is superstition to dress up every circumstance in the garb of terror.

The dawn was now peeping through the shutters; the lights were therefore put out, and Agatha and Floretta then again began to slumber before the fire. They were soon, however, disturbed by a sudden gust of wind, which came with such violence against the doors, as almost to burst them open.

'Heaven defend us!' said Agatha, 'the storm grows worse, instead of better.'

'Hark,' cried Madeline, with a wild expression in her countenance, and laying her hand upon the arm of Agatha—'Hark!—there surely was a groan mingled in that blast.'

'No, Mam'selle,' said Agatha, ' 'tis only the howling of the wind.'

'Again!' exclaimed Madeline;—'Oh Heavens!' starting from her chair, ' 'tis the voice of the Countess!'

She rushed into the chamber, followed by her companions. The curtains of the bed were hastily drawn back, and the Countess was discovered in a fit: a scream of mingled terror and anguish burst from Madeline, and sinking on her knees, she clasped the nerveless hands of her friend between her's.

Agatha and Floretta used every effort to recover their lady, and at length succeeded. On opening her eyes, she turned them round with a wild stare, as if forgetting where she was, or by whom surrounded. Her recollection, however, appeared soon to return; her eyes suddenly lost their wildness, and were raised for some minutes

to Heaven.—She then looked at Madeline, and spoke, but what she said was unintelligible: she seemed sensible of this herself, by mournfully shaking her head. Gently disengaging one hand from Madeline, she pointed it towards the door, looking earnestly in her face as she did so, as if to say, she wished her to bring some person to her.

‘Father Bertrand!’ cried Madeline, starting up.

A faint smile from the Countess was an affirmative; and she was flying from the chamber, when she was suddenly stopped by a deep groan.

‘Has she relapsed?’ cried she with a trembling voice, and a despairing look, again advancing to the bed.

‘Never to recover, I fear,’ said Agatha, bursting into tears.

‘’Tis too true!’ cried Floretta, ‘she is gone for ever.’

Madeline grew sick; she could not weep; she could not speak; she could scarcely breathe; her sight grew dim; her head grew giddy; and the objects that she could discern seemed swimming before her. The grief and consternation of her companions prevented them from noticing her, till they saw her catching at a bed-post for support.—They then directly hastened to her assistance, and supporting her to a chair, opened a window. The keenness of the morning air, together with the water they sprinkled on her face, somewhat revived her, and a shower of tears came to her relief.

Agatha, whom her death-like coldness, and ghastly paleness greatly alarmed, would have led her from the room, but she resisted the effort, and tottering to the bed, threw herself upon it, and bedewed the pale face of her dear, her invaluable benefactress with tears of unutterable, of heart-felt anguish. Agatha now desired Floretta to ring a large bell, which hung in the gallery. This in a few minutes collected all the servants, and they came crowding into the room, preceded by Father Bertrand, and apprized by the sudden alarm of the melancholy event which had happened.

Few scenes could have been more distressing than that now exhibited by the old domestics, as they wept round the bed of their beloved lady, under whose protection they had passed the prime, and trusted to have closed the evening, of their days.

‘Oh my friends and fellow-servants!’ cried Agatha, whom grief made eloquent, ‘our happiness in this world is gone for ever;—but ’tis a comfort to think, that, from the common course of nature, none of us can expect much longer to continue in it.’

‘My friends,’ said Father Bertrand, collecting all his spirits to his aid, and wiping away the tear which had bedewed his pale cheek, ‘my friends,’ looking round him with the most benign compassion, ‘moderate those transports of grief, by patiently acquiescing in the will of the Almighty; endeavour to deserve a continuance of some of his blessings.’

'Peace,' continued he, advancing to the foot of the bed, and kneeling before it, while his arms folded upon his breast, and his head gently reclined, seemed to denote that submission to the divine will which he preached to others, 'peace to the soul of the departed; and may we all, like her, be prepared for our latter end!'

'Let all,' cried Agatha, as he rose from his knees, 'whose services are not required, now retire from the room.'

Father Bertrand approached Madeline, who still lay, with her face covered, upon the bed; he took her hand, and entreated her to rise, but she had neither power to refuse nor to obey. Perceiving her situation, he ordered her to be taken up, and carried into the next room; he was shocked beyond expression at the alteration which grief had effected in her appearance; her cheek and lips had lost all tinge of colour, and her eyes appeared too dim for her to distinguish any object.

Restoratives were administered to her, and by degrees the tears, which extreme agony had suspended, again began flowing, and somewhat relieved her.

Father Bertrand sat by her in silence; he knew the tribute of affection and sorrow must be paid, nor did he attempt to check it, till the first transports of the latter, by indulgence, were a little abated. He then addressed her in the mildest accents of consolation:—

'Oh! my daughter,' he said, 'let the assurance of the felicity to which the spirit of your friend has departed, comfort you for her loss; life at best is but a state of pilgrimage. God, no doubt, to prevent our too great attachment to a state which we must resign, has chequered it with good and evil, so that few, after any long continuance in it, can, if possessed of reason and religion, regret a summons from it. To the Countess it was a happy release; her virtues had prepared her to meet it with fortitude, and her sorrows with pleasure; she knew she was about appearing before a merciful Being, who would reward the patience with which she bore those sorrows—sorrows that corroded the springs of life: so far am I permitted to say, in order to try and reconcile you to her loss, but the source of them I am bound to conceal. Endeavour,' he proceeded, 'to compose yourself; Madame D'Alembert may soon be expected, and it will be some little comfort to the poor mourner to receive your soothing attentions. I am now compelled to retire to the convent, but at the close of day I shall return with some of my brother monks to say mass for the soul of the departed. Farewel!' rising as he spoke, 'may the blessing of heaven rest upon you, and peace soon revisit your heart!'

He had scarcely left the room ere Agatha entered it. 'Had you not better lay down Mam'selle,' said she, in a voice broken by sobs; 'for my part I can hold up no longer; as soon as I have given orders

about what is to be done I shall go to bed, and I little care if I never rise from it.' The melancholy accent in which these words were pronounced, redoubled the tears of Madeline.

'We have lost indeed,' cried she, 'the kindest, the best of friends; never can we expect again to meet with one like her.'

The door now softly opened, and Floretta made her appearance; she came with a message of condolence from the physician, who had just arrived, to Madeline, and a request to know whether he could in any manner be serviceable to her.

'No,' replied Madeline, mournfully, 'he cannot.'

'The Notary has accompanied him,' resumed Floretta, 'and he desired me to tell you that had he imagined the Countess so near her end, he would, notwithstanding the weather, have come hither yesterday.'

'Alack—' cried Agatha, 'I grieve he did not; my Lady's kind intentions towards you will never now be fulfilled.'

The idea of their being frustrated could not, in the present state of Madeline's mind, excite one sigh. Pale, faint, exhausted, she at last complied with the request of Agatha, and retiring to her chamber, threw herself upon the bed; but not even for an instant did sleep shed oblivion over her sorrows; she found the words of the Poet true, that

*He, like the world, his ready visit pays  
Where fortune smiles, the wretched he forsakes,  
Swift on his downy pinions flies from woe,  
And lights on lids unsully'd by a tear.*

Rather fatigued than refreshed by laying down, she arose in about an hour, and opening a window, seated herself by it; for there was a faintness over her which she thought the air might remove. The heaviness of the sky was now dispersed; the sun looked out with refulgent glory, and the winds, whose fury had scattered the lawn with shattered boughs of trees and fragments from the chateau, were hushed into a calm; the trees, still surcharged with rain, displayed a brighter green, 'and glittering as they trembled, cheered the day'; while the birds that sprung from amidst them, poured forth the softest notes of melody; but not that melody, not the blessed beams of the sun which it seemed to hail, could touch the sad heart of Madeline with pleasure.

'Ah!' she cried, 'after such a night as the last, how soon on the morning would my dear benefactress, if she had been spared to us, have gone forth to enquire what mischief was done, and give orders for repairing it! Oh! ye children of poverty and distress—ye, like the unhappy Madeline, have lost a mother.'

Madeline knew not the strength or tenderness of her attachment to the Countess till she was deprived of her; in losing her, she lost

all hope of comfort; for to none, as to her, could she impart the fears, the wishes, the expectations, which had so long, and still at times, agitated her heart; and which, by being concealed, she knew would fatally corrode its peace. Yet not for the tenderness which had poured balm upon its sorrows, not for the counsel which had regulated its impulses, not for the wisdom which had guarded its inexperience, did she lament alone; exclusive of all consideration for herself she bitterly wept the death of her benefactress, and imagined, was she but alive again, her own tranquillity would in some degree be restored, though the next moment she should be transported to an immeasurable distance from her.

The circumstances which occasioned her death, heightened the grief of Madeline for it, and the flattering hopes she had conceived of her amendment, from her uninterrupted rest, also aggravated her feelings.

She continued alone a considerable time; at length Agatha entered with some coffee. 'I see Mam'selle,' cried she, 'that like me you could not rest; I might indeed as well have staid up as gone to bed.'

'No,' said Madeline, looking mournfully in her face, 'I could not rest.'

'Pray Mam'selle,' cried Agatha, as she laid the coffee on a little table before her, 'pray Mam'selle, do not take on so badly; though you have lost a good friend, you have still a kind father to love and to protect you; not like me, who in losing my lady, have lost my only friend. Ah, Mam'selle!' dropping into a chair opposite Madeline, ' 'tis a grievous thing for a poor old soul like me, to be neglected and forlorn.'

'You will never be deserted or forlorn, I trust, and believe,' cried Madeline; 'the noble daughter of your dear departed lady will never, I am convinced, desert any one that she loved.'

'She is a noble lady, indeed,' said Agatha, 'but—'

'But what?' eagerly interrogated Madeline, on her suddenly pausing.

'Nothing, Mam'selle,' replied Agatha, sighing; (then as if to change the discourse) 'do pray, Mam'selle,' she continued, 'try and eat some breakfast; indeed, if you do not take more care of yourself, than you at present seem inclined to do, you will probably bring on a fit of sickness; and what a grievous thing would it be for my poor young lady on arriving, to find, not only her mother dead, but you unable to give her any comfort.'

'Alas!' said Madeline, 'whether well or ill, I fear I shall be equally unable to give her comfort.'—Agatha again pressed her to take some breakfast, but grief had destroyed all inclination for doing so, and the housekeeper soon left her to her melancholy meditations.—At the usual dinner hour they were again interrupted by the re-entrance of Agatha, who came to entreat her to descend to the

dinner parlour. 'Do, pray do, dear Mam'selle,' she said; 'if you eat nothing, it will even do you good to stir a little.'

Madeline had felt so forlorn whilst by herself, that she did not refuse this entreaty, and accordingly went down stairs; but when she entered the parlour—that parlour where she had first been welcomed to the chateau—where she had been embraced as the adopted child of the Countess—where she had passed with her so many happy hours, the composure she tried to assume vanished; she involuntarily started back, and bursting into tears, would have returned to her chamber, had not Agatha prevented her; the pathetic entreaties of the faithful creature at length prevailed on Madeline to sit down to the table, where she also insisted on Agatha's seating herself; but she could not eat—she could only weep.

The sorrowful looks of the servants the—solemn stillness which reigned throughout the chateau, so different from its former cheerfulness, augmented her tears. Agatha judged of Madeline by herself, and thinking those tears would be a relief to her overcharged heart, she did not attempt to stop them. They sat together till the close of day, when Agatha entreated her to retire to her chamber, and try and take that rest which she had been so long deprived of, and so materially wanted.

Madeline was convinced she could not sleep; but she did not hesitate to return to her chamber, at the door of which Agatha left her. Scarcely had she entered it, ere she resolved on going to her benefactress's, and indulging her sorrow by weeping over her remains. She accordingly proceeded thither; but when she reached the door, she paused, and shuddered at the solemn scene before her.

The chamber was hung with black, and a black velvet pall was thrown across the bed, which formed a melancholy contrast to the rich crimson curtains. Before the bed several rows of large wax tapers burned, and cast a gleam upon the face of the Countess that increased its ghastliness. Awe-struck, Madeline wanted resolution to enter; and it might perhaps have been many minutes ere she could have summoned sufficient for that purpose, had she not beheld Agatha and Floretta sitting in a remote corner of the room. She then, with light and trembling steps, approached the bed. The moment she cast her eyes upon the inanimate features of her friend, the composure, which sudden awe had inspired, gave way to her affliction.

'Is she gone?' she cried, looking round her with an eye of wildness, as if forgetting the scene of the morning—as if doubting the reality of what she saw; 'Oh! too surely—too surely she is,' she continued, wringing her hands together; 'and who, in this wide world, can supply her loss to Madeline? Oh, most excellent of women!' kneeling beside the bed, while tears streamed in torrents down her

cheeks; 'Thou—friend to the friendless—'tis now I feel the full extremity of grief; the sorrow, which I so lately deemed excruciating, seems light, seems trivial, in comparison of that which I now feel. Had you died,' she went on, after a momentary pause, and as if the dull cold ear of death could have heard her pathetic lamentations, 'had you died according to the common course of nature, though my loss would have been equally great, my grief, I think, would not have been so poignant. To die by such horrible means,' she added, with a kind of scream in her voice, and starting up as if she saw that very moment the poignard of the assassin pointed at her own breast; 'to die by such horrible means, is what overpowers me. Oh why—why did I not follow you the fatal night you went to the chapel?'

'Dear Mam'selle,' said Agatha, rising and approaching her, 'try to compose yourself; no grief, no lamentations can recal my blessed lady.'

'Oh! Agatha,' cried Madeline, 'tis not a common friend; 'tis a mother I lament;—she was the only person from whom I ever experienced the tenderness of one. Do you not wonder,' she continued, grasping the arm of Agatha, 'how any one could be so wicked as to injure such a woman—a woman who never, I am confident, in the whole course of her life, injured a mortal; whose hand was as liberal as her heart, and whose pity relieved, even when her reason condemned the sufferer? Would you not have thought, Agatha,' again bending o'er the bed, from which she had a little retreated, 'that the innocence of that countenance might have disarmed the rage of a savage? What a smile is there still upon it; it seems to declare the happiness which is enjoyed by the spirit that once animated it!'

'My dear young lady,' said Agatha, in a low voice, 'recollect yourself;—remember the promise you gave my lady in the chapel, never to mention or allude, by any means whatsoever, to the transaction that happened there.'

'I thank you, Agatha,' cried Madeline, 'for awakening me to recollection; never should I have forgiven myself, had I broken my promise. I will in future endeavour to have more command over my feelings.' She still, however, remained by the bed, holding the arm of Agatha.

'And to this cold, this ghastly, this inanimate state, must we all, one day come!' she cried.

'Yes,' replied a hollow voice behind her, the voice of Father Bertrand, who, unperceived, had entered some minutes before, accompanied by some of his brother monks, for the purpose of saying mass for the soul of the departed; 'the crime of disobedience has doomed us to that state, and the paths of fame and fortune lead but to the coffin and the grave.'

He now proceeded to inform Madeline of the purpose for which he had entered.

'If,' cried he, 'you think you can, without interrupting, attend to our solemn rites, and join in our orisons, remain; if not, retire to your chamber.'

'I do think I can,' replied Madeline; 'I also think, that, by staying, my mind will be composed.'

Some of the most ancient of the domestics now entered, and the sacred service was begun, and ere concluded, the turbulence of Madeline's grief was abated: when over, Father Bertrand, who was tenderly interested about her, insisted on her retiring to her chamber, and gave her his benediction as she withdrew.

Overcome by fatigue, both of body and mind, she repaired to bed; but the sleep into which she sunk was broken and disturbed by frightful visions, and she arose pale and unrefreshed, at the first dawn of day, to seek some of her fellow-partners in affliction. To describe her feelings this day would be but to recapitulate those of the preceding one. They were now, as they were then, alternately perturbed, alternately calm; and Father Bertrand, whose sympathy and counsel alone caused that calm, was convinced time only could restore them to their wonted state. She this day performed the painful talk of acquainting her father with the melancholy loss they had sustained, which she did as follows:—

#### TO M. CLERMONT

Where shall I find words to soften the melancholy tidings I have to communicate. Oh! my father, vainly would I try for expressions to do so; no language, no preparation I could use would mitigate them to you; but what I find it impossible to do, your own reason and religion will, I trust, perform.

Heaven has been pleased to recall our estimable friend, my dear and lamented benefactress, to itself. The dawn of yesterday saw the seal of death impressed upon those eyes which scarcely ever opened but to cheer her family, or witness some good deeds of her own performing. So short was her illness, so unexpected her dissolution, that I feel myself at times quite bewildered by the shock, and tempted to think, that what has lately happened is but the dream of my own disordered imagination.

Is she dead? I repeatedly ask myself;—the Countess de Merville dead? she whom but a few days ago I beheld so apparently well and happy? Alas! the gloom of every surrounding object gives a fatal affirmative to those self-questions.

I wander to her favourite apartments, as if to seek for her, who never more will re-enter them; and start back, chilled and affrighted by their neglect and desertion, as if it was unexpected. Oh, my father, what a change has a few days produced! The sound of social

mirth no longer enlivens the Castle; a death-like stillness reigns throughout it, scarcely ever interrupted but by the wind sighing through its long galleries, as if in unison with the grief of its inhabitants.

Things without appear almost as dreary as they do within. The fury of a late storm has scattered the lawn with broken boughs and fragments from the chateau, and thus given the place an appearance of desolation saddening in the extreme. The poor peasants, too, who are employed within the wood, appear (to me at least) quite altered. They seem to pursue their labours with reluctance, and, often suspending them, look towards the Castle with a melancholy air, as if to say the comforts that cheered their toils, and supported their strength, died with its honoured and lamented owner.

Their loss, indeed, is unspeakable;—not content with relieving the objects chance threw in her way, she herself explored the recesses of poverty, and, like a ministering angel from heaven, dispensed charity and compassion wherever she went. She delighted too in contriving little pastimes which should give relaxation to labour, and smiled to see the rough brow of industry smoothed by pleasure, and the peasants sporting on the sod which they had cultivated.

This morning, as I stood at an upper window, which overlooked the old trees that waved before it, and saw the distant fields already beginning to wear the yellow tinge of autumn; I recollected the manner in which she had planned to celebrate the conclusion of the ensuing harvest: she was to have given a feast and a dance upon the lawn to all her tenants, and I was to have mixed in the latter with the peasant girls. Alas! little did I think, when she spoke to me about it, that, ere the period destined for it, she would be laid within the narrow house of clay.

To quit this place directly, to return to you, my dear father, and mingle those tears with your's, which should embalm her memory, would be my wish, had she not requested, almost in her last moments, that I might continue here to receive Madame D'Alembert, who is shortly expected, and also to give her my company while she staid, or whenever she came to the chateau *alone*—a request which the gratitude of your heart will not, I am convinced, permit me to disobey;—yet, alas! little benefit can she derive from my society. How can I comfort—how try to reconcile her to a loss which I feel myself nothing earthly can supply to me? But, perhaps, she may derive a melancholy pleasure from the company of a person who is a real mourner; I feel myself, that those of the Countess's family who are the most afflicted, are those to whom I am the most attached.

It will, I am sure, impart to you the same satisfaction it has done

to me, to know that, to the last, my beloved, my estimable benefactress, bestowed upon me those proofs of affection and esteem, which long since excited a gratitude in my heart, death or the loss of reason only can remove. The very morning on which she died so unexpectedly, her generous intentions towards me were to have been put into execution; that they were unfulfilled will, I am confident, be to you, as to me, a small source of regret, compared to that which we feel for her death. I am not now worse with respect to fortune than when she took me under her protection: the luxuries I enjoyed with her have not vitiated my taste, or rendered me unable to support with contentment the humble situation I am destined to. No, my dear father, her lessons and my affection for you guarded me against such perversion of disposition; and as I will still strive to deserve the protection of heaven, so I trust I shall obtain it, and never feel the pressure of worldly want. Do not suffer any apprehensions about my health to disturb your mind; my body has not sympathized as much as you might have supposed with my mind; I am not ill, indeed, though a little fatigued; but there is nothing now (alas! I sigh as I say so) to prevent my taking repose.

I now regret more than ever the departure of my good friends, Madame Chatteneuf and her daughter; had they continued at V—, I am sure, on the first intimation of the melancholy event which has happened, they would have flown to the castle; and their society, I think, would a little have alleviated my feelings. When I sat down, I did not imagine I could have written above a few lines; but now I find that in writing to, as well as in conversing with, a beloved friend, one is insensibly drawn on, and comforted by being so.

I have now, however, written almost to the extent of my paper; and as I have nothing of sufficient consequence to say to make me begin a new sheet, I shall bid you, my dearest father, farewell. Write as soon as possible, I entreat you; if you say (which I know you will not, except it is the case) that you are well, and somewhat composed after our great loss, you will give ease to my heart.

I shall receive pleasure from hearing that our faithful Jaqueline, and all our good neighbours, are well: to all who may be so kind as to inquire after me, present my best wishes. Once more farewell! and believe me

Your truly dutiful and affectionate child,

MADÉLINE CLERMONT



supposed, chuse to come to the castle till the grief of his lady had a little abated.

'But who,' cried Madeline, 'so able to support her under the pressure of that grief as an affectionate husband.'

Agatha shook her head, but did not answer; and Madeline descended to the hall (from the dressing-room of her departed friend, where she had been sitting) to receive Madame D'Alembert, whose carriage at that instant was heard. In the hall Madeline found Father Bertrand and most of the servants assembled, whom the good priest earnestly besought to command their feelings, in order, if possible, to prevent letting Madame D'Alembert know the melancholy event which had happened, until a little prepared for it.

In a few minutes Madame D'Alembert entered, leaning on her woman—a female figure so interesting Madeline had never before seen. To that dignity which excites involuntary respect, she united that light elegance, that harmony of form, which inspires the beholder with mingled pleasure and admiration; she seemed not yet to have attained the prime of her days, and though the rose upon her cheek was pale, and the lustre of her fine blue eyes was fled, her countenance still retained an expression so animated, that language was scarcely necessary to develope her feelings.

She advanced to the middle of the hall; then paused, as if involuntarily, and casting a look around at the old domestics who were ranged on each side, exclaimed, in a tremulous voice, 'Am I come too late? Have I arrived in time to receive the last blessing of my mother?'—The servants, instead of answering, hung their heads in mournful silence. Madeline, who had hitherto stood at a distance, pale and trembling, now stepped forward, followed by Father Bertrand; but the moment she had reached Madame D'Alembert, the fortitude she had struggled to assume forsook her; and dropping on her knees, she clasped her arms about her, and burst into tears.

'I see,' said Madame D'Alembert, in the hollow voice of despair, and raising her hands towards heaven, 'I see that all is over—she is gone, and it is a stroke too heavy for me to bear.'

She tottered, and would have fallen, had not some of the attendants timely caught her; they conveyed her into an adjoining apartment, but it was many minutes ere she shewed any signs of returning sense. When recovered, instead of heeding Father Bertrand, who hung over her, like the delegate of heaven, to administer compassion, instead of regarding Madeline, who knelt beside her, and whose tears evinced her sympathy in her distress, or the domestics who surrounded her with looks of love and pity: she wildly started up, and demanded whether they had yet interred her mother. When answered in the negative, she insisted on going

to her chamber: any opposition Father Bertrand was convinced, would be not only fruitless, but an aggravation of her grief.

He knew the violence of sorrow must, like that of the mountain torrent, have way, ere it can subside. Followed by him and Madeline, she ascended to the chamber, but when she reached the door, she stopped, or rather shrunk back, from a sensation of horror at only beholding the coffin, before which rows of tapers burned, every ray of day-light being excluded. In speechless agonies she leaned a minute upon the shoulders of Madeline, then raising her head, she looked at Father Bertrand; 'had you the cruelty,' she cried, 'to intend I never more should behold my mother?—never! never, will I acquiesce in such an intention. I command!' advancing into the room, 'I insist! nay, I entreat!' she continued, and tears, the first she had shed, began to steal down her cheeks, 'that the coffin may be opened; cold and inanimate as is the form it contains, it will sooth my sad heart once more to behold it. Oh, suffer the eyes of a child again to gaze upon an idolized parent! Oh let her tears of unutterable sorrow be shed over the dear, the lamented cause of them!'

'Impossible! impossible!' said Father Bertrand; 'the remains of my honoured friend must not be disturbed.'

Madame D'Alembert, with a distracted air, now flung back the pall which was thrown over the coffin, as if she hoped herself to effect what she wished; but when the ghastly head of death, curiously engraved upon the lid, with the name and age of her parent, met her eye, she shivered, groaned, and sinking upon it, fainted away. They seized this opportunity to convey her to her chamber, where she was undressed and put to bed, which the female attendants declared was the properest place for her, as she had never stopped to rest from the commencement of her journey.

Father Bertrand now determined that the funeral of the Countess should take place that night, well knowing that, while her remains continued in the house, the feelings of her daughter would not subside, and accordingly issued the necessary orders for that purpose. Madeline staid by the bedside of Madame D'Alembert till the hour fixed on for the removal of the body, though, like every other person, she was totally unnoticed by her: the weakness she had been seized with, rendering her as unable, as from affliction she was unwilling to converse with any one. An express was sent for the surgeon who had attended the Countess, and he quieted the apprehensions of the family about her, by saying, that he trusted attention and time would restore her to her usual state of health. Madeline continued by her, as I have already said, till the hour for the funeral drew nigh; she then resigned her seat to Madame D'Alembert's woman, and descended to the hall, which was again lit up with all its usual splendour; but alas! how melancholy a scene did that light now display! in the centre lay the coffin, surrounded by

a numerous body of monks from the neighbouring monastery, and the weeping domestics.

Madeline leant, weeping, against a distant pillar, nor had power to move till the procession began; she then took a long mourning veil from Agatha, which she, knowing her intention of following the remains of her lady to the grave, had brought for her as soon as she entered the hall, and wrapping it round her, followed with the housekeeper.

The solemn *requiem* chaunted by the monks, as they preceded the body, the glimmering light of the torches, carried by the servants, which as it fell in partial directions upon the old trees that canopied the garden walk through which they past to the valley, produced a thousand quivering and grotesque shadows; the melancholy notes of the birds, who, deceived by the light, started from their nests, and the low murmurs of the wind amongst the branches, altogether produced an effect upon Madeline that wrought her feelings up to agony.

Yet was that agony, if possible, encreased when she entered the valley;—horror then seized her soul; and she shuddered as she thought she might, at that very moment perhaps, be treading in the steps of the Countess's murderers. The chapel was lighted up, but the light which gleamed from its windows, by rendering the decay and desolation of the building more conspicuous, served rather to increase than diminish its horrors; from its shattered towers the owls now hooted, and the ravens croaked amidst the surrounding trees, as if singing their nightly song of death, o'er the mouldering bodies which lay beneath them.

Father Bertrand met the procession as it entered the chapel; calmness and resignation in his look, but a more than usual paleness upon his cheek, on which Madeline also thought she could discover the traces of a tear. After meeting, he turned, and preceded the body to the grave, which was directly before the altar, and near those of the Count and his two sons. Madeline's heart felt bursting, and it was with difficulty she could prevent herself from breaking into lamentations; but when the solemn service begun—when she saw the coffin raised—when she saw it, by degrees, lowering into its last receptacle, she could no longer command herself, and a deep groan burst from her.—Father Bertrand paused in the sentence he was uttering over the body, and looked steadily at her; she instantly recollected herself, drew her veil entirely over her face, and buried her sobs in her bosom. He would then have proceeded, but as he attempted to speak, his voice faltered, the muscles of his face began to work, and a tear dropped from him into the grave of his benefactress; the weakness, however, which had overcome him was but momentary, and he resumed and finished the service with his usual steadiness; a solemn mass was then again said for the soul of the

departed, after which Father Bertrand pronounced a short and pathetic eulogium on her:—'The loss, my friends,' said he, as he concluded it, 'which you have sustained by the death of this truly good woman, is indeed great; but man is born to suffer, and continually liable to such deprivations as you have experienced; murmur not therefore at the common lot, but, by patient resignation to the will of the Almighty, strive to deserve a continuance of your remaining blessings: instead of quitting this place with a vain sorrow, quit it with a noble resolution to perform your allotted parts, and to pursue, as far as lies in your power, the example of your lamented benefactress. So may you hope, at the last day, to ascend with her to life immortal.'

The lights in the chapel, and the torches were now extinguished, and the monks repaired immediately from it to their convent, and Madeline and the servants returned to the castle. Agatha cried bitterly all the way back; 'twas a grievous thing,' she said to Madeline, 'to see the death of one's best, one's only friend; little did I imagine,' she said, 'that I should ever have beheld the funeral of my lady—I who, when she was a nice prattling little girl, have often and often carried her about in my arms.'

The moment Madeline re-entered the castle, she retired to her chamber, to give vent to that grief, which by being so long suppressed, had almost swelled her heart to bursting. When somewhat relieved by the tears she shed, she knelt down and implored heaven to strengthen her fortitude, that she might be enabled, not only to submit with patience to its divine will, but to pay proper attentions to the daughter of her lamented friend. 'Regard not!' she cried with fervour. 'Oh, regard not! thou, from whom misery and happiness alike proceed, with any degree of displeasure, the sorrow of a weak creature, impressed with the sad idea of the world's being unable to make her any recompence for what she has lost.'

In a short time she was sufficiently composed to be able to repair to the chamber of Madame D'Alembert, where she determined to pass the night. During that night, Madame D'Alembert continued almost in a state of insensibility, but on the morrow she appeared better, and again spoke. She asked, whether the interment of her mother had taken place? Father Bertrand desired, if such a question was asked, that he should be sent for to answer it, and for that purpose remained in the house; he was now called, and without hesitation informed her of the truth. The violence of her grief seemed renewed at this, and she reproached him with cruelty in not deferring the funeral till she was able to have attended it. He bore her reproaches with patience, with composure, and seized the first interval of silence to reason with her.

'For what purpose,' cried he, 'would the interment have been delayed; merely to feed your grief, and continue your family in an

unsettled state. Prove your affection to your departed parent, by striving to adhere to the precepts she always gave, to the example she always set you; with a sensibility as exquisite as your's, recall to mind the fortitude with which she bore the death of an idolized husband and two lovely sons, the darlings of her heart, the expected supporters of her noble house: instead of sinking into the supineness of sorrow, instead of withdrawing her cares from life, because that life had lost its brightest charms, she exerted herself to fulfil its incumbent duties; let the remembrance of those exertions inspire you to make similar ones; let it raise you from the bed of languor, let it rouse you from the torpor of affliction, let it animate you to perform your proper part, by tracing her steps; by doing as she has done, you will more truly prove your love, your reverence for her, than by passing years in fruitless lamentations over her tomb. Like her then, I again repeat, exert yourself; let the smile of your countenance again gladden the hearts of your friends, and your ear be again open to the voice of cheerfulness.'

'She set me a glorious example indeed,' said Madame D'Alembert, on whom the language of the venerable man appeared to have made a deep impression; 'and in future I will strive to follow it.'

'Do,' cried Father Bertrand, 'if you wish to retain your present blessings.'

'My blessings!' repeated she mournfully.

'Yes,' resumed he, 'the many blessings you still possess.'—Madame D'Alembert sighed deeply at those words, and shook her head with an air that seemed to imply a doubt of what he asserted.

'Amongst the least of these blessings,' continued he, glancing at Madeline who sat beside the bed, 'I shall not rank the friend who now sighs to be presented to you.'

'You would be wrong, I am sure, if you did,' said Madame D'Alembert, raising herself a little upon her pillow, and extending her white hand, as if to receive Madeline's. Father Bertrand took it, and instantly put it into her's.—'You have both,' said he, in a softened voice, 'lost a mother; be ye therefore as sisters to each other, a mutual comfort and support.'

'I have long,' cried Madame D'Alembert, turning her soft blue eyes on Madeline, and pressing her hand between her's, 'been prepared to love and to admire you; and she who prepared me to do so, I hoped would have introduced us to each other; but that hope, like many others, was indulged but to be disappointed.' Madeline knelt down, and pressed her hand to her lips; Madame D'Alembert gently disengaged it, and throwing her arm round her neck, clasped her to a heart, whose strong emotions, for a few moments, overpowered her utterance. 'Believe me,' she cried, as soon as she had recovered her voice, 'when I declare, that the chief pleasure I look forward to, is that which I shall receive from your society; she who

was beloved by my mother, and who loved her, must on these accounts, even if not possessed of half your powers of pleasing, be dear and precious to me; with the truest gratitude I now thank you for all your kind attentions to her.'

'Ah Madam!' said Madeline, melting into tears, 'you surely must be ignorant of my great obligations to her, or you never could speak to me in this manner; did you know them, you would certainly think as I do, that I never did, never could do any thing adequate to the gratitude they excited; she was the only person from whom I ever received the tenderness of a mother, and as daughters must, I imagine, love their mothers, I loved her.'

By degrees Madame D'Alembert grew composed, and the conversation then turned upon her deep regret at not arriving in time to behold her mother;—from Madeline, who, she understood, had attended her in her last moments, she entreated to hear the particulars of the disorder which had terminated so fatally. Father Bertrand, who had seated himself at the foot of the bed, now interposed his authority; he knew it would scarcely be possible for Madeline, if she complied with this entreaty, to avoid giving a too faithful narrative, and he therefore declared, that except she and Madame D'Alembert promised to converse no longer on the melancholy subject, they should be separated. 'Why,' said he, to the latter, 'do you feed your own grief, and augment her's, by dwelling on it?'

'I promise what you desire,' cried Madame D'Alembert, 'but Oh! let me be indulged by hearing, whether in her last moments my mother remembered her unhappy Viola!'

'Remembered!' repeated Madeline emphatically. 'Oh, Madam! after heaven you were her first consideration.' She then, as far as it concerned Madame D'Alembert, related the conversation which had passed between the Countess and her the evening preceding her death.

'You will be my friend, my consoler then!' exclaimed Madame D'Alembert, from whom the relation drew floods of tears, extending her hand to Madeline as she spoke; 'I open my heart to receive your consolations; my mother wished me to do so, and as I perform what she wished, so do I hope that the blessing she left me, may draw another down.'—Madeline sighed, and laid her face upon the hand she held, to conceal the feelings, which, for a few minutes stopped her utterance; fervently, though silently, she prayed for the fortitude which she now wanted, to perform the task enjoined her by her lamented friend. Yet, alas! she said to herself, as she had done in her letter to her father, how can I give to others that consolation which I want myself? Her evident inability to do so, rendered her, perhaps, a more soothing companion to Madame D'Alembert, than if the case had been reversed; it proved her deep

and poignant sorrow more than any words could have done; and nothing perhaps attaches the heart of a mourner so soon, so truly, as a keen participation in its griefs. Madame D'Alembert eagerly enquired, whether she would not continue with her while she herself remained at the chateau? and whether she would not always accompany her to it, whenever she visited it alone? Madeline said, she believed she might promise to do so, as she was pretty certain her father would never refuse a request made by his honoured and lamented friend, or her daughter.

'How long Madam,' asked Father Bertrand, 'do you propose staying at the chateau?'

'About two months,' replied Madame D'Alembert; 'I shall then be obliged to return to Paris, where Monsieur D'Alembert proposes spending the winter.'

'And how soon do you expect him here?' still interrogated Bertrand.

'I do not expect him at all,' answered Madame D'Alembert; 'he told me, just before we parted, that he was convinced some particular business, which prevented his accompanying me at the present melancholy juncture, would not be finished in time to permit him to follow me.'

In two months then, thought Madeline, I shall be restored to the arms of my father; ah! how many distressing scenes have I gone through since I left them!

Father Bertrand now withdrew, but Madeline continued the remainder of the day with her friend, who, though unable at times to converse with her, seemed to derive pleasure from even looking at her. The following day, the exertions which Father Bertrand had animated her to make, enabled her to rise; and in two days more, the gentleman who attended her took his leave, declaring that time was the only physician whose aid she now required; but though health returned, cheerfulness still continued absent, nor had it more completely forsaken her breast than it had that of Madeline's.

The death of her benefactress, together with the disappointment she had experienced prior to it, left an impression of sadness upon her mind which she could not conquer;—had her efforts for doing so been aided by any external circumstance, they might perhaps, in some degree, have been successful; but her present companion and abode were gloomy in the extreme, and of themselves sufficient to have lowered even animated spirits.

Madame D'Alembert declined seeing any company; she received no visits but from Father Bertrand; and in answer to the compliments of condolence which she received from the neighbouring families, and which they anxiously wished to pay in person, she declared her utter inability of seeing them at present.

No more the feast of mirth and hospitality was spread within the hall of the chateau—no more its lofty roof re-echoed sounds of melody—no more the peasants danced upon the lawn, while Benevolence sat by in the form of the Countess, and smiled upon their sports. Solitude encompassed, and silence reigned within it; and the old domestics, whose grief for their lady knew no diminution, scrupled not to say, that the glory, the happiness of her house had, with her, forsaken it for ever.

So congenial was its gloom to the present feelings of Madame D'Alembert, that she never talked of quitting it without the deepest regret; exclusive of the above consideration, she was also attached to it from its having been the favourite residence of her parents, the place where the blossoms of her youth had blown. Here she wished to pass the remainder of her days—here, where she could be free from that restraint—that state—those tiresome ceremonies, which in a public situation the etiquette of the world obliged her to observe. Like the poet, she might have said,

*This shadowing desert, unfrequented woods,  
I better brook than flourishing peopl'd towns.  
Here I can sit alone, unseen of any,  
And to the nightingale's complaining notes  
Tune my distresses, and record my woes.*

From words which sometimes dropped from Madame D'Alembert, Madeline was more than once led to imagine, that besides the death of her mother, she had another cause for sorrow; but whenever she reflected on her situation, that idea vanished, and she wondered how she could for a moment have harboured it; knowing, as she did, that Madame D'Alembert possessed those blessings, which in general are supposed to render life estimable—the affections of the man of her choice (for such Madeline always understood M. D'Alembert to be), friends who adored her, and even a superabundance of riches.

Those attentions, which pity for the afflicted Viola, and reverence for the commands of her benefactress, first prompted her to pay, Madeline now continued from affection.

Madame D'Alembert was a woman, whose temper and disposition, upon an intimacy, captivated the heart, as much as her beauty and elegance, at first sight, charmed the eye: besides, she treated Madeline exactly as a tender sister would have done, ordered the same mourning for her as for herself, nor suffered the servants to make any distinction between them.

In the course of the conversation Madeline discovered that Madame D'Alembert knew nothing of her or her father prior to her introduction at the chateau; and she felt from this circumstance more firmly convinced than ever that the private history of her

father must be dreadful, when the Countess would not impart it even to her daughter.

A month elapsed without Madame D'Alembert's solitude being in the least interrupted, during which she and Madeline paid many visits to the grave of the Countess, which the latter could never approach without shuddering.

At the expiration of that period, as they sat at breakfast one morning, a letter was brought to Madame D'Alembert by her woman; who, as she put it into her hands, said, 'From my master, Madam.'

Her Lady turned pale at those words, and desiring her to retire, broke the seal with a trembling hand.



# Clermont

VOLUME THREE







earnestly at Madeline for a reply, but it was many minutes ere Madeline could give one.

Amazed by what she had heard, and learning that Madame D'Alembert had powerful reasons for concealing her from her husband, her whole soul was engrossed in trying to develope those reasons; but like the other mysteries which had tortured it, she vainly tried to do so.

'Ah! Madeline,' said Madame D'Alembert, in a melancholy voice, 'I fear this silence bodes me no good.'

'My dearest Madam,' cried Madeline, 'I would at once have answered you, could I at once have determined how to act; but I will acknowledge though my affection for you prompts me to comply with your request, my pride makes me revolt from the idea of becoming the unknown guest of any person; besides—besides,' with some little hesitation, 'there is a kind of apprehension mingled with that pride. I recollect the particular, the impressive manner, in which my beloved benefactress bade me remember, that whenever Monsieur D'Alembert came to the chateau, she did not desire me to continue in it; and her words, together with those you have uttered, make me fear that Monsieur has some secret enmity against me, though for what cause I cannot possibly conceive, unacquainted as I am with him.'

'What a wild idea,' exclaimed Madame, 'to suppose a person who is really ignorant of your existence, can have any enmity to you?'

'Good heaven! Madam,' cried Madeline, 'how you astonish me!'

'I repeat,' said her friend, 'that Monsieur D'Alembert, at this moment, knows not that such a being as Madeline Clermont exists: when he comes to the chateau he certainly must hear about you, but your real residence I shall take care to have concealed from him: Come, tell me, do you longer hesitate how to act?'

Madeline sighed deeply; she was unwilling to stay, and yet unwilling to go: unwilling from motives of affection, and a fear that if she did she should be deemed ungrateful; rightly considering that those who will not sometimes tax their feelings for a friend, are themselves unworthy of the appellation of one.

'No, Madam,' said she, after the silence of a few minutes, 'I no longer hesitate,—do with me as you please, I should ill requite your favors if I disobeyed your wishes.'

'A thousand thanks, my Madeline, for your compliance;' cried her friend, tenderly embracing her, 'it has removed a heavy burden of uneasiness from me: and now, my dear girl, to inform you of the plan which I have concerted for your concealment; a plan which only to those immediately concerned in carrying it into execution I shall impart, in order to avoid any danger of a discovery, and to prevent idle curiosity: I shall immediately have it circulated through the family that you are going to pay a visit to a relation

some leagues off, and order Lubin, (in whom, his old godmother, Agatha, and Floretta, I alone mean to confide) to prepare horses for the journey; as soon as you are out of sight of the chateau, he shall conduct you to the grotto by the lake, where as soon as it is dark, Floretta shall be sent to re-conduct you home, and by a private door bring you to the chamber of my mother, which I think better adapted than your own for concealing you, as her death is too recent to permit the servants to wish to enter it.

'I hope my love,' seeing Madeline turn pale, 'you have no objection to it?'

Madeline was ashamed to acknowledge she had.—

'No, Madam,' answered she falteringly, 'I have not.'

'Consider, my dear,' said her friend, who was not perfectly satisfied by this assurance, 'your seclusion in it will be but short; and while you continue in it, Agatha and Floretta shall pass as much time as possible with you; every opportunity too which occurs for visiting you, without danger of detection, I shall seize: retire now, my love to your chamber, and in order to give the appearance we wish to my plan, put on a riding habit.'

Madeline withdrew, but instead of changing her dress, she sat down to reconsider all that had passed, and the more she reflected on it, the more her heart recoiled from the idea of continuing in the chateau.

'If discovered,' said she, 'I may be insulted as an intruder, and degraded not only in my own eyes, but those of the family; but can I retract the promise I have given to Madame D'Alembert? No, it is impossible to do so—I cannot appear fickle, I cannot disappoint her; sooner than do so I will run the risk even of indignity.'

While thus engrossed in thought, Madame D'Alembert, followed by Agatha and Floretta, entered: Madeline started and attempted to apologize for not having put on the habit.

'You are an idle girl,' cried her friend, 'the horses are waiting, and no time is to be lost.'

In a few minutes she was ready, and with Madame D'Alembert descended to the hall, where she found many of the old servants, (who loved her for the sake of their dear departed lady as well as for her own) assembled to bid her farewell; having received and returned that farewell, and also a parting embrace from her friend, she mounted her horse and set off at a smart pace with Lubin: they soon penetrated into the thickest of the wood, and after proceeding about a mile through it, they turned into a winding path leading to the lake; here they both alighted, and Madeline, being acquainted with the way, walked on, while Lubin slowly led the horses after her. This was the very path which de Sevignie had taken the last evening she beheld him, and the moment she entered it, the remembrance of that evening rushed upon her mind; she sighed heavily;

'Ah! how different,' she cried to herself, 'were my feelings then to what they are now!—then I imagined myself the beloved of de Sevignie's heart, then believed him entitled, not only from affection but worth, to the possession of mine; but now no idea of that kind remains, and to that which I once entertained I look back as to a delightful dream, from which I have only been awakened to misery and horror.

'Yet can de Sevignie,' she continued, as she pursued her way, 'can de Sevignie,' as if only now she had conceived the doubt, 'be perfidious, be unworthy? Oh! impossible!' cried she, yielding to the suggestions of a tenderness, which, though opposed, had never been in the least degree conquered, 'Oh! impossible! Vice could never wear such a semblance of virtue as he wore; the alteration in his manner must have been owing to some circumstances which pride prevented his revealing, and I should, I ought at once to have believed so: surely I had done so, had I not obeyed, (let me whisper it to myself) the dictates of disappointed tenderness and offended pride.'

On reaching the grotto she seated herself on the moss-covered stone before it; the very seat on which she had once been alarmed by de Sevignie; the very seat on which she had once, while the pale stars glimmered o'er her head, so impatiently waited his approach.

'Oh! what minutes were those,' she exclaimed. 'Oh! what the palpitation of that moment which brought him to my feet!—' Again she beheld him in idea, again saw his fine eyes beaming on her with mingled love, hope and sorrow; again felt the soft pressure of his cold trembling hand; again heard the sighs, with which he declared there was an unconquerable necessity for their separation.

'Oh! de Sevignie,' she cried, 'to know you happier now than when that declaration was made, would relieve my heart of an almost intolerable weight of anguish': she wished she could learn whether he had yet left V—; but to enquire without betraying her motives for doing so was impossible, and from the idea of discovering them she shrunk with affright.

'What satisfaction,' she asked herself, 'could I derive by knowing he was still there? No hope of seeing him could be derived by such a knowledge.'

She continued engrossed by this idea till she felt the tears dropping upon her cheeks; these brought her to a sense of her weakness. 'Is it by indulging such feelings as my present ones,—is it by dwelling on the remembrance of Sevignie,' said she, 'that I adhere to the resolution I formed not to think about him, that I obey the injunctions of my lamented benefactress, or what I know must be the wishes of my father: what folly! instead of trying to drive him from my heart, to try and establish him more firmly than ever within it,

by still believing him amiable! Ah, had he been really so, never would he have formed plans which he did not mean to realize; never would he have condemned my opening my heart to such a friend as I was blest with; and 'tis only a sudden impulse of weak and culpable tenderness which could make me again consider him in the light I once did, an impulse which I will endeavour never more to yield to: Yes, de Sevignie, more resolutely than ever I will try to expell you from my heart.' She wiped away her tears, but felt at the moment how arduous was the task which she had imposed upon herself.—

How difficult it would be, in moments of security and quiet, to banish de Sevignie from her thoughts, when scenes of grief and terror, such as she had lately experienced, had not had power to do so.

'Heaven, however,' cried she, 'strengthens those who wish to do right; I wish to do so, and to do so I think I must forget de Sevignie.'

Lubin, who had hitherto been engaged in securing the horses within a cavity of the mountain, now approached, and opening a small basket of nice provisions, which Agatha had given him, he spread a napkin on the grass before Madeline, and laid the contents of the basket on it.

'Tis time for you to take something Mademoiselle,' said he, 'I dare say 'tis now far beyond your usual dinner hour; do pray, Mademoiselle, do take something, you look faint indeed.'

Madeline felt weak and tired, and did not resist his entreaty: after her little repast was over, he removed the things to a respectful distance, and sat down to refresh himself. The parents of Lubin had passed the principal part of their lives in the service of the Countess and her family, and at their death, which happened when he was very young, she had taken him entirely under her protection; his gratitude and fidelity amply repaid her kindness, and she had considered him as she did Agatha, infinitely above the rest of the servants.

With true French gaiety after he had finished his repast, he amused himself with singing the following

SONG

*'Come, sweet Content, thou ever smiling maid,  
Come, sit with me beneath this old tree's shade;  
Or ramble with me round yon green-clad hill,  
Adown whose side soft steals the silvery rill.*

*'If thou'rt an inmate of my humble home,  
I would not change it for a gilded dome;  
If blest with thee, my table shall be crown'd  
With sweets, in riot's banquet never found;*

*'Careless with thee I'd roam at early day,  
And join the warblers on the waving spray;  
Or gaily tend my fleecy bleating fold,  
And kindly guard them from the wint'ry cold.*

*'Oh! let me fold thee to this throbbing heart,  
Which sighs for peace thou only can'st impart;  
And let me with thee ever humbly bend,  
Before each trial heav'n may please to send.*

*'Like some kind star that gives a cheering ray,  
To lead benighted mortals on their way,  
Do thou appear to check each anxious thought,  
And give that blessedness so long I've sought.'*

'Is that your own composition, Lubin,' asked Madeline, whose mind was amused by listening to him.

'Yes, Mademoiselle,' replied he, 'I pass many of the long winter nights in scribbling, and then I set my own words to my own music, and they answer my purpose as well as the best song in the world.'

'The purpose of amusing you,' said Madeline.

'Yes, Mademoiselle, and keeping care from my mind: life is so short that one should, according to the old saying, "learn to live all the days of their life", which they never can do if they yield to fretting or vexation.'

'True,' cried Madeline, 'those who think as you do, Lubin, are only truly happy.'

Lubin now rambled away, and Madeline also arose and walked about.

The day was now far advanced,

*And in the western sky the downward sun  
Look'd out effulgent from amid the flush  
Of broken clouds, gay shifting to his beams.*

Those beautiful clouds, and all his dazzling splendour were reflected in the clear bosom of the lake, along with its verdant banks; where the laurestine just beginning to blossom, and the arbutis already in bloom, reared high their beauteous heads, while its soft murmurs intermingled in the wild concert of woodland choristers: a thousand golden beams played upon the forest, heightening the richness of its autumnal shades, and as they illumined the distant mountains, discovering some of their most romantic recesses. The mind of Madeline was soothed by the charming scene, and she felt that while she retained her present taste for the works of nature, she could not be entirely insensible to pleasure. The wild flowers that grew about now emitted their choicest fragrance, and the evening gale bore to her ear the bleating of distant flocks, and the far off

whistle of the peasant the welcome signal to his companions in industry, to retire from their labours.

At the appointed time Floretta came to her; in about an hour Lubin said he would follow them to the chateau.

'Well to be sure, Mademoiselle,' said Floretta, as they walked towards it, 'tis with fear and trembling I came for you to-night; Lord I hope this may be the last time I shall ever be sent to the grotto.'

'Is Monsieur D'Alembert come?' asked Madeline.

'Come, yes, and in a way that was not expected; he has brought three coaches full of company along with him.'

'Brought company along with him?' repeated Madeline, in a voice of astonishment.

'Yes, an equal number of ladies and gentlemen, and all gay souls I can assure you.'

'Your lady's feelings must be extremely hurt,' said Madeline.

'Aye to be sure; but if Monsieur never hurts them more severely, she will be very well off.'

'This bringing so much company to the chateau seems as if he intended to make a long stay at it.'

'Oh, no, Mademoiselle,' replied Floretta with quickness, 'I took care to inquire particularly from Lewis his valet de chambre, about his intentions, and he told me his master and his friends were taking a tour of pleasure, and the chateau lying in their way, had merely called at it for the purpose of resting themselves a few days.'

'Or perhaps to request Madame D'Alembert's company,' said Madeline.

'Not they indeed,' cried Floretta, 'she is quite too grave for my master, or the friends he likes, and 'tis a pity indeed that she should be so: Lord, what is the use of fine cloaths, or youth, or beauty, or fortune, if one lives moping and retired, as she does, for all the world like a hermit.'

'Consider, Floretta,' said Madeline, 'the affliction your lady is at present in.'

'And what does solitude do but increase that affliction; when a thing is over what is the good of lamenting it? Ah! Ma'amselle, I have often thought what a fine figure I'd make if I had my lady's fine cloaths, and jewels, and carriage to roll about in.'

'I assure you, Mademoiselle,' continued she with a conceited simper, 'I could scarcely come to you to-night; Monsieur Lewis, whom I knew very well, when in Paris with my lady, would hardly let me leave him; he is one of the politest creatures in the world, and pays such pretty compliments; he says I am vastly improved by the country air, and that my natural roses would shame all the artificial ones in Paris. He and the other servants which accompanied him, have quite enlivened us again, all but poor Agatha; she

has moped about ever since they came, but she is old, Mademoiselle,' proceeded Floretta, with a significant look, 'she is old, and that is the reason she cannot be animated like us.'

'Poor Agatha!' exclaimed Madeline, who felt more attached than ever to the faithful creature, from finding she had feelings so congenial to her own.

She had now reached the chateau, and her heart palpitated with a fear of being discovered either by Monsieur D'Alembert, or some of his servants; but of this Floretta assured her there was no danger.

Through a private door in the rear of the castle, she led her up a flight of narrow stairs, seldom used, to the gallery, which was now gaily illumined by the lights that blazed in the hall: fearful of being discovered, Madeline hastened to the chamber, in which Floretta informed her she would find Agatha waiting to receive her; but ere she reached it, a shout of noisy laughter, ascended from an apartment contiguous to the hall, and shocked her, by making her feel as if an insult had been offered to the memory of the countess.

'If my feelings are so poignant upon the occasion,' said she to herself, 'ah, what must the feelings of her daughter be!—Surely, surely M. D'Alembert cannot have that sensibility which the husband of Viola should possess, or he would not thus have broken in upon the sacredness of her grief.'

Floretta knocked softly at the chamber door and it was immediately opened by Agatha; but the moment Madeline entered it she started back, shocked and surprised at beholding it in the same state as when the remains of the countess were taken from it. Agatha took her hand, and, drawing her in, locked the door. 'Pray be composed, dear Mademoiselle,' said she, 'my lady, who feared the sight of the hangings might affect you, would have had them removed had it been possible for me and Floretta to have taken them down; but as that was not the case, she feared desiring the men to do so, lest it should excite suspicion.'

'I own,' cried Madeline, in a faint voice, with a face as pale as death, 'I own I would rather have continued in my own room; but if you or Floretta will have the goodness to pass the night in this with me, I shall not feel quite so reluctant to it.'

'As to my staying with you, Mademoiselle,' exclaimed Floretta, instantly going to the door, 'that is utterly impossible; I have a thousand things to do, which Agatha, if she pleases can tell you of.'

So saying she hastily unlocked the door, and departed without ceremony.

'For my part,' said Agatha, as soon as she had again secured it, 'I would stay with you with all my heart, but that I fear if I did I should be missed) as some of the maids rooms open into mine) and

if I was, your being in the castle must be discovered, which I know would distress my lady exceedingly.'

'And why should it distress her?' demanded Madeline with quickness, no longer able to suppress her curiosity.

'Why,' repeated Agatha, looking earnestly at her, 'because—dear Mademoiselle,' cried she as if suddenly recollecting herself, 'I am sure I can't tell you.'

'Don't be alarmed, Agatha,' said Madeline, with affected composure, 'I shall not inquire into secrets, which I see your respect for your lady makes you solicitous to conceal; in silence I shall submit to her wishes, her kindness gives her a right to expect this from me.'

Supper was prepared for Madeline, as was also provisions for the ensuing day, as till the next night, she was informed she could not be visited by any one. Agatha pressed her to sit down to table; she had no inclination to eat, she however complied with her entreaty, and made her also take a chair, being anxious to detain her as long as possible.

'Monsieur D'Alembert makes no long stay at the chateau, I understand,' said she, 'from Floretta.'

'No, thank heaven, he soon quits it,' replied Agatha.

'It seems he merely stopped to rest himself, and his party at it,' resumed Madeline.

'So he and his good for nothing servants say,' cried Agatha, 'but I have reason to think he had some other motive for coming to it.'

'Have you?' said Madeline eagerly.

'Yes; I imagine he came to it for the purpose of seeing what part of the estate would be the best to dispose of.'

'Dispose of?' repeated Madeline, in amazement, 'surely Monsieur D'Alembert could not think of disposing of any part of it? surely his situation does not require his doing so?'

'Tis a sign you know little of it, or you would not say so,' cried Agatha, 'his extravagance has long rendered him in want of money.'

'His extravagance!' again repeated Madeline. 'Monsieur D'Alembert extravagant! Gracious heaven how you astonish me! By what means was the countess de Merville prevailed on to let her daughter marry a man of dissipation?'

'He appeared both to the Countess and her daughter a very different man before, to what he did after his marriage,' answered Agatha.

'And to the late discovery of his real character the melancholy of the Countess was to be imputed,' said Madeline.

Agatha looked at her but made no reply.

A dreadful idea started in the mind of Madeline:—the words of Floretta, the solemn manner in which she had been bound by the countess to conceal the black transaction in the chapel, seemed to

declare it was a just one: she grasped the arm of Agatha, she fastened her eyes upon her as if they would pierce into the very recesses of her soul.

'The horrible mystery then,' said she, 'is explained;—Monsieur D'Alembert—the chapel—'

'Ha!' cried Agatha, starting from her chair and shaking off the hand of Madeline, 'what do you say? Beware, beware, Mademoiselle of what you utter; beware,' with a dark frown, 'even of what you think. I know what you would have said, I know what you have imagined, but—'

'But I am not mistaken,' said Madeline, in a hollow voice, and sinking against the back of the chair.

'You are;' exclaimed Agatha, 'you have done injustice to Monsieur D'Alembert.'

'Heaven be praised,' cried Madeline, clasping her hands together, 'heaven be praised; had I continued much longer to believe the idea I formed of him a just one, I think I could not have preserved my reason.'

'Dear heart, I am sure I should not have wondered if you had lost it directly,' said Agatha, 'it must have been horrible indeed to suppose that the husband of the daughter could have murdered the mother.'

'Oh, horrible, most horrible!' exclaimed Madeline.

'Though Monsieur D'Alembert is gay and extravagant, and not the kind of man he appeared to be before his marriage, he is not such a villain as you supposed him,' cried Agatha.

'I was not then mistaken in supposing that Madame D'Alembert had another cause for grief besides the death of her mother?' said Madeline.

'No, you were not mistaken as to that,' replied Agatha, 'poor thing she frets a great deal about Monsieur, and I am sure if he sells any part of the domain belonging to the chateau, it will go nigh to break her heart, for she loves every inch of it; and if any thing could raise my poor dear lady out of her grave, I am certain his doing so would.'

'I hope he will not be so disrespectful to her memory,' said Madeline, 'as to do what he knows would have been contrary to her inclination, nor so inhuman to her daughter as to disregard her wishes.'

'I fear he will, Mademoiselle': cried Agatha, 'when once he takes a thing into his head, 'tis a difficult matter to make him give it up: but I hope when you see Madame you will not tell her any thing I have been saying.'

'You may be assured I shall not,' said Madeline.

'She means,' resumed Agatha, 'to pay you a visit to-morrow night, if she can possibly steal from her company: poor soul 'tis very

different company to what she has been accustomed to: Ah! Mademoiselle, if my dear lady had been living, such people would never have been permitted to enter the chateau. Alas! its glory and happiness are departed, and I shall never again behold such days as once I saw within it.

'Farewell Mademoiselle,' continued she, rising, ' 'tis time for me to leave you, for I hear the servants retiring to rest, heaven bless you and protect you.'

Madeline locked the door after her with a trembling hand, and involuntarily shuddered as she turned from it at finding herself alone in a chamber so gloomy, and so remote from every one as her present one was. Her spirits were too much agitated, in consequence of her conversation with Agatha, to permit her to sleep; and, even if inclined to do so, she could not think of reposing on a bed where she had so lately seen the corpse of her friend; whenever she glanced at it, it was with a kind of terror, as if she almost expected to have beheld again upon it the same ghastly figure.

Within the chamber was a closet which contained a small selection of books; determined on sitting up the night, Madeline took one from it, with a hope that it would divert her thoughts and prevent her attention from dwelling on what distressed her; but this hope was a vain one, and the night wore heavily away. About the dawn of day she leant back in the arm chair on which she was sitting, and slept for a little time; the ensuing hours were as tedious and melancholy as those she had recently passed; she waited most impatiently for the promised visit from some of her friends, particularly after it grew too dark for her to read. At length in about two hours after she had been compelled to lay aside her book, she heard a soft tap at the chamber door, she immediately opened it, and Floretta entered with a light, and a small basket of provisions. Madeline followed her to the table on which she laid them, as soon as she had re-locked the door, and then to her infinite amazement and terror first perceived that Floretta was weeping violently.



said Floretta, who, alarmed by her agitation, feared to oppose her, 'but indeed I fear she cannot, without Monsieur's knowledge, as she is now engaged with him and his company: I know she intends to visit you to-night, as she and my master are to have separate chambers, though it will be at a late hour; if you could wait till then it would be better.'

'Well,' cried Madeline, growing a little composed and re-seating herself, 'if you are sure she intends to come, I will, however contrary to my inclination, wait her own time, rather than expose her to the displeasure of Monsieur D'Alembert: and yet, Floretta,' continued she looking earnestly at her, 'I cannot conceive why he should be displeased to hear I was in the chateau.'

'Displeased!' repeated Floretta, 'Lord I am sure he would be rejoiced!'

'Rejoiced!' exclaimed Madeline.

'Yes, I have not a doubt but what he would,' said Floretta.

'Then why,' asked Madeline, 'am I concealed?'

'Because,' cried Floretta—

'What?' eagerly demanded Madeline.

'Why to tell you the truth, Mademoiselle,' cried Floretta, 'but remember it must go no farther, I believe my lady thinks you are too pretty to be seen by Monsieur.'

'Heavens!' exclaimed Madeline, 'what would you have me imagine that your lady could harbour a suspicion of me?'

'Lord, no, to be sure I would not,' said Floretta, 'tis the very last thing in the world I would have you imagine, because it would be the most unjust idea you could form; 'tis not of you, but Monsieur, she harbours a suspicion; she knows if he saw you—'

'Would to God I had not consented to stay in the house,' interrupted Madeline.

The motive for Madame D'Alembert's concealing her was now explained; the motive which prompted her lamented benefactress so repeatedly to tell her not to continue in the chateau, if Monsieur D'Alembert came to it.

'Oh! my father,' she sighed to herself, 'would to heaven I was again within your arms.'

'I hope Mademoiselle,' said Floretta, 'you will not leave us; Monsieur departs in a few days, and I hope you will not mind a short confinement.'

Madeline made no reply, but desired to hear the particulars of Agatha's death.

'About the middle of the night,' said Floretta, 'I and a fellow servant who sleeps with me were awoke by dreadful groans from the chamber of Agatha, which opened into ours; we directly jumped out of bed, and running into it, asked what was the matter; but groans were all we could hear: we grew dreadfully frightened, and

called up more of the servants. A light was then procured, and we discovered Agatha in fits: the noise we made alarmed my master and mistress, o'er whose apartment we were, and throwing their wrappers over them they came up to inquire what was the matter. My lady appeared greatly shocked by the situation of Agatha, and directly ordered a physician to be sent for, but Monsieur countermanded this order; he said he had a medical friend in the house, who could do as much for her as any other person in the same line. He was accordingly sent for, and on examining Agatha, he declared her fits were owing to her having eaten something that disagreed with her. Scarcely had he spoken when she came to herself, and opening her eyes, in a hollow voice exclaimed, "Poison! I am poisoned!"

"Good heavens!" cried Madame D'Alembert starting, "what does she say? does she not say she is poisoned?"

"You are not to mind what she says," replied Monsieur, in rather an angry voice, "the woman raves, and I insist on your quitting her room directly, you are already sufficiently shocked by her."

'My lady durst not disobey him, and retired, though I saw most unwillingly, with her woman.

"Send for father Bertrand," again spoke Agatha, after the pause of a minute, "for I am dying."

"Nonsense," exclaimed Monsieur D'Alembert, "friend she will be well enough by and by, and I am sure I shall not permit my neighbourhood to be disturbed to gratify her," said my master.—['Ah! Mademoiselle, I fear he is but a bad christian']—"I insist, therefore," continued he, "that not a servant in this castle shall go for father Bertrand, except they chuse immediately to be dismissed my service." Like my poor lady, none of us durst disobey him, he took care indeed that we should not, by continuing to watch us: In a little time Agatha relapsed, and died in a few minutes. She had scarcely breathed her last, ere she turned quite black and swelled to a great size; and, notwithstanding what my master and my master's friend says, we are all, that is, I mean, all the servants are of opinion, that she was poisoned; though how, or by whom, we cannot possibly conceive, as we know of no stranger that lately entered the castle, neither of any mortal that she ever offended.'

"Tis a horrible affair," said Madeline, who was now firmly convinced that the murderers of the countess had destroyed her.

'My master has insisted,' cried Floretta, 'upon our making no comment, at least no public comments on it; he declares if we do, he will have us severely punished. Poor Agatha, poor soul, there is nobody regrets her more than I do, though we had many little tiffs together; she was so good-natured and used to make me such a number of pretty little presents in the course of the year; if ever I

wanted any thing nice, nice sweetmeats, or nice cordials, I had nothing to do but to ask her for them. Mr Lubin will be holding up his head now I suppose, I fancy she has left him all her money, and no trifle either I dare say: we shall know, this, however, to-morrow, for father Bertrand, who has her will, intends opening it then, if she has left me a legacy, I shall buy mourning for her.'

'Poor Agatha!' said Madeline, 'she little thought she would have followed her dear lady so soon.'

'True, Mademoiselle,' cried Floretta, 'but you look faint, let me give you a glass of wine?'

'First tell me,' said Madeline, on whose agitated mind the dreadful idea of poison dwelt, 'first tell me', said she, starting up, 'where or from whom did you procure this wine?'

'Lord bless me, Mademoiselle,' cried Floretta, 'how you frighten me by your looks; why, I stole it from the butler.'

'Well, since you got it from him, I will take some of it,' cried Madeline. She felt her spirits somewhat revived by doing so, and she then expressed her hopes that Floretta would stay with her till Madame D'Alembert came.

'Tis quite out of my power to stay till then,' said Floretta, instantly rising, as if the very idea of doing so had terrified her, 'I must go, in order to watch for an opportunity for my lady to come to you.'

'Hasten her to me I conjure you,' cried Madeline, as she followed Floretta to the door to lock it after her.

'O that I was out of this house,' exclaimed Madeline, as she turned from the door, 'danger and death surround me on every side.'

She feared that Madame D'Alembert would oppose her quitting it, she feared she could not entreat her permission to do so without betraying in some degree the motive which prompted that entreaty. Impressed with terror, she knelt before a large crucifix near the head of the bed, and fervently implored the protection of heaven. As she prayed she was suddenly startled by the creaking of the closet door: she turned her head with quickness towards it, and beheld it half open; and the horror of that moment can better be conceived than described; a man whose face was shaded by a large hat leaning from it, and earnestly regarding her.

That the murderers of Agatha had by some means or other discovered her concealment, and from the garden had entered, through the closet window, with an intention of destroying her, was the dreadful idea which instantly started to her mind: all power of voice and motion forsook her, and straining an eye of agony and horror on the terrifying stranger, she still continued kneeling: in this situation she remained for about two minutes, when a soft tap came to the chamber door, the stranger hastily

retreated, and shut the closet door; Madeline with a scream of mingled joy and terror then started from the ground, and flying to the door opened it and beheld Madame D'Alembert and Floretta.

Madeline fell upon the neck of the former, but for many minutes could only give vent to her feelings by sobs and broken sentences.

'Oh! you are come at last!' she exclaimed as she pressed her friend to her palpitating heart, 'you are come, the blessed instrument of providence, to save me from destruction; let us quit this chamber, and secure the door till the family can be alarmed and the closet searched.'

'Heaven defend us!' cried Floretta, instantly retreating towards the gallery, 'what did you see within the closet, Mademoiselle?'

'Nothing to alarm her, I am sure,' said Madame D'Alembert.

'Nothing to alarm her!' repeated Madeline emphatically.

'No,' cried Madame D'Alembert, 'every avenue to that closet is secured; 'tis therefore impossible any one could have entered it without your knowledge; your imagination affected by the gloom of your apartment has deceived you.'

'Good heaven! Madam,' exclaimed Madeline, 'would you try to make me disbelieve my senses?'

'To prove how certain I am they have been deceived, I will search the closet myself,' said Madame D'Alembert, advancing as she spoke into the chamber.

'Oh! do not be so rash,' cried Madeline, grasping her arm, 'do not too late repent your temerity.'

Madame D'Alembert made no reply, but disengaging herself, she directly went to the closet, and flinging open the door, exclaimed,

'Come, see whether or not I have been mistaken.'

Madeline approached her with trembling steps, and to her infinite amazement beheld there was no creature or trace of any creature within the closet.

'I am astonished indeed,' said she, 'but mysterious as was the entrance or disappearance of any person, that I saw some person is beyond a doubt.'

'What kind of person, Mademoiselle?' asked Floretta.

Madeline, as clearly as she could, described him; but was hurt to find Madame D'Alembert still appeared incredulous.

'You see,' said she, 'that the window, the only way by which any person could have entered the closet, is secured within side.'

'I see it is,' cried Madeline, 'I must therefore only suppose that it was a being of the other world I saw.'

'No, no, my dear Madeline,' said Madame D'Alembert, 'I am sure you have too much sense to be superstitious.'

'Ah! Madame,' replied Madeline, 'I should not wonder if my reason was impaired by the shocks I have lately received.—Wonder not,' she continued, 'if I declare I can no longer remain in this

apartment. Oh! dearest Madam, be not surprised if I entreat your permission to return to my father; he wishes to see me; and who can wonder if I sigh to see him?’

‘Unkind Madeline,’ said Madame D’Alembert, shedding tears, ‘will you then leave me? Will you disappoint the hopes I entertained of enjoying your society whilst I continued at the chateau? Your father, you must remember, in his last letter, assured you he did not expect, nay, he did not desire you to return, till I was going to Paris; and from all disagreeable confinement you will be released in two days, as Monsieur D’Alembert then departs.’

Distressed, confused, perplexed, Madeline stood silent, irresolute how to act. Her fears, her reason urged her to quit the chateau directly, but her dread of being thought ungrateful, unfeeling, by Madame D’Alembert, if she did do so, almost tempted her to stay.

‘Ah!’ cried she to herself, ‘how distressing a situation is mine; the fears which make me tremble to stay in the chateau I am bound by a solemn vow to conceal; and except I can assign better reasons for wishing to leave it than I have already done, (and to do so is impossible) Madame D’Alembert will certainly be offended at my quitting it.’

Hurt by her silence, by her too evident wish of departing, Madame D’Alembert suddenly wiped away her tears, and while a crimson glow mantled her cheek, exclaimed,

‘Against your inclination I will not detain you: no, Madeline, to inclination, not necessity, I must be indebted for your company. I see your reluctance to continue with me, and you are at liberty to depart the moment you please: I own—’ and her voice faltered. ‘I had hoped, I had imagined, but it is no matter, ’tis not the first time I have been disappointed,—disappointed by those on whom my heart placed its tenderest affections, and by those it believed would sincerely return them.’

Had a dagger pierced the bosom of Madeline it could scarcely have given her more pain than did the words of her friend: eager to be reinstated in her good opinion, she forgot those apprehensions which but a moment before had agitated her soul, and determined no longer to persist in desiring to quit the castle.

‘Oh! Madam,’ cried she, while tears trickled down her cheeks, ‘how you have wounded me by your language: Do you then deem me unworthy? Do you think me ungrateful, forgetful of your kindness? Do you suppose I desire to fly from you?’

‘Your words have intimated such a desire,’ replied Madame D’Alembert.

‘Ah! Madame,’ said Madeline ‘when I uttered them my senses were almost overpowered by terror; and if you wish me to continue in the castle,—’

‘Wish you,’ interrupted her friend. ‘Ah! Madeline,’ clasping her

arms around her, 'do you doubt my wishing you to do so? Yes, my love, 'tis my wish, my entreaty, my earnest request, that you stay in the castle till I quit it. You shall not continue in your present chamber, I came on purpose to remove you from it, for, to be brief, Monsieur D'Alembert suspects your being in the castle, and may perhaps take it into his head to search it; I am therefore going to conduct you to a place where he will never think of looking for you.'

'Oh! Madame,' cried Madeline, and she paused, fearful of again exciting the displeasure of her friend, for she had been on the point of again entreating permission to return to her father, 'to what place, Madame,' asked she, suddenly recollecting herself, 'are you going to take me.'

'Ask me no questions at present, my love,' said Madame D'Alembert, 'our security perhaps depends upon our silence; for I know not at this very moment but we may be watched; follow me, therefore, I entreat in silence.'

She now led the way from the chamber, and, preceded by Floretta carrying a light, they stole with trembling steps along the gallery, from whence they descended by the private stairs; opposite to them was a low arched door, which they past through, and proceeded along a dark passage to another flight of steep stone stairs, which seemed to lead to the subterraneous parts of the castle. Here Madeline paused, and entreated to know whither they were taking her.

'Be not alarmed, my love,' said Madame D'Alembert, 'be assured it is to a place of security.'

The stairs were terminated by an iron door fastened by an immense padlock. Floretta laid down the light, and taking down a large rusty key with difficulty unlocked it, slowly opening with a grating noise, that absolutely struck terror into the soul of Madeline; it discovered to her view a black and hideous vault, dripping with damp, and from which a cold vapour issued that nearly extinguished the light; at its entrance Madeline again paused.

'Oh! heavens,' cried she, shuddering and leaning against the wall, 'whither are we going?'

'Ah! Madeline,' said Madame D'Alembert in a supplicating voice, 'after going so far will you at last disappoint me? Be not alarmed I again repeat; if you wish to confirm my obligations to you do not hesitate now: your life, your safety, are more precious to me than my own, follow therefore without fear, without hesitation, wherever I may lead.'

To do so, however, was scarcely in the power of Madeline, and Madame D'Alembert taking her hand, rather drew than led her through a succession of gloomy vaults till they came to a low arched door, fastened by a bolt: Floretta undrew it, and Madeline, to her

infinite horror and amazement, found herself in the chapel, beside the grave of her benefactress, and near the spot where she had received her fatal wound.

'Is this,' said she, looking round her with terror and dismay, 'the place of security you said you were bringing me to? 'Tis all but secure; death and destruction hover o'er it. Oh! Madam!' wildly flinging herself at the feet of Madame D'Alembert, 'I cannot, cannot stay within it, for the murderer here takes his solitary rounds, to plunge his dagger in the heart of innocence and virtue.'

'My love,' cried her friend, raising her from the ground, 'what do you mean? you strike me with horror by your words, you shake my very soul.'

The energy of Madame D'Alembert recalled the scattered senses of Madeline, and made her reflect on the imprudence she had been guilty of; she shuddered as she considered she had nearly broken her solemn vow, and been on the point of planting unutterable and unappeasable sorrows in the heart of Madame D'Alembert.—Exerting all her resolution,

'Dear Madame,' said she, 'I know not what I said; my imagination was disordered by the gloom of the place.'

'Surely my love,' said her friend, 'you could not imagine I would be so cruel as to intend to keep you here: no—to-night, as soon as it is dark, either Floretta or I, accompanied by Lubin, will come to reconduct you to the castle, where you shall be again put in possession of your own apartment: my reason for bringing you to pass the day here, was to prevent your being seen by Monsieur D'Alembert, who, I will acknowledge, threatened to search the castle; but except he puts that threat in execution to-day I am confident he never will, as to-morrow he will busy paying visits in the neighbourhood previous to his departure.'

This assurance calmed the agitation of Madeline, and she grew still more composed when Madame D'Alembert declared she would not leave her till the morning was farther advanced.

They now ascended to the dormitory, which, as I have already said, was in an habitable state, and soon discovered a cell for Madeline to sit in, containing the remains of a wooden bedstead. Here Floretta left a small basket of provisions, and she and her lady continued with Madeline till the gloomy shadows of night had nearly fled, they then bade her adieu, and repeated their assurance of coming for her as soon as it grew dark.

Left to herself, the flurry of Madeline's spirits subsided, and she was able calmly to reconsider what was past and to reflect on her present situation; as she did so she bitterly regretted not having insisted on returning immediately to her father; for her longer residence in the castle, exposed her, she was convinced, to dangers of the most dreadful nature; that Agatha had fallen by the hands

of the countess's murderers she could not doubt, neither that they had entered the closet with an intention of destroying her; for their strange and mysterious disappearance from it she accounted by supposing that behind some one of the large presses it contained there was a secret door.

'I cannot suppose,' said she, 'that one disappointment will make them lay aside their horrible intentions; by remaining in the castle I expose myself to their continual attempts, attempts which may perhaps at last be too successful, I must fly it therefore,' continued she, 'however unpleasant, however agonizing to my feelings to excite the displeasure of Madame D'Alembert; I must, when next we meet, entreat, implore her to let me return to my father.'

As soon as the day was advanced Madeline descended to the chapel, in order to try and divert her mind from the dreadful ideas which depressed it, by examining the curious monuments within the building; the terror of Madeline's soul now gave way to awe and melancholy,—she felt chilled, she felt oppressed beyond expression, as she viewed the records of mortality, and trod the silent solitary aisles, which awfully echoed her lightest step, and whose gloom the beams of the sun that darted through the painted casements could not dissipate.

She had often (to use the words of an author, not less affecting than sublime)\* 'Walked beneath the impending promontory's craggy cliff, sometimes trod the vast spaces of the lonely desert, and penetrated the inmost recesses of the dreary cavern, but had never, never before beheld nature louring with so tremendous an aspect,—never before felt such impressions of awe striking cold upon her heart, as now beneath the black browed arches, amidst the mouldy walls of the Monastery, where melancholy, deepest melancholy spread her raven wings.'

Ah! if the children of vanity, of dissipation, sometimes visited a scene like this, surely (thought she) their hearts would be amended; they would be convinced of the littleness of this world, of the folly of placing their entire affections upon it, when they beheld 'nobility arrayed in a winding sheet, grandeur mouldering in an urn, and the high grass waving round the hero's tomb, while his dusty banner, the banner which he once unfurled to strike consternation on his foes, hung idly fluttering o'er it'.

At the grave of her benefactress she paused.

'Here,' said she, 'gratitude and affection must ever linger. Oh! my friend, my mother, never can thy kindness be obliterated from my heart, never can my heart be consoled for thy loss: alas! from thy deep sleep the sighs of thy Madeline cannot awake thee! Cold is that breast which was the repository of her sorrows, silent the tongue which poured sympathy upon them.'

\* Hervey.

When it grew dark she ascended to the cell, for the gloom of the chapel then grew too awful for her to bear. After sitting a considerable time there in a state of painful impatience, she went to a large folding door, which terminated the gallery, and commanded an extensive view of the valley, to try if she could discover any sign of Madame D'Alembert or Floretta, who had said, as I should previously have mentioned, that they would come to her through the garden; but no step, no voice, could she hear, no glimpse of any object could she distinguish.

'They cannot have forgotten me,' said she, 'they cannot let me pass the night amidst the dead; and yet 'tis far beyond the hour I expected them.'

Her heart almost died away as she viewed the opposite mountains, whose dark brows seemed rising above the clouds, and from whose black cavities the wind issued with hoarse murmurs, like the yells of midnight murderers.

'Ah!' cried she, shuddering, 'within those cavities perhaps the murderers of the countess—of Agatha—the intended murderers of Madeline, may be now concealed; before to-morrow perhaps I may be cold and inanimate, like those o'er whose sculptured urns I so recently bent.'

At this instant she thought she heard the echo of a light step outside the building; her heart palpitated, she bent forward, and caught a glimpse of a female figure habited in black, gliding into the Monastery and followed by a man wrapped up in a large dark coat: That it was Madame D'Alembert and Lubin she beheld she could not doubt, and in a transport of joy she instantly flew to the stairs to meet them, but at the head of the stairs she paused, and trembled, for as the low sound of voices reached her from below, she fancied she heard the voices of total strangers: she held in her breath that she might be better enabled to ascertain whether or not her fears were justly founded, and was soon convinced that it was neither Madame D'Alembert nor Lubin she had seen enter.

Alive only to one dreadful idea, to one apprehension, she now believed her fate approaching, and looked round for some place to secrete herself; she looked in vain however; for mouldering cells and narrow passages, choaked with rubbish only, met her view.

At length she recollected, that near the cell where she had been sitting there was a long and winding gallery, pretty free from rubbish, and which Madame D'Alembert had informed her led to the innermost recesses of the building; down this she determined to fly.

At the head of the staircase which faced the body of the chapel was a large dismantled window, through which the moon, now beginning to rise, shed a faint light, but still sufficient to render objects conspicuous. Madeline therefore feared she should be seen as she crossed the staircase, she knew however there was no

alternative, and that she must either run the risk of being discovered now, or remain where in a few minutes later she was sure of being so.

Madeline accordingly stepped forward, but though her step was too light to be heard, her figure was perceived, and she instantly heard a shout from the chapel, and ascending steps. Fear lent her wings, she flew to the gallery, but, just as she was darting into it, a large iron hook entangled her clothes: with a strength which desperation only could have given her, she attempted to tear them from it, but ere her efforts had succeeded her arm was rudely seized; she immediately turned her head and beheld the inflamed countenance of a man glaring upon her; the moment he saw her face he started back with a look which seemed to intimate she was not the person he expected to have seen, but the faint pleasure which this idea gave was quickly destroyed by his drawing a small dagger from his breast with which he again approached Madeline. Her death she now believed inevitable, and staggering back a few paces, 'Ah! heaven have mercy upon me!' she said, and dropped lifeless on the floor.

As she recovered her senses she felt some one chafing her hands.

'Ah!' she cried, in a faint voice, 'do you restore me to life but to have the pleasure of depriving me of it?'

'My Madeline, my love,' exclaimed the soft voice of Madame D'Alembert, 'what has thus disordered your senses?'

Madeline raised her head from the ground, she looked at Madame D'Alembert,—she looked from her, and beheld Lubin.

'Gracious heaven!' cried she, 'do I dream or have I been in a frightful dream from which you have just awakened me?'

'My dearest girl,' said Madame D'Alembert, 'what has alarmed you?'

'Alarmed me?' repeated Madeline, wildly staring at her. 'Oh, heavens! surely it is but an instant ago since I saw the poignard of the murderer raised against me?'

'You terrify me,' exclaimed her friend.

'Terrify you,' repeated Madeline, starting from the ground. 'Oh, let us fly this dreadful place directly, for even now perhaps our lives may be in danger.'

'Don't be frightened, Mademoiselle,' cried Lubin, 'I am not unarmed.'

'You strike me with horror,' said Madame D'Alembert, 'and take from me the power of moving: tell me what danger it is we have to apprehend, for no trace of any being, of any thing to alarm you, did we discover, and the swoon in which we found you we imputed to illness instead of terror.'

Madeline in a few hasty words informed her of the manner in which she had been terrified, and whilst she gratefully returned her

thanks to heaven for her safety, she expressed her astonishment at being uninjured.

'Oh! my love,' cried her friend, clasping her arms round her as she concluded, 'never, never can I requite you for what you have suffered on my account; never can I forgive myself for having exposed you to such alarms.'

'I wish with all my soul,' said Lubin, grasping the rusty sword he had brought from the chateau, 'I wish with all my soul I had caught the villain, I'll warrant if I had I should soon have made him confess what brought him hither; his companion I suppose, was only a man in disguise.'

'Who these mysterious strangers were I cannot possibly conceive,' cried Madame D'Alembert, 'but that they certainly did not mean to harm you, however appearances may make you believe to the contrary, I think; for had such been their intention they most assuredly could have accomplished that intention 'ere we came.'

'They only designed to rob her I suppose,' said Lubin, 'and frighten her to silence; pray search your pockets, Mademoiselle, to try if you have lost any thing.'

'There was nothing of any value in them,' replied Madeline, 'so I need not take that trouble.'

'They must certainly,' resumed Lubin, 'have retreated, on hearing us, down that gallery,' pointing to the one Madeline had attempted to conceal herself in; 'I would give all the money I am worth for somebody now to assist me in searching it.'

'Oh, Madeline!' cried her friend, 'I can no longer attempt to detain you: I came to you half determined to let you return immediately to your father, as Monsieur D'Alembert, contrary to his first intention, has resolved on passing a month in the chateau; but I am now, in consequence of what I have heard, resolved on doing so; to-night therefore we part, and heaven knows whether we shall ever meet again.'

'To-night!' repeated Madeline amazed.

'Yes,' replied Madame D'Alembert, whose tears scarcely permitted her to speak, 'to-night—was your journey postponed till tomorrow, Monsieur D'Alembert must discover that you have hitherto been concealed in the chateau, and the consequences of such a discovery would be extremely disagreeable to me.'

'Heaven forbid then,' said Madeline, 'I should delay my journey; and yet'—she paused, she recollected herself—and since her friend was anxious for her immediate departure, resolved not to mention the fears she felt at the idea of travelling by night.

'I confide you to the care of Lubin,' cried Madame D'Alembert, 'I know he is faithful, I know he is brave, and will fulfil the trust I repose in him.'

'I humbly thank your Ladyship for your good opinion of me,' said Lubin, taking off his hat and making a low bow, 'it shall be my study to deserve it: I am sure I should be an ungrateful varlet if I would not go through fire and water for you, or any one beloved by you; and Mademoiselle may be assured, while I have an arm to stretch out in her defence, I will protect her.'

'At the extremity of the wood surrounding the chateau, is the cottage of my nurse,' said Madame D'Alembert, addressing Madeline, 'thither Lubin must now conduct you, and there he will procure horses for your journey; for I am afraid to have any taken from the stables here, least a discovery should be the consequence of doing so: do not delay longer than is absolutely necessary at the cottage, I have important reasons for wishing you to get to a distance from the chateau, as soon as possible, when you are about half way between it and your father's house you can stop to rest.'

'Yes,' replied Lubin, 'there is a snug house just thereabouts, where we can put up. You may recollect, Mademoiselle,' turning to Madeline, 'that you and my poor lady dined there last spring in your way to the chateau?'

A deep sigh stole from the breast of Madeline at the recollection of that happy period; and Madame D'Alembert was for a few minutes unable to speak.

'In the course of a few days, Madeline,' said she, as soon as she had recovered her voice, 'you may expect a letter, containing a full explanation of every thing that appeared mysterious in my conduct towards you. After suffering so much on my account you surely are entitled to know every secret of my heart—Oh! Madeline, that heart can never forget the gratitude it owes you.'

'Ah, Madam,' cried Madeline, while tears trickled down her cheeks, 'do not hurt me by speaking in this manner; all that I could do, could never repay the numerous favours I have received from you, 'tis I only have a right to speak of gratitude.'

'Perhaps,' resumed her friend, 'we may meet again: I will indulge such a hope, it will sooth, it will console me in some degree for your loss. Oh! Madeline, 'tis with pain, 'tis with agony I consent to our separation, but without murmuring I must submit to that as well as to many other sorrows.'

She now took the trembling hand of Madeline, and they descended to the valley, thro' which they silently and swiftly passed, nor stopped 'till they came within sight of the chateau; Madame D'Alembert then paused, to give a last farewell to Madeline; locked in each others arms they continued many minutes unable to speak, unable to separate; at length Madame D'Alembert summoning all her resolution to her aid, disengaged herself from Madeline. 'Farewell,' said she, 'may heaven for ever bless, protect you, and make you as happy as you deserve to be.' She turned away as she spoke

as if fearful her resolution would fail her if she continued another moment with Madeline, and hastened to the chateau.

Silent and immoveable Madeline stood gazing after her till addressed by Lubin.

'Come, Mademoiselle,' said he, 'we had better not delay any longer, 'twill be a late hour even as it is, I can assure you, 'ere we reach the house where we are to rest, this way, Mademoiselle.'

Almost instinctively Madeline followed him to a door which opened from the garden to the lawn, but here she again stopped; the variety of distressing and terrifying scenes she had lately gone through had almost bewildered her senses, and she now felt as if she scarcely knew where she was, or whither she was going.

'Have I really taken my last leave of Madame D'Alembert? Am I really quitting the chateau?' said she, earnestly looking at Lubin.

'Lord, yes, that you have indeed Mademoiselle,' answered he, somewhat surprised and alarmed.

'Gracious heaven!' cried she, with folded hands, 'if any person two months ago had told me I should quit the chateau in the manner I am at present doing, what little credit should I have given to their words.—

'Oh life!' she sighed to herself, 'how rapid are thy revolutions!— But a short time ago and that very mansion which I now leave with secrecy and precipitation, I entered with every hope of finding a permanent and happy home within it; but a short time ago and it was a refuge for distress, an asylum for innocence and virtue; but now the mendicant may wander to it in vain for relief, innocence and virtue seek protection without receiving it.

'With its virtues its honours must decline; for he who has not a heart to cherish the former, must surely want a spirit to support the latter.

'No more then shall the arm of valour unfurl its banners to the call of glory; no more shall the records of fame be swelled by its achievements; no more shall noble emulation be inspired by them.

'With its late owner its greatness and happiness departed; they are set, but set not like that sun whose splendours so lately brightened this scene, to rise again with renovated glory.'



at last a window was opened, and an old man, putting out his head, asked who came there.

'Why, a friend,' replied Lubin, 'and a devilish time he has been trying to gain admittance: Come, come, Mr Colin, you may open the door without any grumbling, for by the time I have taken to waken you it is pretty evident you have had a good spell.'

'Pray what brings you here at this time of night?' cried a shrill female voice.

'I am come by the command of my lady to borrow two horses,' answered Lubin, 'I must get them directly, and without being asked whither I am going with them; pray make haste, I have a lady waiting with me for them.'

'A lady!' the old couple repeated, and both thrust their heads together out of the window, to see whether he spoke truth or not.

The door was now opened in a minute, and the nurse invited Madeline into the cottage, while her husband went forth with Lubin to a little shed adjoining it, to prepare the horses: she had seen Madeline before at the cottage, and almost immediately recollected her; she was all amazement at now beholding her, nor could forbear inquiring the reason of it. Madeline waved the discourse, and expressed her regret at her having been disturbed.

The horses were ready in a few minutes, and the good couple having received a strict caution against mentioning her to any one, she was assisted by Lubin to mount, and they set off at a smart pace.

'How very curious old Colin and his wife were!' said Lubin, 'I dare say they would have given half they were worth to know the cause of our travelling by night, and not getting horses at the chateau.'

'I don't wonder at their being so,' cried Madeline.

'No, nor I neither, Mademoiselle; 'tis a comical thing to be sure our rambling about at night; it puts me in mind of the Fairy Tales I have read; heaven be praised our journey is but a short one.'

They did not slacken their pace till they reached the gloomy forest, in which the gothic castle of Montmorency stood; the heart of Madeline sunk as she approached it, and she trembled as she entered amidst its awful shades, and heard the breeze sweeping over them with a hollow murmur: the courage of Lubin too seemed a little to fail him.

'I wish with all my soul Mademoiselle,' said he, 'that the house we are going to was at this side of the forest instead of the other.'

'I wish it was,' cried Madeline, 'or that we could get shelter elsewhere.'

'That is impossible, Mademoiselle,' replied he, 'so we must only make what haste we can to it; Lord how glad I shall be when I find myself there; so will you, I dare say, Mademoiselle.'

'Undoubtedly,' replied Madeline, 'the recollection of past danger will heighten present pleasure.'

'I wish all our dangers were over, and our pleasures come,' cried Lubin, 'but Lord, Mademoiselle, the very worst of our way is still before us; the middle of the forest, which we have not yet reached, is a grand rendezvous, they say, for a gang of banditti, that have long infested the country; there they meet as soon as it grows dark, and settle their plans for the night. Well, of all places in the world I should not like to be robbed in a forest, it would be such an easy matter afterwards to murder one.'

'Pray, Lubin,' said Madeline, 'do not talk any more in this manner, for if you do you'll make me tremble so I shall not be able to keep my seat.'

'I ask your pardon, Mademoiselle; I am sure the last thing in the world I meant to do was to frighten you: To be sure I wish I had brought a pocket pistol or two with me from the chateau, instead of this rusty sword, to defend you; though, after all, what would avail my single arm against a whole gang? Heaven help us if they meet us! poor Colin may then go whistle for his horses; though upon recollection my Lady would certainly recompence him for their loss.'

'Drop this dreadful subject I entreat you,' said Madeline, in a tremulous voice.

'Come cheer up, Mademoiselle,' exclaimed Lubin, who was now thoroughly convinced he had alarmed Madeline, 'we will keep as near as possible to the extremity of the forest, and if we ride fast we shall soon reach the house.'

As fast as the intricacies of the path would permit them to go, they went, and at last reached in safety their destined goal.

Here Madeline, who had hitherto with difficulty kept her seat, alighted; but how impossible to describe her disappointment, and the disappointment of her companion, when after repeatedly knocking at the door they were at length convinced that the house was uninhabited. They stood for some minutes looking at each other, in a consternation that deprived them of speech.

Lubin was the first who broke silence.

'What's to be done, Mademoiselle?' said he.

'I am sure I can't tell,' answered Madeline in a faint voice, and leaning against the wall.

'Faith,' cried Lubin, 'I have a good mind to break open the door and obtain shelter for the night, though, to my sorrow, I can't get a good supper; I meant to have ordered a nice omelet, the moment I arrived.'

'For heaven's sake do not attempt to break open the door,' exclaimed Madeline, 'the consequences of such an action might be dreadful.'

'What's to be done then I again ask?' said Lubin, 'you would not

wish, I suppose, to sit down here without any shelter for the remainder of the night; neither would you, I suppose, like to mount your horse and go ten miles farther in search of another habitation, and nearer you need not expect to find one that would receive you.'

'I am not able to go in search of another,' replied Madeline, 'the shocks I received and the fatigue I have gone through this night have quite overpowered me.'

'Lord,' cried Lubin, starting, 'perhaps the Marquis of Montmorenci may be come to his castle, only you were afraid Mademoiselle of that part of the forest, we might have past it, and been able perhaps to have discovered.'

'And even if we had,' said Madeline, 'what benefit should we have derived from that circumstance?'

'Why we should certainly have obtained a lodging in his castle.'

'I should be afraid to disturb the family at this late hour,' cried Madeline hesitatingly.

'Lord I am sure,' cried Lubin, 'it is better to disturb them than run the risque of being murdered here.'

'But suppose they are not there?' said Madeline.

'Why then, Mademoiselle,' cried Lubin hastily, 'we will try to find some niche about the wall where we can shelter ourselves for the night, since you are so scrupulous about the door of this house.'

'But,' said Madeline, 'though the family may not be come to the castle, there may be inhabitants in it.'

'Oh! I understand you, Mademoiselle,' interrupted Lubin, 'you are afraid that some of the banditti I was telling you of may have taken up their quarters there; but of that I am sure there's no danger, the castle was too well secured for them to gain admittance; so that except we find the right inhabitants in it, I am confident we shall not find any: come, Mademoiselle, let's lose no time, will you accept my arm, or would you choose to mount again?'

'No,' replied she, 'I would rather walk.'

'Go before me then,' said he, 'and I will lead the horses.'

Madeline obeyed him though with difficulty, for she felt so agitated that she could scarcely drag her weary limbs along. As she approached the castle her eyes were anxiously fastened on it, in hopes of discovering a light or some other sign of inhabitation, but all was dark and dreary around.

'I am afraid, Lubin,' said she, stopping and mournfully shaking her head, 'I am afraid the family have not yet returned.'

'I do not quite despair about that, Mademoiselle,' replied Lubin; 'at so very late an hour as this you know we could not expect to have found any of them up.'

'How shall we make ourselves heard by them then?' asked Madeline.

'Why I suppose we shall find a great bell at the gate, which I shall ring.'

'But if the Marquis's family,' cried Madeline, shuddering at the very idea, 'should not be in the castle, may not the ringing of that bell expose us to destruction? Do you forget the banditti you told me infested this forest?'

'Lord,' said Lubin, 'that's true, the bell would certainly alarm them—well Mademoiselle, I'll tell you what we can do: I recollect taking notice last spring as I passed this castle, of the very bad repair in which the court wall was, so we will search about it for some gap to clamber through.'

He accordingly fastened the horses to the gate, and had not long searched about 'ere he found a place which Madeline easily got over.

Immediately opposite this spot was an arched gateway, which led through a wing of the building to another court; to this Lubin conducted Madeline, who trembled so she could scarcely stand, but the moment she entered it she shrunk back, affrighted at the desolation she beheld, and fancied in the hoarse murmurs of the wind that sighed thro' the shattered buildings surrounding it, she heard portentous sounds.

On each side of the gateway were several doors; Lubin perceived one of them open, and through this he led his trembling companion: they then found themselves in a spacious stone hall, light with one gothic window, through which the twilight now cast a dim religious light, and opposite to which was a folding door, of heavy workmanship: there was a damp smell in this hall, which proclaimed it long deserted, and struck cold to the very heart of Madeline.

'Shall I go now, Mademoiselle,' asked Lubin, 'and try whether there is any one within the castle?'

'Not yet,' replied Madeline, sitting down upon a little bench which ran round the hall, 'not yet,' said she in a faint voice, and involuntarily leaning her head against his arm for support.

Lubin was terrified, he almost believed her dying.

'Dear, dear, Mademoiselle,' said he, 'cheer up, I shall not be long absent; and whether there is or is not any one in the castle, we are secure for the night.'

Madeline grew a little better, and no longer opposed his going. It was some time 'ere he could open the folding door; when he did it disclosed to his view a long dark passage, down which the anxious eyes of Madeline pursued him till slowly closing, the door hid him from her view.

Scarcely was she left to herself 'ere she regretted not having accompanied him, for as her eye timidly glanced around, she shuddered at the profound gloom in which she was involved; never had she felt more forlorn, scarcely ever more disconsolate: the manner

in which her first journey had been taken recurred to her recollection, and the contrast she drew between her situation now and then, heightened all the horrors of the present: so true is it, that the remembrance of past joys aggravates our present miseries.

From her melancholy retrospection she was roused by the opening of the door, tho' expecting Lubin, her spirits were so weak she involuntarily started from her seat.

'Don't be frightened Mademoiselle,' cried Lubin, in a whispering voice, as he softly closed the door after him, ' 'tis only I.'

'Well, Lubin,' said Madeline, almost gasping for breath through agitation, 'what intelligence—did you see any one?'

'I can't tell you now, Mademoiselle,' cried he, 'we must be gone.'

'Oh, heavens!' said Madeline, 'is there any danger.'

'This is no time to ask questions,' replied Lubin, 'no place I can assure you to answer them; I again repeat it—we must be gone!'

To move was scarcely in the power of Madeline, so much was she overpowered by the terror Lubin's words had given her, she gave him her hand however, and he led her from the hall: but scarcely had they proceeded a few yards down the gateway, 'ere he started, suddenly stopped, and in a low voice exclaimed,

'There are some of them!'

'Gracious heaven!' cried Madeline, 'what do you mean?'

To repeat her question was unnecessary, for at that instant she beheld two men crossing the court. Lubin now drew, or rather carried her back to the hall, for her tremor had increased to such a degree that she could not stand, and he was compelled to support her upon the seat on which she sunk.

In a voice of agony she now conjured him to tell her what they had to fear, declaring that no certainty almost of danger could be more dreadful than the suspense she at present endured.

'Since you must know, Mademoiselle,' said he, 'we have nothing more to fear than being robbed and murdered!'

'Good heaven!' exclaimed Madeline, 'do you think the men we just beheld are murderers?'

'Yes,' replied Lubin, ruefully shaking his head.

'What reason have you for so horrible a suspicion?' asked Madeline.

'Why you must know, Mademoiselle, I had not proceeded far down the dark passage 'ere I heard a noise, which sounded to me like the clattering of arms. A sudden panic instantly seized me, and I had a great mind to return directly and lead you from the castle: this, however, was but the thought of a minute, for when I reflected there was no probability of getting a lodging elsewhere, and how dismal a thing it would be to pass the remainder of the night in the open air, I resolved on going forward and trying to discover whether there were friends within.'

'I accordingly proceeded till I came to the foot of a narrow flight of stairs, down which a faint light glimmered; up these I softly ascended to a half open door, from which the light issued, and peeping in I beheld a large ill-furnished chamber, with half a dozen men in it, as ill looking dogs as ever I beheld, before a huge fire, cleaning some fire arms: but that was not all—in one corner of the chamber lay the body of a man dreadfully mangled. The dogs laughed as they pursued their work, and talked of the exploits they had achieved and still hoped to achieve with their arms; in short, it was soon evident to me, that the banditti I had mentioned to you had thought proper to make free with the castle in the Marquis's absence, so I made the best of my way back to you, in order to take you directly from it; an intention which the rogues have disappointed.'

'The horses will betray us,' said Madeline in an agony.

'Aye, so I fear,' cried Lubin, 'it was devilish unlucky my fastening them to the gate.'

'Hark!' exclaimed Madeline, 'do you not hear a noise?'

Both were instantly silent, and then clearly heard a violent shouting in the outer court. The dreadful fears it excited were soon however a little appeased by its growing fainter, as if the persons it came from had moved to a greater distance.

'I think,' cried Lubin, after the silence of a few minutes, and gasping for the breath he had before suppressed, 'I think I will now have another peep to try whether or not the coast is clear.'

Madeline rising declared she would accompany him, that if there was an opportunity for escaping, not a moment might be lost.

Again therefore they quitted the hall, but had scarcely done so ere they once more retreated to it with precipitation, on hearing the shouting in the court renewed with double violence.

'The horses have, I am sure, as you feared, betrayed us;' cried Lubin, 'and I make no doubt search is now making for us.'

'Oh! Lubin,' said Madeline, 'is there no way of escaping the impending danger?'

'None that I know of,' answered he, 'but don't be so frightened Mademoiselle, I promise you,' he continued, grasping his rusty sword, 'those that attempt to harm you shall pay dearly for doing so: the villains perhaps may not be such villains as you imagine, they may have some little mercy in their hearts.'

As he spoke the gateway resounded with the shouting, and a light glimmered beneath the door opening from it.

Madeline turned her eyes with dreadful expectation towards it; the next minute it was flung open, and several men entered: Her first impulse was to fall at their feet, and supplicate their mercy, but as she attempted to rise her senses totally receded, and she fell fainting upon the out stretched arm of Lubin.

When her reason returned she found herself supported between two women, and surrounded by men, amongst whom Lubin stood talking with earnestness. She looked round her wildly, too much disordered to understand the words of Lubin, or observe whether the appearance of the men was calculated to remove or confirm her fears.

Her clear perception was however soon restored by Lubin, who almost as soon as he saw her senses restored, exclaimed

'Come, cheer up, Mademoiselle, after all our fright we are in no danger; the noble owner of the castle has returned to it, and the fine fellows I saw cleaning the fire-arms, and whom I took, humbly begging their pardons, for robbers, which to be sure was a great wonder, seeing what honest countenances they have, were some of his Lordship's servants.'

Madeline raised her eyes in thankfulness to heaven, and Lubin proceeded to inform her that the body he had seen had been one of the banditti, who the night before had made an unsuccessful attempt upon the castle, and that the tumult in the court originated from the domestics suspecting, in consequence of finding the horses fastened to the gate, that they were again lurking about it.

'Now that you find yourself in no dishonorable hands, I hope, Madam, you will speedily recover your spirits,' said an elderly man, whose looks and manner denoted a conscious superiority over the rest of his companions.

Madeline thanked him for the hope he had expressed, and was going to explain the cause of her coming to the castle, when Lubin hastily interrupted her by saying, he had already explained every circumstance.

'My Lord,' cried the man who had before addressed her, respectfully bowing as he spoke, 'has been already apprised of your situation, and has commissioned me, Madam, to present his compliments to you, and to entreat you to have the goodness to excuse his not doing the honors of his house himself, which the weak state of his health and spirits prevents: he also desired me to request you would honor his servants by your commands, and not think of quitting the castle till perfectly recovered from your late fatigue and fright.'

Madeline felt truly grateful for this politeness, and rather happy than otherwise at not being introduced to the Marquis de Montmorenci, as her exhausted strength and spirits left her little inclination or ability to converse with a stranger.

The housekeeper, who was one of the women that had supported her, now conducted her down the passage, Lubin had before explored, to a large apartment near its termination; where, in a few minutes, a table was covered with refreshments. Lubin was taken to the servants hall, and Madeline, somewhat cheered by the

knowledge of her safety, partook of the things provided for her: she found her companion extremely loquacious, and so she talked, not much caring whether it was questions she asked or answered.

Madeline inquired how long the Marquis had been indisposed.

'Many, many years,' replied the housekeeper, with a melancholy shake of the head, 'after the heavy afflictions he has sustained, it would be a wonder indeed if he had retained either his health or spirits.'

Madeline, who perfectly recollected the account she had already heard of him, now made no inquiry concerning the nature of those afflictions; but of her own accord the housekeeper gave her a narrative of them.

'The Count St Julian, his son,' continued she, 'was certainly one of the finest youths I ever beheld; his death undoubtedly caused that of my Lady Marchioness: 'tis generally imagined he fell by the hands of banditti, but some people have their doubts about that, and I own I am one of them.'

'Good heaven!' cried Madeline, 'who but banditti could be suspected of murdering him?'

The housekeeper shook her head—

'There were people, Mademoiselle, but'—as if suddenly recollecting herself, 'it does not become me to tell family secrets.'

The curiosity of Madeline was highly raised, but into secrets which indeed she thought properly withheld, she could not think of prying.

'Would not the sympathizing society of friends be of some service to your Lord?' asked Madeline, after the pause of a minute.

'I scarcely think it would, Madam,' answered the housekeeper, 'but at any rate he will not try whether it would have any effect upon him; he lives the most strange and solitary life imaginable, rambling about from one seat to another, and never admitting any one to his presence except his attendants, and now and then a kinsman, who lives some leagues from this, and will be his heir. This castle, in the life time of my Lady, was one of the finest and gayest places perhaps you can conceive; and 'tis a grievous thing to any one who knew it in its glory, to see it now going to rack and ruin for want of a little repair, its courts full of rubbish, and its fine old towers mouldering away; but my Lord seems pleased at beholding its decay.'

'Does he never go about the domain?' asked Madeline.

'No: he generally confines himself to a great lonely apartment, where he scarcely suffers a ray of the blessed day-light to enter, and frequently passes whole nights within the chapel, where he has caused a magnificent monument to be erected to the memory of his lady and son.'

The conversation into which she had entered cast an involuntary

gloom over the mind of Madeline, and by again depressing her spirits made her soon betray symptoms of langour and weariness.

The housekeeper then offered to conduct her to her chamber, an offer which she gladly accepted, and was accordingly led up a flight of stairs, at the end of the passage, to a gallery immediately over it; here she found a comfortable room prepared for her.

Too much fatigued to converse any longer with pleasure, Madeline would have been pleased if her companion had now retired, but the good woman was so fond of talking that she declared she would not leave her till she had seen her to bed.

Madeline was scarcely begun to undress when she missed her father's picture. Struck with consternation and regret at its loss, she threw herself on a chair with a countenance so full of concern, that the housekeeper hastily demanded what was the matter: On being informed, she begged Madeline not to be so much distressed, at least till convinced she could not find it, declaring there was every probability of its being dropped in the hall at the time they were trying to recover her.

Madeline instantly started up with an intention of going in quest of it, but was prevented by the housekeeper, who assured her, that she herself would make a diligent search after it. This assurance however was not sufficient to prevent Madeline from wishing to join in it, till told that if she went now to the hall, she would run the chance of encountering the Marquis, who always passed through it in his way to the chapel, which he frequently visited at this hour.

As the housekeeper spoke somebody tapped at the door; she demanded who it was, and a voice which Madeline immediately recollected to be that of the Marquis's valet, who had so politely addressed her in the hall, replied,

' 'Tis Lafroy.—My Lord presents his compliments to the young lady, and begs she may have the goodness to come to him for a few minutes.'

'Lord have mercy upon me!' exclaimed the housekeeper, with uplifted hands and eyes, 'what can be the meaning of this?—Why, Lafroy,' eagerly opening the door, 'you have quite astonished me!'

The surprise of Madeline, if possible, surpassed her companions; besides, with her's was intermingled something like fear.

'Aye,' cried Lafroy, in reply to the housekeeper, 'I don't wonder, indeed, Mrs Beatrice, at your being astonished, 'tis quite a marvel to have my Lord desire to see a stranger, when he won't permit his own friends to come to him.'

'But, pray, Lafroy, did he give no reason for desiring to see the young lady?'

'Why as I was lighting him to the chapel which, according to his

usual custom, whenever he finds himself in very bad spirits, he was going to, he found in the hall a little picture, which he directly concluded must belong to the young lady; so instead of repairing to the chapel, he immediately returned to his apartment, declaring he must himself restore it to her.'

'Dear heart,' cried Mrs Beatrice, 'well, I protest he is very complaisant.'

'Twas a complaisance, however, which Madeline would gladly have excused, and which she wondered a mind so afflicted as his could ever have thought of.

'I never saw my Lord more disturbed than he was just after finding the picture,' said Lafroy, 'I thought when he returned to his apartment he would have fainted.'

'Since so disordered 'tis a greater wonder than ever that he should desire to see a stranger,' cried the housekeeper.

'Aye, so I think too,' said Lafroy.

Madeline saw he was impatient to conduct her to his Lord, and, though with a reluctance she could scarcely conceal, she did not hesitate to accompany him immediately.

He led her through a circuitous gallery to a very magnificent one, as well as she could discern by the faint light which glimmered through it; at the extreme end of which was the apartment the Marquis sat in: the moment he introduced her to it he retired, closing the door after him.

The Marquis sat at the head of the room; he bowed without rising at her entrance, and motioned for her to take a chair on his right hand.

Tremblingly Madeline approached him, and obeyed his motion. It was some minutes 'ere he spoke, and as his eyes were bent upon the ground the timid ones of Madeline surveyed a form which inspired her with mingled reverence and pity, and which, though bent by age and sorrow, still retained traces of majesty and captivating beauty.

'Young lady,' said he, at last, raising his eyes to hers, 'I hope you had the goodness to excuse my not doing the honors of my house myself; affliction,' added he, with a deep sigh, 'has long rendered me unable to perform the rites of hospitality, to fulfil the claims of society.'

'The rites of hospitality were so amply fulfilled towards me, my Lord,' cried Madeline, 'that I should deem myself highly remiss if I neglected this opportunity of assuring your Lordship of my heartfelt gratitude.'

'Does this picture, young lady,' said he, displaying her father's, which he had hitherto concealed within his hand, and looking earnestly at her, 'belong to you?'

'It does my Lord,' replied Madeline.

'Will you be so obliging,' said he, still retaining it, 'as to inform me how it came into your possession?'

The strangeness of this question, and the look which accompanied it, threw Madeline into an agitation that made her tremble, and took from her all power of replying.

'You are surprised at my question,' proceeded he, 'nor do I wonder at your being so, but I trust you will excuse it, when I inform you I have important reasons for it: tell me therefore, I entreat, I conjure you,' he continued, with a vehemence Madeline did not think him capable of, 'how this picture became your's?'

'My father gave it to me, my Lord,' answered Madeline.

'Your father!—Gracious heaven!'—He paused, as if overcome by strong emotions, but almost immediately recovering his voice, 'his name I entreat!'

'Clermont, my Lord,' said Madeline, with increasing wonder.

'Clermont!' repeated he, with a look strongly expressive of disappointment; then after the silence of some minutes, 'do you know by what means he obtained it?'

'It is his own, my Lord,' replied Madeline.

'His own!' repeated the Marquis, with a wild and eager look, 'his own!—All gracious powers!' he arose and walked with disordered steps about the room.

Madeline amazed at all she saw and heard, remained trembling on her chair.

The Marquis suddenly stopped before her, and looked at her with an earnestness that made her droop her head.

'Yes,' cried he, 'I see traces in that face of one—which no time can wear from my remembrance.'

He resumed his seat.—

'In what manner does your father live?' asked he.

'He lives in obscurity, my Lord,' replied Madeline.

'What is his family?'

'It consists but of me, my Lord.'

'You are acquainted I suppose with his real name, and the misfortunes which drove him to obscurity?'

'No, my Lord, I am not; I never knew he had a right to any name but that of Clermont; never knew he had been in a situation different from his present one.'

'Tenderness to you made him, I suppose, conceal his misfortunes,' said the Marquis. 'I see,' he continued, gazing upon Madeline, whose pale countenance was expressive of terror as well as agitation, 'that I have disturbed you; a curiosity raised as your's has been, yet ungratified, is sufficient indeed to give you uneasiness; be satisfied, however, by an assurance that the present mystery shall perhaps, when least expected, be explained.'

The too evident uneasiness of Madeline however was not solely

owing to the cause he imputed it to. Ignorant of her father's connexions in life, she knew not whether to consider the Marquis as a friend or foe, and her uncertainty threw her into agony.

'No, my Lord,' she cried, determined if possible to terminate her suspense, 'tis not the pain of ungratified curiosity that now distresses my mind; 'tis the fear'—she paused, trembled, and bent her eyes to the ground,—'tis the fear'—resumed she in a few minutes, and summoning all her courage to her aid—'that my father perhaps may have reason to regret the discovery of his residence.'

'Never!' said the Marquis warmly, 'never will he have reason to regret my discovering it; no, never will he have reason to regret your seeking shelter beneath the roof of Montmorenci Castle. Accept my hand,' continued he, offering it to her, 'accept it as a pledge of friendship to you and to your father.'

Madeline received the proffered pledge with transport, and the Marquis, after gently pressing her hand between his, restored her father's picture.

He now told he would no longer detain her from the rest she appeared so much to require, and expressed his hopes, that 'till perfectly recovered from the effects of her late fright and fatigue, she would not quit the castle.

Madeline thanked him for his kind consideration about her, but said she was pretty sure she should be able to re-commence her journey the ensuing day.

The Marquis rung for Lafroy to reconduct her to her chamber, and cautioned her against mentioning the conversation which had passed between them to any one but her father.

Lafroy appeared in a few minutes, and Madeline on returning to her chamber found the housekeeper still there, all amazement and curiosity.

'Well, Mademoiselle, upon my word,' she exclaimed, the moment Madeline entered, 'you have had a long conversation with my Lord.'

'Yes,' said Madeline, who scarcely knew what she uttered, so much was her mind engrossed by wonder.

'And pray, Mademoiselle, how do you like him?' asked the inquisitive Mrs Beatrice.

'Very well,' replied Madeline, beginning to undress in order to get rid of her troublesome companion.

'Aye,' said Mrs Beatrice, 'he is even now sometimes to be liked; in his youth there could not be a finer gentleman; he was so complaisant, and one of the best dancers I ever beheld.'

She continued to extol what his Lordship had been 'till Madeline was in bed, she then bade her good-night, and desired her, when she chose to rise, to ring for a servant.

But solitude could not calm the agitation of Madeline's mind;

the more she reflected on the conversation that had passed between her and the Marquis, the more her perplexity increased; she at last, however, endeavoured to compose herself by reflecting on the promise she had received from him of having the mystery explained, and his assurance of friendship to her father.

'Should that friendship,' she cried, 'be something more than bare profession: should it have power to mitigate the sorrows he too visibly labours under, for ever blessed shall I consider the hour in which I entered Montmorenci Castle.'

Exhausted by mental as well as bodily fatigue, she at last sunk to repose, from which she did not awaken till the morning was far advanced: she was ready to leave her chamber 'ere she rung for a servant, a maid immediately obeyed her summons, and informed her breakfast was already prepared for her by the housekeeper.

Through a number of winding passages Madeline was conducted to the grand staircase, which she descended to the hall. Here she involuntarily paused to examine the ancient ornaments surrounding her, which spoke of the splendour and the taste of other days: but with the admiration they excited, was intermingled a degree of sadness at the neglect and even desolation so every where apparent; the shields and other war-like trophies which hung upon the stately pillars of the hall, were covered with dust and cobwebs, the fine historical pictures which stretched from the side of the staircase to the ceiling, were discoloured by damp and dropping from the walls; and a great folding door half open, discovered the inner court strewn with rubbish, and encompassed by decaying buildings, before which the high grass waved in rank luxuriance, unbent by any foot.

'How dreary, how desolate,' said Madeline to herself, 'is this scene; but to this state every work of man sooner or later comes: who then should vaunt of possessions, which, like the hand that raised them, are doomed to swift decay? Like the Poet she said,

' "Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy towers to-day, yet a few years and the blast of the desert comes; it howls in the empty court, and whistles round thy half worn shield." '

The voice of Lubin roused her from her melancholy meditation. He came to inquire whether she was able to continue her journey that day. She immediately assured him she was, and desired him to have the horses ready against she had breakfasted.

She was then shewn into a parlour adjoining the hall, where she found the housekeeper waiting at the breakfast-table to receive her. Mrs Beatrice apologized for her Lord's not appearing, but said, for many years past he had not risen till the day was far advanced.

Directly after breakfast Madeline bade an adieu to Montmorenci Castle; as she did so, she requested Mrs Beatrice to present her

sincere acknowledgments to the Marquis for the politeness and hospitality she had received beneath his roof.

Lubin would gladly have chatted as they travelled, but the mind of Madeline was too much agitated to permit her to converse, and he was forced to amuse himself by whistling and singing.

The nearer Madeline drew to the habitation of her father, the more her agitation increased; all the scenes she had gone thro' since her separation from him recurred to her memory, and she feared his inquiries concerning them would be too minute; she trembled lest she should discover, notwithstanding all her precaution, the real state of her heart, discover that its affections were abused, its pride mortified, its expectations disappointed; well she knew such a discovery would wound him to the soul.

'And, Oh!' she cried, 'to add sorrow to his sorrow, to increase his misery already too oppressive, would be indeed to aggravate my own.'

At the entrance of the valley, in which the cottage of her father stood, she alighted and desired Lubin to lead the horses after her.

Had her mind been less disturbed than it now was, she would have been enraptured with the lovely prospect she beheld: it was the autumnal season, and the promise of the spring was amply fulfilled by the luxuriance of the harvest; the grapes she had left in embryo, were now ripened into purple clusters, and the toils of the vintage had already commenced; a profusion of gay flowers enameled the bright sword of the valley, and the yellow mantle of Ceres covered the little vales that intersected many of the hills, and o'er the waving woods that hung upon those hills soft and solemn tints were just beginning to steal.

Madeline reached the valley when the sun had attained its meridian, an hour when the cattle lay pensively ruminating, and

*The daw,*

*The rook and magpie, to the grey-grown oaks  
That the calm village in their verdant arms  
Shelt'ring, embrace, direct their lazy flight;  
Where on the mingling boughs they sit embower'd  
All the hot noon, 'till cooler hours arise:  
Faint, underneath, the household fowls convene;  
And, in a corner of the buzzing shade,  
The house-dog, with the vacant grey-hound, lie  
Out-stretch'd and sleepy.*

'The children of industry have had their hopes amply fulfilled,' cried Madeline, as she cast her eyes around, 'mine,' she sighed, 'mine when I left this place, were, though different, as flattering as their's.'

To describe her feelings when she came in sight of her beloved

cottage would be impossible; they were such as almost swelled her heart to bursting; pain and pleasure were so intermingled, that it would have been hard to determine which was most predominant. Her pleasure at the idea of beholding her father was damped by reflecting in how very different a manner she once expected to have returned to him. She stopped at the little gate which opened into the grove, and leaned upon it, in order to try and gain some composure 'ere she should appear before him: old Bijou, the house dog, who lay slumbering beside it, woke at her approach, and instantly set up a cry of joy, which denoted his perfect recollection of her; as she patted his head, she endeavoured to quiet him, but without effect: the noise he made disturbed Jaqueline at her work, and excited her curiosity.

'What is the matter, you noisy rogue?' said she, coming from the cottage, 'what possesses you, Bijou, to keep such a barking?'

She approached the gate, stopped, screamed, and retreated—then again advanced—again retreated: at last she exclaimed

'If you do not wish to deprive me of my senses, you will at once tell me whether or not you are Mademoiselle Madeline?'

'Do you doubt your eyes,' cried Madeline, stretching out her hand.

Jaqueline instantly pulled open the gate, but instead of taking the proffered hand of Madeline, she clasped her arms about her, and for some minutes by her caresses prevented her from speaking.

'Is my father well?' at last asked Madeline, disengaging herself from the enraptured Jaqueline.

'Yes, Mademoiselle, very well; but how did you travel?—Bless me,' looking over the gate, and perceiving Lubin with the horses, 'surely you did not ride?'

'Is my father within?' asked Madeline, not attending to this question.

'No, he is in the vineyard; I will run and inform him of your arrival.'

'Do not be too precipitate,' said Madeline, 'break it to him by degrees for he does not expect me.'

To practise any caution, however, was totally out of the power of Jaqueline; she flew to the vineyard; and Madeline all the way heard her exclaiming,

'She is come, she is come—O, Monsieur, Mademoiselle Madeline is come.'

Madeline entered the parlour, she sat down, and tried to compose herself against the approaching interview; but she tried in vain. In a few minutes she heard the voice of her father; her heart throbbled as if it would burst her bosom: she rose, but had not power to meet him. Pale, disordered he rushed into the room, and Madeline sunk almost fainting into his extended arms.

It was some time 'ere either of them could speak. Clermont at last raised his eyes,

'Do I again behold you, my child, my Madeline,' he exclaimed, 'welcome, thrice welcome to my arms.'

He held her to a distance from him; he gazed upon her; the alteration in her looks seemed to strike him to the very heart: the rose that had bloomed upon her cheek when they parted,—the lustre that had brightened her eye was fled, and sadness had taken entire possession of her.

'Oh! my child,' said he, looking mournfully at her, 'I fear, I fear, you have too bitterly lamented the death of our inestimable friend.'

Madeline burst into tears.

'Our loss,' resumed Clermont, 'is great indeed, but our grief is selfish: death to her was a removal to unutterable felicity; stem therefore these strong emotions in pity to me, check them, remember you are my only earthly consolation, the only prop I have to rest on.'

'Alas!' sighed Madeline, 'how frail a prop!' She took his hand, she pressed it to her lips. 'My father,' she said, 'be assured no effort on my part shall be wanting to fulfil your expectations, and heaven I doubt not will strengthen the feeble hands and calm the agitated mind of her who prays to it for fortitude and composure to be enabled to perform its incumbent duties.'

'Yes, my child,' cried Clermont embracing her, 'heaven always assists the virtuous.'

He now inquired to what circumstance he owed her unexpected return, as in her last letter she had given no intimation of it. Madeline, without entering into the particulars of her late situation at the chateau, briefly informed him, that as soon as Monsieur D'Alembert came to it, Madame D'Alembert wished her to leave it, and had promised in a few days to assign her reason for that wish.

Clermont was all astonishment; but as he could not possibly fathom the mystery, he endeavoured to turn his thoughts from it. Madeline was still too much agitated to be able to inform him of her adventures at Montmorenci castle, but she determined to devote the first minutes of returning composure to that purpose, deeming it highly necessary for him to be acquainted with them as soon as possible.

Her mind was a little relieved from the uneasiness that oppressed it by finding him silent respecting de Sevignie; yet while she rejoiced she wondered at that silence till she reflected that the Countess had promised never to acquaint him with the renewed attentions of de Sevignie, except they were terminated in a manner that she knew must be pleasing to him.

But though the Countess had kept her promise, though Clermont

was silent respecting de Sevignie, his mind was occupied in thinking of him; he could not believe that the deep dejection of his daughter was owing solely to the death of her friend, as his words, from regard to her delicacy had intimated: to the disappointment of her hopes relative to de Sevignie he was convinced it was principally owing, and with anguish intolerable he looked upon this drooping blossom, whose fair promise of maturity seemed now utterly at an end.

'But a few days ago,' he cried to himself, 'and, from the recollection of former calamities, I thought I could not be more wretched than I then was: but, alas! I now find I was mistaken—now, when I behold the sole solace of affliction, my only earthly hope, sinking beneath a grief which seems bending her gentle head to swift decay. Oh! gracious heaven, if my child is destined to an early grave, close these sad eyes 'ere that destiny be accomplished.'

He wished to have the sorrows of her heart acknowledged to him; the acknowledgment would give him a right to offer his sympathy and counsel: and the sympathy, the counsel of a parent, might perhaps, he thought, be efficacious. But though he wished such a divulgement, he would not desire it, well knowing the delicacy of the female mind, and how unwillingly it must confess a hopeless passion.



trembling, disordered;—he entered it, he spoke not to Madeline—he seemed to have no power to speak—but he put an open letter into her hand. With an agitation that shook her whole frame she cast her eyes over it, and read as follows.

The sigh of repentance has at length prevailed—heaven has given me an opportunity of making some atonement for the injustice I committed in my youth:—

Come then, son of a much injured and unhappy love, come to your rightful home, to the arms of your father—

The lamp of life but feebly lights his eyes; hasten then, while he has power to see—to bless you he would add—but that he is unworthy of bestowing a blessing.

Hasten, that he may sink to his grave with some degree of peace, at beholding his rightful heir acknowledged; at beholding an heir better calculated than himself for supporting the honors of

MONTMORENCI

The variety of emotions that assailed the heart of Madeline on perusing this letter prevented all utterance, and she stood gazing on her father, the very image of astonishment.

‘Yes,’ said Clermont, at last, in a solemn voice, ‘I am the son of a much injured and unhappy woman, the rightful though long unacknowledged heir of Montmorenci; called to a situation I was always entitled to, when too late for that situation to afford me any pleasure. So much am I attached to my present retirement, so congenial is it to my feelings, that nothing but respect to the memory of my mother, regard to the interest of my child, could tempt me to forego it.’

‘Heaven can witness for me,’ cried Madeline, ‘how little I desire you to leave it on my account. Oh! my father, no wealth, however great, no rank however exalted, can now confer happiness upon me.’

‘My child,’ exclaimed Clermont, clasping his arms round her, ‘do not torture my soul by expressions which intimate such despondence. Oh, try to alleviate my misery, a misery which no time, no circumstance can banish from my mind, by letting me think that you will be happy,—by letting me think that the approaching change of situation will at least promote your felicity.’

‘I will try, my father,’ said Madeline, ‘I will try to be all you wish me.’

‘I have no longer any reason to conceal my former situation,’ said Clermont, ‘to-morrow therefore in our way to the Castle of Montmorenci, I shall relate a long and affecting story to you.’

‘To-morrow!’ cried Madeline, gasping for breath, ‘to-morrow do we go to Montmorenci Castle?’

‘Yes,’ replied Clermont, ‘the servant who brought me the letter from his Lord and has just departed, informed me that a carriage

would be here early in the morning, to convey us thither; to-morrow therefore I bid adieu to this cottage, in which I imagined my last sigh would have been breathed; to those shadowy woods which screened me from an invidious world; to those lonely shades which heard the voice of my complaining.'

Madeline was not less affected than her father at the idea of quitting their retirement; the gaiety, the hopes, that would once have rendered her delighted with the prospect that now opened to her view, were fled, never, never she believed, to be revived.

Her father told her he meant merely to inform Jaqueline that they were going on a visit to a friend, but as soon as they were settled in Montmorenci Castle he intended to write to her and put her in possession of the cottage as a reward for her long and faithful services.

The preparations for their journey were made before they retired to rest; Madeline, at the time she accompanied the Countess de Merville had fortunately left some cloaths behind, and these were now packed up for her.

In the solitude of her little chamber she gave vent to those feelings which tenderness for her father made her suppress in his presence.

'Alas!' she cried, 'are my hopes always to be disappointed?—must I resign the tranquillity of this cottage?—must I again launch into a world where I experienced little else than distress and danger?—Oh! scenes dear and congenial to my soul!' she exclaimed, as from a window she viewed the valley, now illumined by a bright moon, 'Oh! scenes dear and congenial to my soul, had I never left you I had never known the reality of falshood, never been truly unhappy.'

'I am now,' she continued, 'about entering into a situation, which from disappointed hope I am incapable of enjoying; a situation which will give the world claims upon me, that from the sadness of my mind I shall be if not unable, at least totally unwilling to fulfil; far better, far happier than for me to remain in an obscurity, where, without strictures from others, or censures from myself, I might act as inclination prompted.'

'But what do I say?' cried she, after a pause, 'do I repine at a change which restores my father to the rank he has been so long unjustly deprived of; at a change which will give to me the means of dispensing happiness to others. Oh! let me chase from my breast a grief so selfish, let me not wrap myself in sorrow and despair, and because the blessing I desired is not mine reject every other. Let me not, like a froward child, dash the proffered cup of joy from my lips, because there is not in it every ingredient I could wish. Yes,' she proceeded, as if animated by a new spirit, 'I will try to dispel a grief that enervates, that sinks me into langour, that makes me

shrink from the idea of fulfilling the claims of society; and I make no doubt my efforts will be successful, for heaven strengthens those who wish to do right, and I shall be again, if not happy, at least tranquil; the felicity I shall have the means of bestowing on others, will soothe my feelings; the tears I wipe from the cheek of misery will dissipate my own, and the sigh I suppress in the bosom of affliction will prevent mine from rising.'

The entrance of Jaqueline now disturbed her, she came to make those inquiries which the presence of Clermont had hitherto prevented.

'Dear Mademoiselle,' said she, sitting down by the little toilette as Madeline began to undress, 'what in the name of wonder occasioned your coming home in the sudden manner you did?'

'Nothing that can afford you any pleasure to hear,' replied Madeline, 'I therefore request you may ask no more questions about it.'

'Lord, Mademoiselle, 'tis very natural to inquire about what has surprised one so much. Well, if you had taken my advice, you would never have gone with the Countess—I knew very well how she would serve you; I knew there was no dependance to be placed upon the promises of the great, and you find I was not wrong in thinking or saying so: you see after promising you so fine a fortune, how she has popped off without leaving you so much as a sou.'

'You hurt me extremely by talking in this way,' said Madeline, 'I beg you may never speak again in such a manner of a person who was my best friend, and whose sudden death alone prevented her fulfilling her generous intentions towards me.'

'Ah! Mademoiselle, you are a good soul, and willing to excuse every one; but people will have their own thoughts let you say what you will. One looks so foolish now,' she continued, 'for my chief consolation during your absence was telling the neighbours of the fine situation you had got into for life. "She has been taken," says I, "to one of the finest castles in Dauphine, and from thence she is to be carried to Paris, where, no doubt, she will get a grand match as the lady, her friend, intends to give her a very large fortune; and as soon as she is settled in a house of her own, I am to be sent for, either to be her own woman, or housekeeper, 'twill be at my own option which.'"

'And pray, Jaqueline, how came you to say such things, when you foresaw, as you yourself acknowledge that I should be disappointed by the Countess?'

Jaqueline looked confused—

'Why, Mademoiselle,' said she, after the hesitation of a minute, 'I was sometimes inclined to think that she might be as good as her word.'

'Well, Jaqueline, let this be a caution to you never again to

mention expectations which you are not pretty sure of having fulfilled.'

'Aye, Mademoiselle, we all grow wiser every day.'

She now expressed her regret at the intended departure of Clermont and Madeline, and endeavoured to discover whither they were going; but Madeline evaded her questions, and when nearly undrest dismissed her, highly mortified at not having had her curiosity gratified.

Madeline's mind was too much agitated to permit her to rest, and though she went to bed, she passed a restless night; towards the dawn of day she sunk into a slumber, from which however she was soon disturbed by Jaqueline, who came to tell her the carriage waited. She started up and hastily began to dress.

'Do pray, dear Mademoiselle,' said Jaqueline, 'do pray come to the window and look at the carriage, I dare say you never saw so fine a one; 'tis so beautifully ornamented, and drawn by six horses, and there are four out-riders and three postillions: dear me, it must be a charming thing to ride in it! I dare say it belongs to a very great man, I should certainly have inquired from the servants, but that my master told me he would be very angry if I asked them any questions.'

'Tell my father,' said Madeline, 'I shall be with him very soon.'

'Yes, Mademoiselle,' replied Jaqueline, 'and by the time you come down the coffee will be made.'

Madeline was soon dressed and descended the stairs; but instead of going directly to the parlour, she stole into the garden, to take a last leave of

*The native bowers of innocence and ease,  
Seats of her youth when ev'ry charm could please.*

Scarcely a spot within the garden but what recalled some happy, some delightful hour to her mind; such hours as she never more expected to experience.

O'er the trees beneath whose shelter she had so often sported in childish gaiety, so often enjoyed a delightful retreat from the meridian sun; o'er the flowers which she had planted, and with her pencil so often amused herself by copying, she could now with difficulty prevent herself from weeping, and like the poet she exclaimed,

*Farewel, ye flow'rs, whose buds, with early care,  
I watch'd, and to the chearful sun did rear;  
Who now shall bind your stems, or, when you fall,  
With fountain streams your fainting souls recall.*

*No more, my goats, shall I behold you climb,  
The steepy cliffs, or crop the flowery thyme;*

*No more extended in the grot below,  
Shall see you browsing on the mountain's brow:  
The prickly shrubs, and after on the bare,  
Lean down the deep abyss and hang in air.'*

A deep sigh from a little bower near her startled Madeline: she looked towards it, and beheld her father: he came out and taking her hand, led her into the house.

Breakfast was ready, they took some coffee and then rose to depart; Jaqueline cried bitterly, but Clermont comforted her by an assurance of writing soon, and informing her where he was; he also desired her to chuse some neighbour for a companion: with a trembling hand he assisted his daughter into the coach, which set off the moment he had entered it. The deepest melancholy appeared to have taken possession of both, and both for a considerable time observed a profound silence.



bed, and, in the most affecting language, he conjured us to submit, without repining, to the divine will; after he had bestowed a solemn and tender benediction upon his daughter, such as her filial piety deserved, he turned to me and took my hand:

“My dear Lausane,” said he, for so I was called, “I should have died unhappy if I had not had an opportunity of thanking you for the respect, the attention you ever paid to me and mine.”

‘I would have spoken, I would have told him how inadequate that respect, that attention was to the care, the affection I had experienced from him and his family, but the fullness of my heart prevented utterance.

‘“Had heaven spared my life,” continued he, “a little longer, I should have disclosed to you a most important secret; it was decreed however that from me you should never hear it; but in a small India box, in my cabinet, you will find a packet addressed to you, and containing all the particulars I would have informed you of: when you read them, you will find that without knowing misfortune you have been most unfortunate; that without feeling injury you have been most injured; but as you hope for prosperity in this world, endless happiness in that to come, I entreat you never rashly to resent those misfortunes, or endeavour to revenge those injuries. Should the author of both still withhold that justice you are entitled to, you will not find yourself under any necessity of accepting his bounty, which in such a case would be degrading to you, as in my will, which will be opened as soon as M. Valdore, my daughter’s guardian arrives at the chateau, I have made such provision for you as will enable you to hold the same place in society you have hitherto done.”

‘I cannot describe the feelings excited by the words of the Count: astonishment overwhelmed my senses, and I would not long have delayed to seek an explanation of them, had he not died almost immediately after he had ceased speaking.

‘The confusion of the family, the grief of his daughter, who would only listen to consolation from me, and my own affliction then deadened my curiosity, and his interment had taken place ere I thought of visiting the cabinet; nor perhaps should I have done so as soon as I did, had I not found myself, the very evening after his funeral, seated with Elvira in the room where it stood. We were alone; for her guardian, who lived in a remote part of the kingdom, was not yet arrived. The moment I beheld the cabinet my curiosity was revived, and I eagerly wished to take from it the important papers; the eyes of Elvira followed mine, and the words of her father instantly recurred to her recollection.

‘“My dear Lausane,” said she, “I am confident you must have suffered much from the suspension of your curiosity; delay no longer to gratify it—it may be requisite for you to be immediately

acquainted with the secret my father spoke of; I will retire to give you a proper opportunity of perusing the packet."

"No, Elvira," I replied, taking her hand as she rose to withdraw, "you have hitherto honored me with the appellation of brother, and heaven can witness for me I bear you the affection of one; a brother should have no secrets from an affectionate sister; since you therefore permit me to consider you as one, condescend to hear the mysterious words of your father explained; they have prepared me for a tale of distress, and if any thing can alleviate the sorrow it may perhaps excite, it can only be the gentle sympathy of such a friend as you are."

"She re-seated herself, and tremblingly I approached and unlocked the cabinet: the first thing I beheld within it was the India box. I took it out, I drew back the lid, and beheld a large sealed packet, directed in the hand-writing of the Count to me. I felt my whole frame agitated, and could scarcely reach the sofa on which Elvira sat.

"Many minutes elapsed ere I could summon sufficient resolution to break the seal. I felt as if about to raise a veil which had hitherto concealed terrific images from my view, and shuddered at the idea of the horrors they might excite; at length I ventured to do so, and found several sheets of small paper within the envelope, all closely written, and in a hand entirely new to me. Elvira leant over my shoulder, and together we began to peruse the following story.'

Here Clermont paused; and, taking a manuscript from his pocket, he put it into the hand of his daughter, and desired her to read it to herself,

"When you have finished it," said he, "I will go on with my narrative.'

Madeline bowed, and read as follows:

Ere those pages meet your eye, the hand that wrote them will be crumbled into dust. Oh! my son, offspring of an unhappy and ill-requited love, long before you peruse them, every trace, every memorial of your unfortunate mother will be obliterated from your mind, nor will all your efforts be able to recall to recollection the period in which her bitter tears bedewed your innocent cheek, in which with happy playfulness you hid your head in her distracted bosom:—but I run into complaints ere I assign the sad occasion of them—I will, if possible, be brief.

Ere I was born, love, unhappy love, I may say, laid in some degree the foundation of my misery. My mother, the daughter of Count St Paul, whose family is well known for its antiquity and pride in the Province of Normandy; untinctured either by the ambition or avarice of her parents, selected for herself at an early age a partner whose only portion was merit, and thus disappointed the expectations which her birth, beauty, and accomplishments had

raised in her family; in consequence of doing so she was utterly discarded by every member of it, her youngest brother excepted, who had then however nothing to bestow but—assurances of friendship.

St Foix, the descendant of a noble but reduced family, to whom she had united herself, was in the army, and with him she launched into the world, whose storms and distresses she had hitherto known only by report; too soon, alas! she had a sad experience of them.

But with a noble fortitude she sustained them, not only from tenderness to her husband, but from a consciousness of having drawn them upon herself. St Foix, however, the delirium of passion over, and the pressure of distress experienced, bitterly regretted having yielded to an affection which heightened his cares, by involving the woman he adored in sorrow, and in little more than two years after his marriage, and a few months after my birth, he fell a victim to his feelings. The grief of my mother may be imagined, but cannot be described, and in all probability she would soon have sunk beneath it, had not her brother flown to her relief: an union just then completed with an heiress of considerable fortune, gave him the power of serving her as he wished, and he endeavoured to calm her sorrows by assurances of being a never-failing friend to her, and of supplying to me, to the utmost of his power, the place of the parent I was so early deprived of. He immediately took a small cottage, in a sequestered and romantic part of Dauphine, for her, and settled upon her a yearly stipend, amply sufficient to procure her all that she could want or desire in retirement.

Time and religion softened her anguish, and as I grew up, her heart again began to be sensible of pleasure; a pleasure, however, frequently embittered by a conviction of the unhappiness her brother experienced in consequence of serving her; for his wife, selfish and illiberal in her disposition, could not with any degree of patience bear the idea of his regarding any one out of his own immediate family, or of his expending on them any part of that fortune she so frequently boasted of having given to him.

Long he withstood her solicitations to withdraw his bounty, long opposed her inclination; but at length, tired of domestic strife, of continual upbraidings for the intention he avowed of providing for his niece in a manner suitable to her birth, he hinted a wish to my mother for my retiring into a convent.

This was an unexpected blow, and one which overwhelmed my mother, by destroying those hopes that, with the natural vanity and partiality of a parent, almost from my birth she had indulged, of seeing me at some period or other happily settled, and of enjoying beneath my roof that tranquillity which sorrow and dependance had hitherto prevented her from experiencing.

With tears, with agonies which shook her frame, she conjured

him not to deprive her of her only earthly comfort, not to entomb her child alive, or in one short minute undo all he had hitherto done.

Ah! my mother, well had it been for your Madeline, if your lips had never uttered such a supplication; well had it been for her, if in the first bloom of life, ere her heart was sufficiently expanded to feel that tenderness which constitutes our greatest happiness or misery, the walls of a convent had immured her from a world, where her peace, her fame, were destined to be wrecked.

My uncle was too generous to repeat a wish which gave such pain; he regretted ever having mentioned it, and strove to make amends for having done so, by reiterating the most solemn assurances of fulfilling the intentions he had before avowed towards me.

Thus was the storm which threatened the peace of my mother, overblown; but, alas! the calm that succeeded it was to me of short duration. I had scarcely attained my sixteenth year when I was deprived of this inestimable parent. In the language of despair I wrote to my uncle, then at Paris, to inform him of this event; and at the same time enclosed a letter, written by my mother in her last hours, and, which I afterwards found contained a supplication not to permit me to enter a convent without I wished myself to do so, and an entreaty for his protection to be continued to me.

He directly hastened to me, and used every method in his power to sooth my sorrows; he repeated his assurances of continued kindness, and declared from that period I should reside with him till I had a proper habitation of my own to go to.

I accordingly accompanied him to Paris; and here, in all probability, the sadness of my heart might soon have been diverted by the novelty of every thing I saw, had I met with any of that tenderness I had always been accustomed to; but the most chilling coldness, or else the most contemptuous disdain, was the treatment I received from my aunt and her family. My uncle, in order to try and prevent my mind from dwelling on it, insisted on my being taken to all the places they frequented; but this, instead of alleviating, rather aggravated my misery, for my aunt soon took it into her head that I was a rival to her daughters. A year I dragged on in a state of wretchedness, which no language could justly express: at the expiration of that period, worn out with ill treatment, and agonized by beholding my benevolent protector in continual disquietude on my account, I determined, with a kind of desperate resolution, to terminate that disquietude and my indignities, by retiring to a cloister: but how impossible is it to express the pangs with which I formed and announced this resolution: yet what, you will say, could have occasioned those pangs? surely not the idea of renouncing a world which contained no tender friend to supply the place of the one I had lost?—

Alas! it then contained a being dearer to me than life itself:—St Julian, the Marquis of Montmorenci's son, visited at my uncle's, and had not long been known ere he was beloved! Those who knew him could not have wondered at my sudden attachment; every virtue, every grace which ennobles and adorns humanity he appeared to possess. Oh! St Julian, Heaven surely endowed you with every virtue; for candour and benevolence sat upon your countenance, and it was only an improper education, or pernicious company that rendered you deceitful, and led you to betray the unsuspecting heart, which reposed upon you for happiness.

Secretly I indulged my passion, yet without the smallest hope of having it returned; for though a soft beam from the eye of St Julian sometimes tempted me to think I was not utterly indifferent to him, I never had reason to imagine he thought seriously about me; but, notwithstanding my hopelessness respecting him, so great, so exquisite was the pleasure I derived from seeing, from listening to him, that the idea of foregoing it was infinitely more painful to me than that of death.

My uncle heard my determination of retiring to a cloister with a satisfaction which he could not disguise, though he attempted it; and my aunt and her children with evident delight: generous to the last, my uncle left me free to chuse a convent—I accordingly fixed on one, with which I was well acquainted, near the habitation where alone I had been happy.

Immediate preparations were made for my removal, and in a few days after I had avowed my intention of quitting it, I was hurried from my uncle's house.

Accompanied by an old female domestic, I commenced my journey; what I suffered on doing so I shall not attempt to describe. I felt like a wretch going into a gloomy exile, where the features, the voice he loved, would never more charm his eye, or sooth his ear.

At a late hour we stopped for the night. As soon as my companion had retired to her chamber, I locked myself up in mine, and gave way to the agonies of my soul. In the midst of my lamentations I was startled by a tap at the chamber-door; I listened attentively, and heard it repeated, and at the same time my name pronounced in a low voice. Still more surprised, I hastily unlocked the door, and beheld—ah! gracious Heaven! what were the feelings of that moment, St Julian!—I involuntarily receded, and sunk half fainting upon a chair. The words, the tenderness of St Julian soon revived me, and brought me to a perfect sense of my happiness; he implored my pardon for the agitation he had caused me.

He had loved me, he declared, almost from the first moment he beheld me, and would at once have divulged his passion, had he not feared its being then discovered to my aunt, whose malice he knew would betray him to his father; he had therefore determined,

if he beheld no chance of losing me, to conceal it till the expectations he entertained of a splendid independence at the death of a very old relative were realized, and he consequently secured from suffering any pecuniary distress through the displeasure of his father, which he could not deny his thinking would follow the disclosure of our union.

My sudden resolution (he proceeded to say) had been concealed from him till I had quitted my uncle's; with difficulty on hearing it he could hide his emotions, and almost instantly pursued me, trembling lest I should be lost to him for ever.

He now implored me to consent to a private union, and put myself immediately under his protection, solemnly assuring me, that the moment he could acknowledge me as his wife, without involving me in distress, with equal pride and pleasure he would do so.

You may well believe I did not, could not resist his supplications:—a carriage and confidential servants were in waiting, and we directly set out for Paris, which we reached at the dawn of day, and, stopping at the first church we came to, were united.

St Julian then took lodgings for me in a retired part of the town, under a feigned name, passing himself for a secretary to a man of consequence, and unable, from his situation, to be always with me.

I had now no drawback on my felicity but that which proceeded from sorrow at my mother's not being alive to witness it, and uneasiness at the disquiet, which I learned from St Julian, who still continued to visit at his house, my uncle felt on my account, not being able to form the slightest conjecture of what had become of me: Perfect happiness, however, I knew was unattainable in this world, and as the best proof of my gratitude to Heaven for that portion which I enjoyed, I sedulously endeavoured to repel the sigh of regret that sometimes involuntarily heaved my bosom.

Before the expiration of a year you were born. Oh! with what rapture did I receive you to my arms! with what delight did I present you to your father! and, with mingled emotions of tenderness and pleasure, beheld the tear which stole down his cheek, as I endeavoured in your infant features to discover a resemblance to his.

I had now attained my summit of felicity; and my sun was soon to set in misery and despair.

Soon after your birth, the visits of your father became less frequent; he did not assign any reason for their being so, nor did I inquire; for suspicion was a stranger to my breast; my faith was unbounded, great, and firm as my love; and while I wept his absence I ever hailed his presence with a smile.

At length a long space ensued in which I did not behold him; my spirits involuntarily drooped, and with them my health declined; yet, notwithstanding my sufferings, the moment I again saw him, I thought myself amply rewarded for them.

The pleasure, however, which filled my heart on his entering my chamber, was quickly damped by the coldness of his manner: he scarcely returned my caresses, or noticed you.

'Well, Madeline,' said he, seating himself at a distance from me, 'I trust you have been well and happy since I last saw you.'

'As well and happy,' I replied, looking at him with that tenderness which my heart experienced, 'as I could be without the society which constitutes my chief felicity.'

'Ah! Madeline,' cried he, 'I trust when you mix more in the world, you will be able to enjoy felicity without that society.'

'Could the world,' said I, 'produce any change in my present sentiments, I should wish for ever to be secluded from it.'

He arose and approached me.

'I came, Madeline,' said he, 'with a hope of receiving proofs of your good sense instead of your tenderness; do not interrupt me,' continued he, seeing me about to speak, 'listen attentively to what I am about saying:

'All hopes of an independence are terminated by my uncle, who died some days ago, bequeathing the whole of his property to a religious house; I am therefore entirely at the mercy of my father; consequently to disclose our marriage would be to involve me in certain ruin, as I am convinced no supplications, no entreaties would ever prevail upon him to pardon so imprudent a step; 'tis absolutely necessary therefore that we should conceal it for ever.'

'For ever!' repeated I, 'gracious Heaven! would it not be better for you at once to avow it, than to be teased with continual importunities (which must be the case) to form another connexion.'

'I will not deny, Madeline,' said he, 'that it is not my intention to be deaf to such importunities: as our marriage is a profound secret, I mean it never shall be known; that from henceforth we shall be strangers to each other, and each again enter the world free to make another choice.'

Good heavens! what words were those for a wife, for a mother to hear!—The blood run cold through my veins, and for some time the faculties of speech were suspended.

'Have I lived,' I at length exclaimed, 'have I lived to hear the husband I adore declare his intention of disowning me? Have I lived to hear St Julian avow his design of branding his child with infamy?'

'Do not, Madeline,' said he, 'with the weakness peculiar to your sex, run into complaints at once unjust and unavailing; when you mix more in the world, and have opportunities of comparing my conduct with that of others, you will then be convinced that it is not quite so base or cruel as you now imagine; you will then see numbers of your sex, perhaps as amiable as yourself, cruelly forsaken after the first ardour of passion is extinguished, instead of which you will find yourself, if your obstinacy does not counteract

my intentions, in possession of an ample provision, with which you can retire to some other part of France, where you are not known, and there, passing yourself as a widow, bring up your son, and, perhaps, make another choice more calculated than your present one to render you happy.'

My heart felt bursting; but I strove to repress the grief, the indignation with which it laboured.

'No, St Julian,' said I, in a solemn voice, 'never will I enter the road of infamy you have marked out for me to take; I am your wife, nor shall any power but that, whose mandate we must all obey, make me give up my claims. What! did you snatch me from the altar of my God, from the dwelling of piety and peace, but to plunge me into guilt and misery?'

'Madeline,' cried he, 'be wise, nor mar my good intentions towards you by useless endeavours to support claims, which I am determined to deny; 'tis impossible, you know, for you to prove your marriage; there were, you may recollect, no witnesses to it, and with the name of the priest who performed the ceremony you are unacquainted.'

Alas! those were truths which could not be controverted, and destitute as I was of any friend to interfere in my behalf, my uncle having paid the last sad debt of nature some weeks before, I saw no means of escaping the fate he doomed me to. I wept, I upbraided, I supplicated, but all without effect; and I was soon convinced that every spark of his former affection was extinguished, and that some dangerous rival had taken entire possession of his heart.

Agonized by this conviction, I might perhaps have silently submitted to his wishes, assured that his name, without his regard, could give me no happiness, had I not considered that with his unhappy mother the son of St Julian must also sink; maternal tenderness urged me therefore to make some effort to counteract his cruel and unjust intentions.

I accordingly formed the resolution of flying to Dauphine, to throw myself at the feet of his father, and implore his protection for the deserted wife and offspring of his son. Alas! it was a resolution which despair and ignorance of the world only could have prompted; for a heart occupied by avarice and ambition, as was the Marquis's, is ever dead to the nobler softer claims of justice and humanity.

As St Julian departed, he told me he would give me a day or two to consider of what he had said; if at the expiration of that time he found me inclined to accede to his wishes, he would at once secure to me the provision he had promised; but if, on the contrary, he found me still inclined to dispute them, he would, without farther hesitation abandon me to a world which would laugh at all the allegations I could make against him.

I saw no time was to be lost; the moment therefore he had left me I stole from the house, and hired a carriage, which I ordered to meet me at an early hour, the next morning, at the end of the street. Faint, trembling, opprest with a thousand horrors, I commenced my journey with you in my arms.

Fearful of being pursued, I made the driver, as night approached, turn into an obscure village, some leagues from the road. Here a violent illness, brought on by the dreadful agitation I suffered, detained me two days, and when I recommenced my journey, I was more dead than alive.

Oh! how impossible to describe the emotions which shook my frame as I approached the mansion of Montmorenci; as I stopped before those gates which I once hoped I should have entered as the acknowledged wife of St Julian! for many minutes my feelings prevented my declaring to the astonished domestics the purport of my visit; at length I summoned sufficient resolution to desire to be shewn into the presence of their Lord. I drew near his apartment more like an unhappy criminal about deprecating vengeance, than an injured sufferer going to implore justice: the moment I beheld his countenance, where pride and sternness only were visible, the faint hope of obtaining his protection, which had hitherto cheered my heart, died away; like the drowning wretch, however, grasping at every straw, I determined to essay every thing which had a chance of procuring me relief—I therefore cast myself at his feet, and poured forth my sorrows; but scarcely had I concluded my sad tale, scarcely had I raised my tearful eyes to his to try if I could perceive one gleam of pity in them, ere a door burst open, and St Julian entered. He entered with a countenance inflamed by rage and every direful passion. Oh! had a dagger pierced my breast I could not have suffered greater agonies than I experienced when I beheld those eyes which had once beamed unutterable tenderness, now darting the keenest glances of resentment on me.

‘You see, my Lord,’ said he, addressing his father, ‘that I was not mistaken with regard to this unhappy woman. I was well convinced of the lengths her artifice and ambition would carry her.’

‘Such artifice in one so young is really astonishing,’ replied the Marquis, ‘and renders it absolutely necessary that we should prevent her having another opportunity of trying to deceive.’

I attempted to speak, but was interrupted by St Julian, who directly called in two servants, and ordered them to bear me to a remote apartment. Thither, shrieking with despair, and with you in my arms, I was carried and locked in. A kind of madness seized me—I could not weep—I could not speak—by cries, by groans I could alone express my misery.

Night approached ere any one came near me; a young female then appeared—I merely cast a glance at her, and then averted my eyes,

as a trembling wretch would have done from his executioner; for every heart in the mansion of Montmorenci I fancied steeled against me. She came to me and entreated me to take some refreshment.

Surprised by the entreaty, and by the gentleness with which it was delivered, I looked at her, and beheld a tear stealing down her cheek; it was a sacred tear, which pity had engendered, and operated more powerfully in calming the violence of my feeling than any arguments could have done. Oh! how sweet, how soothing, when we believe ourselves utterly abandoned, utterly friendless, to be surprised by finding a heart that compassionates us!—

My tears immediately began to flow, the fever in my brain abated, and I stretched out my hand to press her's to my bosom.

'Alas! unhappy lady,' she exclaimed, 'I pity you from my soul, and wish it was in my power to save you from the fate that awaits you.'

'What fate?' cried I, gazing on her; 'have they planned my death? Ah! no—they would not be so merciful as to terminate the anguish they have inflicted.'

'About the middle of to-night,' said she, 'they mean to put you into a carriage, and send you to a house of penitents near Paris, where you will for ever be confined from the world, and separated from your son.'

—Horror for some time took from me the power of speech.

'Oh! St Julian,' I at length exclaimed, 'is this the fate you have decreed for Madeline?—Is this the destiny you have doomed her to, whom but a few short months ago you wooed to your arms with vows of never-changing love?—Oh, never let my sex again confide in man!—Oh, never more let them gaze with pleasure upon the beam of tenderness, nor listen with delight to the language of love!—

On my knees I implored my informer to assist me to escape.

'Not on my own account,' cried I, 'do I plead; stripes, dungeons, or perpetual imprisonment, could give little pain to her who has experienced the so much greater pain of being deserted by the man she loves; but on the account of him, who, if deprived of me, would surely be deprived of his only earthly friend; for those who exercised such unprecedented cruelty upon his mother, would no doubt but ill protect his helpless youth: By the God, then, which you worship; by that heaven which you hope to attain, assist me to fly with my son to some solitary gloom, where I may rear his youth with tenderness, or see him, while unconscious of calamity, laid within his grave.'

She raised me, and told me, if I would be calm, and thought I could brave the horrors of travelling through lonely woods at such an hour as the present, she would try to assist me in escaping. I gave her every assurance she desired, and she lost no time in con-

ducting me down a flight of back stairs terminated by a door that opened into the forest. I gave her, at parting, almost all I had to bestow, my thanks, and put a little fancy ring upon her finger to bring me sometimes to her mind, and make her now and then offer up a prayer for me and my babe.

My mind was too much disturbed to suffer me to arrange any plan for my future destiny: all I could think of was to seek some lonely cottage, where I might sequester myself till the heat of that pursuit, which I supposed would be made after me, should be over.

Without knowing whither I went, or how far I had wandered, I found myself, as if instinct had guided me thither, about the middle of the night as well as I could conjecture, the hour which was to have borne me to endless confinement, near the habitation where I had resided with my mother, and which, since her death, had been unoccupied. Gently the moon dispensed her silvery light, and gave a perfect view of all the dear and lovely scenes of early youth: Oh! how agonizing were my feelings as I contrasted my present misery with the happiness I had enjoyed amongst them a happiness of which, like a bright vision, no trace remained but in my memory:—Oh! how excruciating my pangs as I gazed upon the cottage where I had experienced the care, the tenderness of a parent, and reflected that I was now a wretch forlorn, without one friend to protect me, without any covering for my head but the canopy of heaven, without any pillow to repose it on but the cold sod; nothing but religion, which had been early and strongly implanted in my mind, could have prevented my raising the hand of despair against a life, which from being no longer valuable to others, was hateful to myself.

‘But I will not,’ said I, ‘I will not, by any act of rashness forfeit that heaven, where only I can be recompensed for my sorrows.’

Exhausted by my sufferings, I threw myself upon the ground, and as I lulled you upon my bosom, sleep insensibly stole upon me.

The horror of my waking thoughts tintured my sleeping ones, and I suddenly awoke in terror: as I started from the ground I beheld a lady and gentleman standing by me, for the morning was far advanced; I gazed upon them wildly, and in the features of the female at length recognized those of the Countess de Valdore, who had married a few months previous to my mother’s death, and with whom, from having resided both before and after her union near our cottage, I was well acquainted; she expressed the utmost astonishment at the situation in which she had discovered me, and with a degree of pity that quite overcame me: for as a profusion of viands will overpower the famished wretch, so will unexpected compassion the sad heart that has deemed itself utterly abandoned.

A total weakness seized me, and I could only answer her inquiries with my tears. She seated herself on the ground, and supported my

head on her lap, while the Count hastened to the chateau for a carriage to convey me thither. There I lay a week before I had power to disclose my unhappy story; when I concluded I had the comfort of finding I had secured two friends for my child, who would never desert him; and this comfort was surely requisite to save me from distraction, for I now learned that St Julian had been married four months to the rich and beautiful heiress of Charette.

'To attempt now, therefore, to redress your wrongs, would be unavailing,' said the Count; 'whilst St Julian is intoxicated with love and the attainment of his wishes, any effort to do so would in all probability expose you to his vengeance, and perhaps occasion your final separation from your son: we must therefore leave him to the workings of conscience; though sometimes slow, it is always sure in its operations, and will yet raise its scorpion stings within his breast.'

With his amiable Countess the Count united in assurances of friendship and protection; the Countess told me of the high esteem and regard she had always felt for me, and that at the death of my mother both she and the Count would gladly have offered me an asylum in their house, had they not naturally supposed I preferred my uncle's; from the period of my quitting Dauphine, she had never heard concerning me.

'Had I sooner known your fate,' she said, 'I should sooner have tried to alleviate it.'

Certain that St Julian would make diligent search after me, in order to try and get me into his power, which if he once discovered me, it would be impossible to prevent his doing, from his having represented me as an artful woman, who had seduced his youth and endeavoured to ruin his character; it was deemed expedient that I should in future be secluded from the world: for such a purpose no place appeared so eligible as the deserted monastery in the valley; thither I was accordingly conveyed without the knowledge of any of the family but a confidential servant of the Countess. A few months after my retirement, I resigned you to the arms of my friend, for the purpose of having you conveyed to her house, as the orphan of an esteemed acquaintance of her Lords.

Two years have elapsed since that period, during which I have heard of St Julian's attaining his paternal title, of his having a son, born to his wishes, and of his leading a life of unbounded gaiety and pleasure—Ah! how different from the one he has doomed me to!

The attentions of the Count and Countess have been unremitting; could kindness, could compassion have healed the wounds of my heart, they would long since have been closed.

In their visits to me you are often brought:—Ah! how does my breast heave with mingled pain and pleasure as I clasp you to it, and hear your lisping accents. Fair is the promise of your infancy,

but never, my son, will your unfortunate mother see it fulfilled; affliction has undermined my health, I daily, hourly grow weaker; I fade like an early flower, o'er which the desolating blast has past, ere half its beauties are expanded; and long, long before the blossoms of your youth are blown, I shall be laid within my cold grave.

From that grave, as you peruse this narrative, Oh! think the spirit of your mother speaks, and charges you to attend to the advice which it contains—charges you never, in resentment for her wrongs, to forget the respect due to your father; she wishes you to plead for your rights, to vindicate her character, and prove to the world, that the descendant of St Paul, the daughter of St Foix, never disgraced the noble families from which she sprung, but she wishes you to plead with calmness, and, if unsuccessful, to be resigned.

She also charges you, if only acknowledged as the son of an illicit love, to fly from any overtures of kindness which may be made you.

The Count and Countess de Valdore have promised never to withdraw their protection. Generous pair! may Heaven recompense their kindness to me and mine.

They have also promised, ere they put this narrative into your hands, to prepare you in some degree for my unfortunate story: Sad and painful has been my task in writing it—Oh! agonizing in the extreme to divulge to my son the crimes of his father.

Oh! St Julian, beloved, though perjured from every mortal eye, I would have concealed those crimes, had not justice to your child compelled me to disclose them.

Farewell, my boy—my child, farewell! I leave you all I have to bestow, my blessing—may your conduct ever entitle you to that of Heaven, may your mind be fair as your person, may your heart ever glow with fervour in the cause of virtue, and your hand never lie idle by your side when misery or innocence call for assistance!

In happy ignorance and childish gaiety often perhaps will your light steps bound o'er the sod which covers my remains; but the period I trust will arrive when tenderness and sensibility shall guide you to it, to drop a tear to the memory of her whose last prayer will be breathed for your felicity, to bedew with the sacred drops of filial affection the grave of your mother.

MADÉLINE ST JULIAN

The tears of Madeline fell as she perused the narrative of her unfortunate grandmother, which (too much affected by it to speak), she returned in silence to her father.

'You can better conceive than I can describe,' said he, 'the feelings I experienced on perusing this story. I wept for my mother, I blushed for my father, and my heart was divided between affliction and resentment.'

‘With the natural impetuosity of youth, I determined not to let another day elapse without pleading for those rights which I had been so long and so unjustly deprived of; but convinced that my agitation would not permit me to plead for them in person, as I could wish, I resolved on sending a letter by a special messenger to the castle of Montmorenci, where I knew my father resided, declaring the late discovery of my birth, and the manner in which I had been protected from the distresses his desertion had exposed me to.

‘I accordingly withdrew from Elvira as soon as I was sufficiently composed to pen my letter, which I did in the most respectful yet energetic manner, and enclosed within it a small miniature of myself, drawn by the Countess de Valdore’s desire a few months previous to her death, along with her daughter’s, for the purpose of ornamenting a cabinet, whence I now received it from Elvira: I sent it with a hope that it might perhaps, by recalling to his memory some feature of the woman he had injured, and once tenderly loved, soften his mind in my favour, and incline him to do me justice.

‘My sufferings till the return of my messenger mock description. At his first appearance I flew with breathless haste to meet him. “The Marquis of Montmorenci,” he said, “was too ill to answer my letter, but he desired me without delay to repair to his castle.”

‘Oh! gracious Heaven, how rapturous were the feelings of that moment!—I could not doubt but that he desired to see me for the purpose of blessing, of acknowledging me as his son, of vindicating the fame of my injured mother.

‘Elvira thought as I did; and while a tear of regret for my intended departure strayed down her cheek, congratulated me in the most fervent manner on the prospect there appeared of having my wishes realized.

‘I set out unattended for the mansion of my father, which I entered, though with hope, with emotions that shook my frame; the domestics were prepared to receive me, and immediately conducted me to the apartment where their Lord lay, apparently much indisposed, and exhibiting but the ruin of those graces which had captivated the too susceptible heart of my mother.

‘Trembling I approached, and knelt before him, supplicating by my looks his blessing.

‘“With pleasure,” said he, extending his hand, “I acknowledge you as my son; to disown you never was my intention.”

‘I pressed his hand to my lips, but could not speak; the reception I met with, the idea of being able to vindicate the fame of my mother, quite overpowered me. Alas! short was the duration of my joy.

‘“Rise,” continued my father, “I have much to say; but ere I proceed, let me,” looking as he spoke towards a young man who sat at some distance from the couch, and whom my agitation had

hitherto prevented me from noticing, "let me present you to the Count St Julian, who has kindly promised to consider you as a brother."

'Surprise, intermingled with indignation pervaded my heart, on hearing the Marquis address another person by the title to which alone I had a right. I suppressed those feelings however from a hope that an explanation would ensue, which should appease them.

' "Chance," proceeded my father, "made him acquainted with your story: During a late illness, from which I am now but barely recovered, I ordered every letter or message which came to me to be delivered to him—consequently your's fell into his hands; I therefore deemed it requisite that he should be present at our interview, deemed it an absolute duty to him, his mother, and myself, that he should, whilst he heard me acknowledge you as my son, solemnly disacknowledge you as the heir of Montmorenci; no ties but those of love ever existed between your mother and me, and if you have been credulous enough to give implicit credit to the artful tale she fabricated, all my schemes in your favour must be defeated:—Be wise, study your own interest, declare your total renunciation of your chimerical claims, and ensure my kindness and protection."

' "Never, my Lord," cried I; "if your kindness and protection can only be acquired by stigmatizing the character of my mother, and degrading myself, the son of Madeline St Foix will never consent to be called the child of infamy; my opinion of her veracity is unalterable, and though I may not be able to support, I never will renounce my claims."

' "Then you must for ever be an alien to me," said the Marquis. "Go," he continued, with an agitated voice and a countenance inflamed by resentment, "go, lest you should tempt me to curse the hour in which you were born."

'With difficulty I suppressed the feelings which swelled my heart almost to bursting, but I determined not to forget that the author of my injuries was also the author of my being.

'I directly left the castle, and set out for the mansion which had fostered my helpless infancy. Ah! how different was the situation of my mind now from what it had been when I journeyed from it!—On entering it a servant informed me that M. de Valdore was arrived. I was too much disturbed to think of then paying my compliments to him, but I desired to be shewn directly to Lady Elvira. Her tenderness, said I to myself, will soften the bitterness of disappointment; her gentleness will sooth the perturbations of my soul.

'I found her alone and in the deepest dejection. She started with astonishment at my unexpected appearance, and her eyes instantly brightened with pleasure; a brightness, however, which quickly vanished on surveying my countenance.

‘“My dear Lausane,” said she, extending her hand, “what mean those looks?”’

‘“Ah! my Elvira,” cried I, “do they not render language unnecessary?—do they not tell you that my hopes were too sanguine?—that I have returned without finding the father I expected?”’

‘“Good Heaven!” said she, bursting into tears, “you overwhelm me with misery.—Oh! Lausane, what will become of you?”’

‘“Do not, my dear Elvira,” cried I, “aggravate my feelings, by giving way to your’s. My situation is not desperate!—Reflect that the bounty of your noble parents secured me from experiencing any pecuniary distress through the desertion of my father.”’

‘“Oh! Lausane,” exclaimed she in an agony, “you are mistaken. M. de Valdore, who reached the chateau soon after you had left it, immediately opened the will of my father, in which your name was no where visible: this, I am convinced, unintentional omission, would give me little concern, could I immediately do what I know my father meant to have done for you; but M. de Valdore, without whose consent I cannot act, appears too selfish and illiberal to let me hope he will permit me to follow my wishes. Surely, surely my father was deceived with respect to the disposition of his relative, or he never would have chosen such a guardian for his Elvira; already he has told me, that if you returned to the castle, he would not suffer you to continue in it; views respecting me and his son, have, I am confident, inspired this resolution; he wishes an alliance to take place between us, and thinks that if you remained here, you might perhaps defeat those wishes: but I will kneel, I will supplicate him to drop the determination he has avowed; should he, however, have the cruelty to persevere in it, I can give you jewels of sufficient value to support you in the stile of life you have hitherto been accustomed to, till I am of age, when the doors of Elvira’s mansion shall be again opened with delight to the adopted son of her parents, the friend of her youth, the brother of her heart.”’

‘Sad, silent, overwhelmed with misery, I listened to Elvira; her words gave the final stroke to my happiness; all the horrors of dependance stared me in the face, and ere she had ceased to speak, I had determined on ending the life upon which they seemed entailed.

‘“Formed for domestic comforts,” said I within myself, “such comforts as my situation precludes my enjoying, life without them would be a burthen. I will not, therefore, toil to support an existence valueless to me; I will not enter a world where I have no relative to guide, no friend to sooth me; where I might meet such men as the Marquis of Montmorenci and M. de Valdore; I will go to the mansion from which I am exiled, and gratify its master by destroying, perhaps in his presence, the being he detests.

‘A kind of gloomy composure took possession of me from the moment I had conceived my fatal resolution. I made no comments

to Elvira upon the conduct of her guardian; I attempted not to dissuade her from pleading to him in my favour, but pretending fatigue, I said I would retire for a little while to my chamber.

'As soon as I entered it, fearful of myself, fearful that my resolution would be shaken if I allowed myself a moment's thought, I put into my bosom a dagger, the gift of my late departed benefactor, and stealing out, bid, as I then thought, a last adieu to my hitherto happy home. I flew rather than walked, and about sun-set found myself in the gloomiest part of the forest of Montmorenci, and within view of the castle. Exhausted by fatigue and agitation, I threw myself upon the ground: it was a fine summer evening, and the beauty and serenity of nature formed a melancholy contrast to the horror and agony of my mind; the hour recalled a thousand tender images to my memory, a thousand happy scenes in which I had been engaged with the beloved protectors of my youth.

' "Oh! joys departed!" I exclaimed, "how bitter is your recollection!—but, for the last time, it now wrings my heart; to-morrow I shall be insensible of pain or pleasure.—Oh! sun," I cried, raising my eyes to that resplendent orb, which in majestic glory was retiring from the world, "never more will thy bright beams give me joy or vigour; ere they again visit the earth, I shall be cold and inanimate as the sod on which I now rest. Father of mercies!" I proceeded, raising myself on my knees, "to thee I fly. I am forlorn, I am an outcast, where then but in thy bosom can I expect comfort or protection? Forgive me then, forgive me, for appearing in thy presence unsummoned; and, Oh! should the eye of a father behold my remains, behold them with compunction, let, I implore thee, that compunction extenuate his errors, nor suffer the blood I shed to rest upon his head."

'I attempted to raise the dagger to my heart, but felt at the instant my arm seized. Astonished, I looked round, and beheld him who was unjustly stiled St Julian.

'I rose, and tried but in vain, to disengage myself from him—rage took immediate possession of my soul.

' "Release me," cried I, "directly, lest passion should endue me with double strength, and tempt me to raise that hand against your breast which now I only wish to turn against my own."

' "Your threats are in vain," said he; "I will not release you till you assure me you have dropped your present dreadful intentions—till you assure me that you will have mercy upon your own soul.—Oh! kneel and deprecate the vengeance of heaven, for having thought of disobeying its most sacred injunctions, for having doubted its promises of protection, and despairingly determined on destroying what, as it gave, so only it should take."

' "The acknowledged heir of Montmorenci, the son of tenderness and prosperity," cried I, "may preach against a crime which he

beholds no prospect of ever being tempted to commit; but were our situations reversed, was he, like me, an outcast, an exile from the house that should have sheltered and protected him, he would, like me, perhaps gladly resign a being valueless to himself from being so to others."

"To more strength of mind, more firmness than other men," said he, "I do not pretend; but still I humbly trust that in the very depth of misery the sacred sentiments of religion I have imbibed would guard me against an act which would for ever close the doors of happiness against me. You shall not," he continued, "throw me from you; I will save, I will serve you—we are brothers, suffer us to be friends. My heart conceived a partiality for you the first moment I beheld you, and I should then have declared it, had I thought its disclosure would have been pleasing to you."

"I will not, my love," proceeded Clermont, after a short pause, 'dwell longer upon a scene which I perceive has already inspired you with horror; suffice it to say I was not able to resist his kindnesses, which, from being unexpected, had a double effect; his gentleness allayed the stormy passions of my soul, his arguments convinced me of the enormity of the crime I had been about committing, and I dropped the instrument of intended destruction to clasp his hand to a breast which heaved with strong emotion, forgetting in that moment that he was the usurper of my rights.

'Ah! had he been convinced he was the usurper of them, I am confident he would, without hesitation, have withdrawn from the place I should have filled; but the artful tale of the Marquis of Montmorenci completely deceived him: and while his generous heart acknowledged me as his brother, he considered me as the illegitimate son of his father.

'From the hour our friendship commenced I determined never more to mention the painful subject of my mother's wrongs and mine. But ere I would accept his offers of assistance, I made him assure me that his own feelings alone prompted him to serve me, solemnly vowing within my mind never through any hands, or by any means, to receive any mark of kindness from my father, except acknowledged by him in the light I wished.

'St Julian (for so I now called him, though my heart swelled as I did so), informed me that in a few days he was going to Italy, and asked me to accompany him thither. This I gladly consented to do, and, in the interim he said he would bring me to the house of a cottager, where I might be secretly lodged: "And ere we return to France," continued he, "we may think of some plan for your future establishment in life."

'Ere I commenced my journey, I wrote to Elvira, acquainting her of the friend I had gained, and imploring her forgiveness for quitting her house in the abrupt manner I had done, carefully

concealing, however, the motive which had prompted me to do so.

‘St Julian informed me, that his present excursion was merely for pleasure, as he had already made the tour of Europe.

‘I shall pass over the admiration, the enthusiastic delight, which pervaded my mind as I ascended the Alps, and viewed nature in some of her most sublime forms.

‘On the evening of the first day’s journey St Julian told me he meant to pass the night at the habitation of a very particular friend of his.

‘“Some months ago,” said he, “as I was returning from Italy to France, I was severely hurt near his house by the overturning of my carriage, and from him, to whom I was then a total stranger, received every attention which politeness or humanity could dictate. I should therefore deem myself highly ungrateful if I could think of passing his door without paying him my respects.

‘“He is a foreigner, far advanced in life; a man of distinction, but unfortunate. Of the troubles which some years back agitated England, and its sister kingdom, I dare say you have heard. Lord Dunlere (so my friend is stiled) was one of the most faithful and zealous supporters of James the Second, and in consequence of his attachment to that unhappy Prince, became an exile from his native country, Ireland, and lost a considerable property in it:—with all he could preserve, a small pittance, he retired to the obscurity of these mountains, where, with two daughters, and a few affectionate followers, he lives a life of peaceful retirement, looking back on the world he has left without regret, and forward to the one to come with every hope of felicity.

‘“’Tis impossible to give you any adequate idea of the benevolence of his disposition, the urbanity, the cheerfulness of his temper: he continually brings to mind the stories we have heard of the patriarchs; his simplicity, his hospitality, exactly accords with the account we have received of them.

‘“Of his daughters I must not speak, because I could not do them justice. I must, however, timely caution you against the charms of the elder, who is engaged to a gentleman, to whom she is prevented by particular circumstances from being immediately united; but the heart as well as the hand of the younger are at liberty I understand, and to wish them my brother’s would be to wish him the greatest blessing man could possess.”

‘Soon after this conversation we stopped at Lord Dunlere’s. St Julian went in first to prepare him for my reception, and in a few minutes returned with his venerable friend, whose looks were calculated to excite an immediate prepossession in his favour.

‘He welcomed me with the utmost kindness, and conducted me to the apartment where his daughters sat. I cannot give you any idea

of the surprise, the admiration which seized me on beholding them:—I saw indeed that my brother was right in not attempting to describe charms which no description could have done justice to. My eyes wandered for some time from one to the other, scarcely knowing which to give the preference of beauty to, but at last settled on the lovely face of Geraldine, the younger.

‘Instead of staying but one night, we remained a week under the roof of Lord Dunlere—a week of such happiness as I had never before experienced—a week in which new feelings, new sentiments took possession of my soul, and taught me that I had hitherto been a stranger to the greatest pleasure, the greatest pain man can feel. I wished, I determined, however, if possible, to conceal my feelings—I regarded my passion as hopeless, and pride actuated me to hide it; but in vain I strove to do so; my melancholy, my total abstraction, amidst the new and lovely scenes through which I travelled, and the conversations into which I insensibly entered, betrayed me to St Julian. He laughed, yet pitied, but neither desired me to hope nor despair.

“*Lausane,*” said he, one morning, after we had been two or three weeks in Italy, “would it be vastly disagreeable to you if, instead of passing two months here as we at first proposed, we returned to Lord Dunlere’s, and spent them there?”

“*Ah! St Julian,*” cried I, “you know my heart too well to render it necessary for me to answer you.”

‘In short, without longer delay we returned to that mansion on which my thoughts continually dwelt. Here, in the presence of her whom my soul adored, I forgot my resolution of trying to conquer—to conceal my passion:—*ah!* how indeed could I do so, when in the soft glances of her eyes I sometimes fancied I saw an assurance of its being returned. At length the period for quitting her arrived—for quitting without the smallest hope of again beholding her: the most excruciating anguish filled my heart the moment it was announced, and with difficulty I concealed it.

‘Unable to converse the evening preceding the day fixed for my departure, I left Lord Dunlere and St Julian together, and withdrew to an alcove in a lonely and romantic part of the garden, where some of my happiest hours had been passed with Geraldine, indulging a melancholy kind of pleasure at the idea of there giving vent to my feelings.

‘You may imagine what my emotions were, when, on entering it, the first object I beheld was Geraldine!—She was alone, and dejectedly leaning on a little table. Reason bid me fly, but passion overpowered, and at her feet I poured forth my sorrows. *Ah!* how amply did I think myself recompensed for those sorrows when I beheld the tear of pity stealing down her cheek, when I heard her soft and faltering accents declare I was not indifferent to her:—

but the rapture that declaration gave was transient; I reflected on my situation, and my soul immediately upbraided me with cruelty to her, and treachery to Lord Dunlere, in avowing my passion, and pleading for a return to it, when no hope existed of our ever being united.

‘Pity me, Geraldine,’ said I, wildly starting from her feet, ‘but no longer love me; yield not to sentiments which will, if indulged, entail anguish upon your gentle soul, such anguish as now pervades mine—the anguish of a hopeless passion:—we must part, part without an idea of again meeting;—I cannot, dare not ask you to become mine; cannot ask you to bestow your hand on him who is but a dependant. No, Geraldine, were it offered I would reject it, from a conviction that by accepting it I should plunge you in distress!—Oh! mild as your virtues may your destiny be,—different, ah! far different from that of the unhappy Lausane’s!’

‘A sudden rustling amongst the trees behind me made me turn round, and I beheld Lord Dunlere. I was a little startled, but the consciousness of not having attempted to take any advantage of the tenderness of his daughter, prevented my feeling that confusion I should otherwise have experienced at being thus surprised. I bowed, and was retiring from the alcove, when he stopped me—

‘Lausane,’ said he, ‘do not let me frighten you away: let me try,’ added he, with a benignant smile, ‘whether I cannot obtain your pardon for my intrusion.’

‘He seated himself by the almost fainting Geraldine, and motioned me to sit beside him.

‘“You will not, Lausane,” said he, after a pause, “be surprised I think, when I inform you that I have overheard your conversation, nor will you, I hope, regret my having done so; it was one which reflected the highest honour on your heart. He who can soar above selfish considerations, who can resist the pleadings of passion for fear of inconveniencing the woman he loves, evinces a generosity, a sensibility, that does credit to human nature.

‘“I have long suspected your attachment; you will believe I did not disapprove it, when I confess I felt happy to think it was returned.

‘“To men of virtue, not to men of greatness, I always wished to give my daughters; they only, of all the numerous connexions which once blessed me, remain; consequently my felicity solely depends upon their’s: I therefore determined never to control their inclinations, if such as reason could approve.”

‘“Oh! my Lord,” I exclaimed, “I cannot give utterance to my feelings; but, ah! will you indeed persevere in your generous intentions when you hear my sad story, when you hear that I have been not only deprived of fortune, but the name I have a right to?”

‘“I am already acquainted with your story,” he replied; “Count

St Julian related it a few days after your introduction to me. Your now mentioning it reminds me of a preliminary which must be settled ere I positively consent to give you my daughter, namely, that you solemnly promise never to enter again upon the subject of former grievances."

"This was a promise which, even without having such an inducement as he now held out for making, I would not have hesitated to give, having long before determined to be silent about wrongs which I could not gain redress for.

"If then," resumed he, "you think you can be happy in the retirement in which we live, for my fortune will not permit me to give you the power of entering the gay world, receive the hand of my daughter."

"On my knees I expressed my gratitude, on my knees with truth assured him, that a desert with her would be a paradise. From his arms I received the most lovely and beloved of women. Oh! moment of ecstacy, in which I folded my Geraldine to my heart as my destined wife—in which I kissed away the tear that hung upon her glowing cheek, like the sweet dew of the morning on the silken leaves of the rose!

"St Julian, who appeared almost overpowered with delight at my happiness, put off his journey in order to be present at my marriage, and gave me the most solemn assurances of dividing with me his paternal fortune whenever he came into possession of it.

"He left me the most blessed of men. Oh! days of delight, rapid in your course, and succeeded by years of misery and horror!

"I had been married about three months when I received a letter from my brother, informing me that he was ill, and anxiously desirous of seeing me. I sighed at the idea of even a transient separation from my love, but I could not resist the call of friendship, and accordingly set out for a cottage near the castle of Montmorenci, where St Julian had once before lodged, and now appointed to see me.

"The heaviness of heart with which I commenced my journey was surely a presentiment of the ills that were approaching. Oh! venerable Dunlere, thy happiness and mine was then about setting!

"The chateau de Valdore lay in my way to the castle of Montmorenci; I could not think of passing it without inquiring after the friend of my youth, from whom I had heard but once since my departure from her house; our correspondence, as she then informed me, having been prohibited by her guardian. I went through a private path to the chateau, which conducted me directly to the hall occupied by the servants: here, amidst many strangers I soon discovered some of the old domestics, and from them learned that M. de Valdore and his family resided at the chateau, and that Lady Elvira's situation was unaltered. I sent to request an inter-

view, and was almost immediately summoned to her: she received me with the most rapturous delight, and tears involuntarily fell from me as I recollected the kindness of her parents, and witnessed her pleasure at beholding me.

‘When we grew a little composed, I answered her eager enquiries concerning all that had befallen me since our separation, and my present situation: but, Oh! what were my emotions when, as I mentioned that situation, I saw the blood forsake her cheeks, and discovered that it was more than friendship which she felt for me!

‘“Married!” she repeated in a faint voice—she paused—she seemed trying to recollect herself, and attempted to wish me joy; but her tongue could not utter what she wished to say, and her head sunk upon my shoulder. Oh! Geraldine, surely I did not wrong thy love by the tears, the tears of unutterable tenderness which I shed upon her pale cheek—by the sighs which heaved my bosom on hearing her’s.

‘She soon however recovered:—her mind was the seat of every virtue, and shrunk from the idea of betraying feelings contrary to propriety—

‘“Lausane,” said she, “be assured I rejoice at your present happiness; the period I trust will arrive when I shall have an opportunity of beholding it; prepare your lady against that period to love and esteem me; tell her you have a friend, a sister, to introduce to her.”

‘“Already,” cried I, “she is acquainted with the virtues of Elvira; already taught to love and esteem her.”

‘In pity to her feelings, which I saw she could ill suppress, I determined to shorten my visit: when she saw me rising to depart, she desired me to stop another moment—

‘“I have a present,” said she, “to send your lady: you know I often amused myself by copying pictures?—amongst the rest,” continued she, with a blush, “I copied your’s, and now request you will take it to your lady.”

‘She retired without permitting me to speak, and returned in a few minutes with it: it was the same which you now have, and which by being an exact copy of the one I sent my father, led to the late discovery.

‘From that period particular circumstances, not necessary to explain, prevented my seeing or hearing any thing of the destiny of Elvira, till chance conducted her to our cottage. She then informed me, that soon after she was of age, she had united herself to the Count de Merville, whose virtues and tenderness rendered her, during his life time, one of the happiest of women, and thus rewarded her for the resolution with which she set about conquering her first attachment from the moment she knew it was improper to be indulged.

'From the chateau de Valdore I repaired to the cottage where my brother had desired to see me. He received me with the utmost affection, and I found he had not deceived me by saying he was ill; it was an illness however which seemed occasioned more by agitation than any bodily complaint; and I afterwards discovered I was not wrong in this opinion.

'Oh! had he confided in me; Oh! had he then opened his heart, divulged its cares, its anxieties, what misery, what horror would he have saved us both from experiencing!

'I had not been above a week with him when I was overwhelmed with sorrow by a letter from my wife, containing the melancholy intelligence of her lovely sister Eleanora's death.

'I could not hesitate a moment about returning to her directly; yet at the instant I determined on doing so, my heart was almost divided between her and my brother, who was seized with a violent fever the very day on which I heard from her.

'I will not pain your gentle soul, my Madeline, by describing the situation in which I found your mother, or relating the numerous train of calamities that followed the death of her sister; it is sufficient for me to say that within a few months after her decease I lost my brother and my wife.

'Ah, heavens! even at this distant period I shudder at the recollection of the excruciating anguish I endured on being deprived of friends so beloved. The world seemed a blank, and nothing but religion and tenderness for you could have prevented my quitting it; nor has time done more than appease the violence of that anguish.—Oh! never, never can the barb of sorrow be extracted from my heart; and respect for the memory of my mother, affection for you, could only have tempted me to quit a retirement, where unrestrained and unobserved I could have indulged my feelings.

'Lord Dunlere soon followed his children to their grave; the wreck of his fortune was placed in the hands of a banker at Paris, who failed about the time of his death. Thus, from necessity as well as choice, I sought the obscurity in which you were brought up.

'Disgusted with the world, I changed my name, in order to conceal myself from every one who had known me before, and thus prevent my retirement from being interrupted.

'I carefully concealed my story from you, well knowing from your sensibility the pain you would feel if acquainted with my injuries.

'Alas! too late is the hand of my father extended to do me justice; neither wealth nor titles can now confer pleasure upon me, and the coronet he is about placing upon my brow, I should reject, was it not to have the power of transmitting it to the child of my lamented love.'



assured it does, should it not amply satisfy weak and erring man?"

Agitation caused him to pause in the hall, and the domestics seemed pleased with the opportunity he thus afforded them of gratifying their curiosity; one of them bowing low at length spoke—

'The Marquis impatiently expects your arrival, my Lord,' said he; 'shall I have the honour of conducting you to him?'

St Julian assented by an inclination of his head, and was immediately ushered up stairs to the apartment where his father sat.

On reaching the door he took the hand of Madeline, who with trembling steps had followed him to it.

The Marquis attempted to rise at their entrance, but neither his strength nor spirits seconded the effort, and faint and almost breathless he sunk back upon his chair.

St Julian and Madeline knelt before him.

'Let the blessing of a father,' said St Julian in a solemn voice, 'at length rejoice my heart.'

The Marquis raised his venerable head—

'I am too unworthy to dare to give it,' he exclaimed; 'but may heaven bless you, may all that can render life desirable be your's, long, long after I am laid within that grave where I now wish to shroud my sorrows and my shame!'

'Oh, my father,' cried St Julian, penetrated by his language, 'speak not so again; wish not again to deprive your son of an inexpressible comfort—the comfort of trying to mitigate your sorrows.'

The Marquis embraced him, but was unable for some minutes to speak; then suddenly raising his head—

'Treat me not with tenderness,' he said, while a frown overspread his countenance, 'reproach, revile, neglect me, and you will shew me mercy; for you will then save my heart from the intolerable pangs which kindness and attention so unmerited from you must give it. Oh! my son, my son,' he continued, clasping his hands together, and all the austerity of his countenance vanishing, 'you are now amply avenged, and I am amply punished. Had virtue been the guide of my actions, exclusive of that happiness which ever attends a quiet conscience, I should have had the happiness of being able to enjoy the society of my son; but now, what then would have been my blessing, almost becomes my curse; for not a word of tenderness that passes your lips, not a beam of love from your eye, but will come like daggers to my heart.'

'Far better had it been then,' said St Julian, 'that I had remained in my obscurity, if I am only taken from it to aggravate the woes of a father: permit me, my Lord,' cried he, with increasing emotion, 'again to retire to it; permit me to withdraw from your presence a being so injurious to your tranquillity.'

'No,' exclaimed the Marquis eagerly, 'never, never shall you, except you really wish to do so, withdraw yourself from me. Excuse what I have said, make some allowances for the agitation of such a meeting as our's; my composure will soon, I trust, return, and I shall then, I make no doubt, be able to enjoy your society.'

'Rise now, my children,' extending a hand to St Julian and Madeline, ' 'tis I should have knelt to you; but since you knelt for a blessing, though unworthy of giving, receive it: may happiness and honour, both in their fullest extent, ever be your's; may thy weakness,' turning to Madeline, and kissing her soft cheek, 'ever find a tender guardian in thy father; and may his sufferings and filial piety to me be amply recompensed by thy affection and duty!'

He seated them on each side of himself, and the violence of his feelings having a little abated, began, notwithstanding the avowed wishes of St Julian to the contrary, the history of his repentance.

'The dreadful fate of my son made me recollect my past conduct; all its enormities stared me in the face, and I wondered that the punishment of heaven had been so long delayed. Oh! wretch,' I cried, in the excruciating anguish of my soul, 'thy crimes have at length justly provoked the vengeance of Heaven, and drawn down destruction upon the head of thy son!—'

'The idea, that the sins of the father had been the occasion of the death of the son, almost shook Reason from her throne; horrors, beyond language to express, took possession of me:—to try to appease them, appease agonies which often urged me to complete the measure of my guilt, by raising the hand of suicide against my life.

'I sent for a Monk from a neighbouring Convent, to pour out my soul in confession to him; an holy act which I had long omitted, from a consciousness that till now it would have been a mockery of heaven, as till now the real sign of repentance had never heaved my breast.

'"My son," cried the good man, "you judge rightly in thinking that your conduct has caused your present afflictions; a merciful Being has sent them, in order to awaken you to repentance, and by suffering here, save your precious soul from suffering hereafter. Without further murmurs, therefore, submit to your deprivations as to a righteous punishment, and strive by every atonement in your power to expiate your crimes; so may you hope for a gleam of returning peace, so hope for support in the hour of death, when all the terrors of another world are opening to your view."

'In consequence of his words, and the pleadings of my own conscience, I directly ordered the most diligent search to be made after you, but without effect. I then drew up a paper, acknowledging my marriage with your mother, and, consequently, you as my heir; which I lodged in the convent where my Confessor lived, that if by

any chance either he or any of his holy brothers should hereafter hear of you, or any offspring of your's, they might be able to authenticate your title to the Castle of Montmorenci.

'Gratefully I return thanks to Heaven for permitting me to do that justice to you which I gave to others the power of performing; the pleasure derived from that idea will, I make no doubt, in a few days alleviate my feelings. But, Oh! my son, if your attentions have not always power to mitigate my sadness—if, whilst receiving them, the sigh of regret, the tear of tender recollection, should obtrude, be not offended, whilst I rejoice for the son I have recovered, I cannot help mourning for the one I have lost: he was all that the fondest father could desire! The proudest of the sons of men might have gloried in being called his parent. Ignorant as well as innocent of my great offences, his praises cannot displease you; but if they should, let the reflection of his being now in his cold and dreary tomb, where he can no longer interpose between you and your rights, remove your resentment.'

'Oh! my father,' cried St Julian, his tearful eye evincing the truth of his words, 'little do you know my heart if you think it can feel displeasure at the praises of my brother.'

'I believe you, my son,' said the Marquis, 'and the belief gives me pleasure; for to think you will sometimes permit me to talk of him to you, soothes my feelings.'

The appearance of a domestic now interrupted the conversation, and the Marquis led Madeline down stairs. The supper was laid out in one of the state apartments which had been long disused; and though every thing was magnificent, every thing was gloomy.

Fatigued by her journey, or rather by the emotions of her mind, Madeline soon after supper entreated permission to retire to her chamber; an attendant was accordingly summoned to conduct her to it, and on leaving the parlour she found the housekeeper waiting in the hall for that purpose.

'Well, I am happy,' cried she, simpering and courtesying, 'that I have an opportunity at last of wishing your La'ship joy. Dear me, I have been so surprised at what has lately happened! Who could ever have thought that the night I had the honour of seeing your La'ship here, I should have had the so much greater honour of calling you Mistress.'

Madeline received her compliment with a faint smile, for her heart was too heavy to permit her to answer it as at another time she might have done; nor was her melancholy decreased on entering her spacious chamber, whose faded tapestry and tarnished furniture spoke of its long desertion and neglect.

'I hope your La'ship does not dislike this apartment,' said the housekeeper, on perceiving Madeline pause at the entrance, and look round her with a kind of dread; 'it is one of the most magnifi-

cent in the castle I can assure you, and was occupied by my late Lady, the Marchioness, since whose death it has neither been used or altered.'

'No,' replied Madeline, advancing, and endeavouring to shake off the impression which its gloom had made upon her mind, 'I do not dislike it.'

'That door,' cried the housekeeper, 'opens into the dressing-room; there my lady used to pass many of her hours: it was fitted up entirely under her direction, and ornamented with portraits of several of her most particular friends; amongst the pictures is one of herself, and another of Lord Philippe, her son, drawn about a year before his death; the room still remains just in the same state as when he died.'

An irresistible impulse prompted Madeline immediately to take a view of these pictures; and she directly entered the dressing-room still attended by the housekeeper.

The first she examined was the Marchioness: it represented a woman in all the bloom of youth and of the most exquisite beauty; she turned from it, after expressing her admiration, to Lord Philippe's. But, Oh! what were her feelings at that moment, when the exact resemblance of de Sevignie met her eyes.

With all the wildness of astonishment she gazed upon it: 'Are you sure,' cried she, glancing for an instant at the housekeeper, and speaking in almost breathless agitation, 'are you sure this picture was drawn for Lord Philippe?'

'Sure!' repeated the housekeeper, 'Lord, yes, that I am indeed. Why I saw him, myself sitting for it.'

'Good heaven!' said Madeline to herself, 'what a likeness! Ah! how vain,' she continued, 'my resolves to forget de Sevignie while his image will be thus almost continually before me.'

As if rivetted by some spell to the spot, she still continued to stand before it: the more she gazed upon it, the more if possible the likeness grew upon her.

'Do you think it a handsome picture?' asked the housekeeper, elevating the light as she spoke as if to give Madeline a better opportunity of examining it.

'Handsome!' repeated Madeline emphatically and with a deep sigh, 'yes, very handsome indeed.'

'Aye, and so do I;' cried the housekeeper, 'what a sweet smile there is about the mouth!'

Yes, thought Madeline, the fascinating smile of de Sevignie.

'And the eyes!' continued the housekeeper, 'how piercing, yet how mild!'

Madeline, who had turned to the housekeeper, again fastened her's upon them, and again fancied she beheld the dark eyes of de Sevignie beaming with unutterable tenderness upon her.

She sighed more deeply than before; and fearful that if she remained much longer in her present situation, she should not be able to conceal the feelings which now almost swelled her heart to bursting, she instantly left the dressing-room.

'Your La'ship looks disturbed,' said the housekeeper; 'I am afraid the picture of Lord Philippe has affected you, by bringing his melancholy fate to your mind: Poor youth, it was a sad thing indeed; but your La'ship must consider, that if he had not been taken off, your father would never have been restored to his rights; and heaven knows, he was kept long enough out of them.'

'I must for ever regret,' said Madeline, 'that his restoration to them was occasioned by the death of his brother.'

'Why to be sure,' replied the housekeeper, 'it would have been better if they could have been regained by any other means; but that that would ever have been the case there was very little probability of; and, between ourselves,' proceeded she, lowering her voice, 'since your La'ship has hinted at the affair to me, I think even if it was openly proved, instead of being merely suspected, as it is at present, that the Count, your father, when his injuries were considered, would not be condemned; I, for my part, am one of those who would forgive him for what he did.'

'For what he did!' repeated Madeline, starting, 'why what has he done to require forgiveness? What is the affair you say I have hinted at? Speak,—you have agitated my very soul.'

The housekeeper receded a few steps in evident terror.

'Why, nothing, I assure your La'ship,' exclaimed she in faltering accents, 'I only meant that—that—'

Here she paused in the utmost confusion.

'Speak!' cried Madeline, in a voice that betrayed the most dreadful agitation—an agitation caused by recollecting at that instant the conversation which had passed between her and the housekeeper relative to the murder of Lord Philippe on the night she had sought for shelter in the castle; 'speak, I adjure you,' she repeated, with a distracted air, 'and relieve me from the horrors you have inspired.'

'I am very sorry, I am sure,' said Mrs Beatrice, 'that I have so distressed your La'ship; like an old woman, I must always be prating; I only meant, my Lady, I can assure you, to say, that if it was known that the Count, your father, rejoiced at, instead of regretted, the death of his brother, no one could wonder at it, considering the reason he had to hate him as the usurper of his rights.'

'And was this all you really meant?' asked Madeline.

'Oh, all, I do assure your La'ship, upon the word of a true Christian; if you do not believe me, I will call all the Saints in Heaven to witness for me.'

Madeline could not help smiling:

'As it is a call, perhaps,' said she, 'they might not obey; I will take your word.'

She now endeavoured to compose herself; but not easily could she regain composure, nor dismiss remorse from her mind, for having yielded, though but for a minute, to the horrid suggestions which had lately pervaded it.

'Oh! was my father acquainted with them,' cried she to herself, 'never, never would he forgive me. Ah! how can I forgive myself—Ah! how support, without betraying it, the pain I must ever feel, for having thought unjustly of him.'

'You seem well acquainted with the affairs of this family?' said she, sitting down, and making an effort to appear composed.

'Yes, very well acquainted with them indeed,' replied the housekeeper, significantly shaking her head; 'I have lived in it almost ever since I was born; for my parents dying when I was very young, my aunt, who was housekeeper, took me immediately under her protection.'

It now occurred to Madeline, that the domestic who had liberated her unhappy grandmother might still be living; and anxious, if she was, to pay her the tribute of respect she merited, she inquired; and heard, with pleasure, that her present attendant was the person who had performed that generous act.

'Yes, my lady, it was I,' cried the housekeeper, bridling up, 'who freed the poor unfortunate lady: I was then a fine lively young girl, as your La'ship indeed may well suppose, from the number of years which have passed since that event; and the most tender-hearted creature, though I say it myself, that perhaps ever lived. Dear me, I shall never forget how I cried, when I went with some food to her, and found her sitting on the ground, so pale, yet so beautiful, with her hair, the finest hair I ever saw, about one shade darker than your's, my lady, hanging about her shoulders, and her little baby lying on her lap, on whom her tears were falling so fast, while a cold wind whistled through the broken windows; for she was confined in an upper room, in one of the uninhabited towers.'

'Could I see that room?' asked Madeline.

'Why, the stairs which lead to it are now very bad; but if you wish very much to go to it, I think you may venture some day or other. Poor soul!—it has not been opened I believe since she left it. I never shall forget the manner in which she thanked me as I led her from it; or the tears she shed as she put this little ring upon my finger.'

Madeline started up and examined the ring; then, after a moment fastening her fine eyes swimming in tears upon the housekeeper,

'Blessed, for ever blessed,' she exclaimed, 'be the hand which aided the unhappy!'

'There was such a fuss,' resumed Mrs. Beatrice, 'when it was known that she had escaped, I was very near being dismissed from the castle; nothing but my youth could have obtained my forgiveness: so in it I continued, and on the death of my aunt obtained her place.'

'And what was the general opinion about the unhappy Marchioness?' demanded Madeline.

'It was the opinion of the domestics, and such simple folks,' replied the housekeeper, 'that she was an unfortunate lady, who had been cruelly injured; but all the great people believed, or said they did at least, that she was an artful creature, who had drawn in the Count to have an amour with her.'

After conversing a few minutes longer with the housekeeper, Madeline told her, she no longer required her attendance. The night was now indeed waning fast, and most of the inhabitants of the castle had retired to repose, ere she dismissed her; however so much was her imagination affected by the gloom of her apartment, that she could not avoid asking, whether there was an inhabited one near it?

'Not very near it,' answered the housekeeper; 'the one adjoining it,' she said, 'had belonged to Lord Philippe, but since his death had been shut up, with all the rest of the chambers in that gallery, except a few near the staircase, one of which had been now prepared for the Count St Julian.'

Left to herself, instead of retiring to rest, Madeline reseated herself by the toilette, and leaning her head pensively upon her hand, began to ruminate over past events. The picture of Lord Philippe, by recalling de Sevignie to her mind, had awakened a thousand tender recollections, which wrung her heart with agony; the idea of de Sevignie's falsehood had failed to conquer her tenderness, she still loved him, still doubted his duplicity, and felt more convinced than ever that all the splendour of her present situation could never restore the cheerfulness her disappointment relative to him had injured: again she regretted that situation, again regretted her elevation to a height which would render more conspicuous the melancholy she wished to conceal from every eye.

'The sadness that marks my brow will make me appear ungrateful to heaven,' cried she, 'for the wonderful change it has effected in my father's favour; and what ill-natured speculations may not be excited by seeing one so young so hopeless!'

Severely, however, did her heart reproach her for regretting that change—a change which removed from the memory of her grandmother the obloquy that had been so long attached to it.

From the sufferings of her grandmother her thoughts naturally reverted to those of her father, and the more she reflected on his narrative, the more firmly convinced she was that much of his life

remained untold;—the recollected words of her departed friend confirmed this opinion.

'She told me,' cried Madeline, 'and her lips knew not falsehood, that the calamities of his life were unprecedented; that its characters were marked by horror, and stained with blood;—but in the view he gave me of it, no such calamities, no such characters met my eye; 'tis therefore too evident, that much of it remained concealed.—Oh! may that concealment now continue,' she proceeded; 'Oh! may no hand more daring than mine withdraw the veil I have been so often cautioned against raising; may no untoward circumstance reveal a mystery, whose elucidation I have now a presentiment would fill me with horror!'

She suddenly paused, for at this instant she thought she heard a groan from the adjoining chamber; which, it may be remembered, has already been mentioned as once belonging to Lord Philippe.

Her heart beat quick, and she turned her eyes towards the partition, as if they could have penetrated it, and discovered the cause of the sound that had alarmed her; but all again was profoundly still, and she at last began to think it was either the wind growling through the casements, she had heard, or some of those unaccountable noises, so common in old houses; such, she recollected, as had often startled her at the chateau of the Countess de Mer-ville.

Thus trying to tranquillize her mind, she was beginning to undress, when the powers of motion were suddenly suspended by a repetition of the sound which had so recently alarmed her—a sound she could no longer ascribe to the causes she had already done.

Deep and dreadful groans now pierced her ear—groans which seemed bursting from the bosom of misery and despair, and which by degrees rose to a yell, intermingled with sighs and sobs.

That Madeline was not an entire stranger to superstition, must have been already perceived; that it was now awakened in her breast, cannot be denied, nor indeed scarcely wondered at, when her situation is considered; in a gloomy chamber, remote from every inhabited one, and assailed by noises from the long unoccupied apartment of a murdered relative.

For some minutes she was unable to move: at length her eyes timidly glanced round her chamber, dreading yet wishing to ascertain whether any terrific object was within it. They encountered a bell near the head of the bed, and which the housekeeper had previously informed her communicated with the gallery where the servants slept; to this she instantly darted, and rung it with violence;—almost immediately she heard a bustle over her head, and then descending steps.

She flew to the light, and taking it up, directly opened the door.

Several of the male and female domestics approached, accompanied by her father.

'What is the matter, my love?' cried he, 'I have been called from my bed by the sound of passing steps.'

'Listen!' exclaimed Madeline, with a countenance of horror, and glancing at the chamber.

The yell became, if possible, more savage; and the domestics began to cross themselves. Madeline looked at her father, with an intention of asking his opinion of the noise; but was prevented by observing the disorder and death-like paleness of his countenance.

'How long,' demanded he, 'is it since this chamber was opened?'

'Two months at least, my Lord,' replied the housekeeper, 'and then it was only opened for a few hours, of a fine sunny day, merely to air it.'

'Where is the key?' asked he.

'It hangs beside the door, my Lord,' answered Mrs Beatrice.

'I will examine it then,' cried he.

'Examine it!' repeated the housekeeper, 'Jesu Maria!—Why, surely my Lord, you could not think of such a thing; surely, surely you, of all men in the world, could not have courage to enter it?'

St Julian started, and turned quick upon her; and a frown, such as Madeline had never before seen upon it, darkened his brow—his eyes, his piercing eyes, were fastened on her, as if wishing to discover the innermost recesses of her soul, and in an agitated voice he demanded what she meant.

'Meant, my Lord?' said the affrighted Beatrice, 'meant—why, nothing—nothing that could give your Lordship offence.'

St Julian looked doubtfully at her; then turning, he took down the key, and unlocked the chamber; the moment he opened the door, the women retreated from it, and shame alone, it was visible, prevented the men from following their example:—attended by them and Madeline he entered it, and the noise directly ceased.

The room, like Madeline's, was hung with tapestry; this was now raised, and the walls minutely examined, but no opening could be discovered, nor any means of entrance but by the door in the gallery.

'Were you ever before disturbed by any noise in this chamber?' asked St Julian.

'No,' the servants replied, 'never before the present night.'

''Tis strange!' cried he, after pausing for a minute.

They then quitted the chamber, which he relocked.

'I shall keep the key myself,' said he, as he turned from it; 'it must undergo another examination; though destruction, certain destruction should overwhelm me for doing so, I will try to develop the mystery.'

He now took the hand of Madeline, and led her to her room; he tried to tranquillize her, but the trembling of his frame, and disorder of his looks, mocked the efforts he made to do so.

'You look alarmed, my love?' cried he.

Madeline sighed, and might have said,

'And trust me, in mine eye, so do you.'

'You have no reason for terror,' said he with a deep sigh, 'your conduct has made no enemies either in this world or the next.'

'I trust not;' cried Madeline, 'but conscious innocence is not always able to guard the heart against the attacks of fear; and I own I am shocked beyond expression by the noise I have heard.'

'I fear you are superstitious,' exclaimed her father.

'Could you wonder if I was?' cried she: 'What we cannot account for, we can scarcely help ascribing to supernatural causes.'

'Am I to infer,' said St Julian, regarding her with earnestness, 'from what you say, that it is your opinion the groans proceeded from the spirit of the murdered Philippe?'

'With the Supreme nothing is impossible,' said Madeline, 'and I have been told that the spirits of the injured are sometimes permitted to revisit this world, for the purpose of obtaining retribution; and if 'tis true what the housekeeper once hinted to me,—'

St Julian started,—'What did she hint?' asked he with eagerness.

Madeline paused for a minute; then with a faltering voice, and timidly raising her eyes to her father's face,

'She told me,' said she, 'that Lord Philippe fell not by the hands of banditti, but—'

'By whom?' demanded St Julian, in almost convulsive agitation.

'Some relative,' replied Madeline.

'And did she acquaint you with the name of that relative?'

'No, and perhaps, after all, it was only an idle surmise of her own.'

St Julian left his seat, and traversed the apartment.

Madeline viewed him with consternation; her thoughts began to grow wild; and fears of the most frightful nature again assailed her heart.

'Oh, God!' she cried to herself, while every nerve was strained with agony at the idea, 'should the suspicions that now rack my breast be just!—This torture of suspense is more than I can bear,' continued she; 'I will throw myself at the feet of my father, I will disclose to him my suspicions: if false, he will pardon them, when he reflects on the combination of circumstances which excited them; if true, he will not surely shrink from reposing confidence in his child.'

She rose, but almost instantly sunk upon her seat, recoiling

from the dreadful idea of a child declaring to a parent her suspicion of his having committed one of the most horrible crimes which human nature can be capable of:—she shuddered, she wondered at her temerity, in having ever thought of doing so; and, as she wondered, the recollection of her father's precepts, his gentleness, his uniform piety, returning, she again began to believe, that in thinking he had ever deviated from integrity, she had done him the greatest injustice.

St Julian, whose emotions prevented his noticing those of Madeline, soon resumed his seat; his countenance had lost its wildness, and a faint glow again mantled his cheek.

'I trust, my love,' cried he, 'you will not again listen to the idle surmises of the servants: even on the slightest foundation they are apt to raise improbabilities and horrors, which, in spite of reason, make too often a dangerous impression on the mind, and overturn its quiet, by engendering superstition:—Heaven knows,' he proceeded, 'the evils of life are sufficiently great without adding to them those of the imagination.'

Madeline assured him she would never more encourage any conversation from the domestics, on family affairs.

'You look fatigued,' said he, 'and I will now,' rising as he spoke, 'leave you to repose; retire to it, my love, without fear or trembling; blest with conscious innocence, you can dread no evil, no angry spirit demanding retribution:—Oh! never may your bosom lose that peace which must ever belong to virtue!—Oh! never may reflection break your slumbers, or an offended conscience present terrific images to your view. Farewel, my child,' tenderly embracing her, 'would to God thy father could sink to forgetfulness with a mind like thine!'

Heart-struck by the last words of her father, Madeline remained many minutes rivetted to the spot on which he had left her, deeply ruminating on them; then starting, as if from a deep reverie,

'I must not think,' said she, 'since thought is so dreadful.'

She felt fatigued, but it was more a mental than a bodily fatigue—that fatigue which repels, instead of inviting rest; besides a secret dread clung to her soul, which rendered her unwilling to go to bed; she therefore threw herself before a large crucifix that was placed near it, and continued to pray for her father, for herself, and for repose to the spirit of the murdered Philippe, till day began to dawn through the shutters. With night her terror decreased, and undressing herself, she then retired to bed; but the sleep into which she soon fell was broken by horrid visions, and she arose in the morning, pale, and unrefreshed.

The sun beamed bright through the casements, and on the stately trees that waved before them, unnumbered birds poured forth their matin lay, intermingled with the simple carol of the woodman: but

neither the bright beams of the sun, the melodious notes of soaring birds, nor the wild song of the peasant, could now, as heretofore, delight the mind of Madeline. Saddened beyond expression by obtrusive ideas, she strove to banish that sadness by banishing thought—but, ah! how vain the effort! the 'vital spark of heavenly flame' within us must be extinguished, ere we can cease to think.





# Clermont

VOLUME FOUR







'Like the groans, or rather yells, of execruciating distress,' replied St Julian; 'never before did sounds so horrible pierce my ear.'

'I shall place some of the servants I can depend on in the gallery as a watch upon this door to-night; and if any villainy is practised, I think,' said the Marquis, 'by that means it will be detected. Though this room,' continued he, 'affects, it also pleases me; it seems to me a place peculiarly consecrated to my Philippe, as since his death it never has been inhabited, nor never shall whilst I live. Will you indulge me by remaining a little longer in it with me?'

St Julian and Madeline instantly seated themselves.

After some further conversation, the Marquis requested to hear the particulars of his son's life.

St Julian seemed somewhat embarrassed: after a little hesitation, however, he gave the desired recital. But how great was the astonishment of Madeline to find it differ essentially from the one he had given her; every circumstance relative to his brother was now suppressed.

On finding his expectations of fortune blasted, he had set out for Italy, he said, with an intention of cultivating a taste for painting; trusting, from that source, he should be enabled at least to derive a support. 'I had not proceeded far on my journey,' continued he, 'ere an accident introduced me to the hospitable Lord Dunlere': he then gave the same account of that nobleman to the Marquis that he had already done to Madeline; and concluded by saying, he had lost his wife, and her father, in consequence of their grief for the premature death of his lovely sister-in-law: after which he had forsaken their habitations, unable to bear the scene of his former joys, and retired, changing his name, to a lonely cottage, amidst some of the most wild and romantic mountains of Dauphine.

The Marquis was affected by the sufferings of his son; but at the same time pleased to hear he had been united to a woman of rank and virtue: it gratified his pride to find the heiress of his fortunes could boast on every side of illustrious connections.

But how different were the feelings of Madeline from his, on hearing this second narrative from her father: she was shocked to find so great a difference between the one he had given her, and the one he had given the Marquis. 'Ah, why,' cried she to herself, 'conceal the generosity of his noble brother!—Yet, perhaps,' continued she, after some minutes' reflection, 'he only forbore mentioning him, from a fear of awaking painful emotions in the Marquis's breast.'

Soothed by this idea, the composure of her mind was returning, when again it was disturbed by the Marquis's suddenly enquiring on what part of the Alps the habitation in which Lord Dunlere had lived was situated, and by the agitation her father betrayed at the question: in faltering accents he answered it, and the Marquis instantly exclaimed—

'Oh, God! it was there my Philippe fell!—You resided with Lord Dunlure at that time,' continued he, after the pause of a moment, 'and you heard perhaps of the murder?'

'A rumour of it,' replied St Julian, 'but without knowing the sufferer's name.'

'You knew not then, till lately, that the vengeance of Heaven had overtaken me: the offended Majesty of Heaven could not indeed have inflicted any punishment upon me half so severe as that of depriving me of my son. Oh, Philippe! lovely and beloved! days, years have elapsed since your death,—but without witnessing any diminution of my grief!—Had I received your last sigh—had I paid the last sad duties to your remains, its poignancy I think would have been abated: but far from your kindred you fell!—and never will the tomb of your forefathers receive you.'

'You have heard, perhaps,' continued the Marquis, 'from your vicinity to the spot, where he fell—that the body could never be found. At the time he received his death wound, he was on his way to Italy, and had stopped for the night at a little obscure inn; from whence, tempted by the sublimity of the scene, he had wandered to an adjoining mountain, to pass an hour or two, attended by a favourite servant: both were unarmed; and the moment his master was attacked, the servant fled for assistance; but, alas! ere he returned with it, the murdered and the murderer were gone. No doubt the body was dragged into some recess, a prey for the ravenous wolves which infest that part of the country; and even now, perhaps, his bones, unburied, lie bleaching in the mountain blast. Oh! never may my eyes be closed till they have seen vengeance fall upon the head of his murderer! accursed may he be! may his days be without comfort—his nights without repose!—and may his pangs, if possible, be more intoltable than those he has inflicted on my soul!'

'Perhaps,' cried Madeline, in a faint voice, 'he does not live.'

'Suggest not such an idea again,' exclaimed the Marquis, with a kind of savage fury in his countenance; 'the hope of yet bringing him to punishment has hitherto, more than any other circumstance, supported me amidst my sufferings; to relinquish that hope, would be to relinquish almost all that could console me.—Still then will I retain it; still then will I trust, O God! that some heaven-directed hand shall point out the murderer of my son.'

The Marquis and the Count sat on the same side, and Madeline directly opposite to them. As her grandfather uttered the last words, she withdrew her eyes from his for the purpose of stealing a glance at her father; but as she was turning to him, they were suddenly arrested by a sight which struck her with horror.

She beheld a hand thrust through the tapestry behind him, extended and pointing to him. Shrieking aloud, she started from her

seat, and, with a desperate resolution, was flying to the wall in order to examine it, when her strength and senses suddenly receded, and she fell fainting on the floor.

Alarmed by her too evident terror and illness, St Julian flew to her assistance; whilst the Marquis, scarcely less affected than her father, rung the bell with violence. Some of the servants immediately hastened to the room; and restoratives being procured, Madeline soon revived. The moment she opened her eyes, she raised her languid head from the shoulder of her father, and turned them to the spot from whence she had seen the dreadful hand extended. But it was gone; and she then begged to be carried to her chamber.

St Julian would not permit any one to continue in it with her but himself. He had some secret reasons for wishing no one at present to listen to their conversation. He tried to sooth, he tried to tranquillize her, but without effect; and he besought her to acquaint him with the cause of her illness.

Unwilling to tell a falsehood, yet unable to declare the truth—'Oh! my father,' cried she, bathing his hands with tears as she pressed them between her's, 'ask me no farther questions on the subject; place the same confidence in me now you have hitherto done, and believe that your Madeline will never have any concealments from you which you can disapprove: you seem ill yourself,' observing his pale and haggard looks.

'At my being disordered,' cried he, 'you cannot wonder after what has passed.'

'Passed!' repeated Madeline, recoiling with horror at the idea of his having seen the hand.

'Yes,' replied St Julian, 'after what has passed,—after being cursed by my father.'

'Cursed!' cried Madeline aghast.

'Did you not hear him curse me?'

'No, surely not,' answered Madeline; 'I heard him curse, but—' she paused—she hesitated.

'But whom?' demanded St Julian impatiently.

'The murderer of his son,' replied Madeline in a faint voice, and turning her eyes from her father.

St Julian groaned; he clasped his hands upon his breast and traversed the apartment.

'True,' cried he, suddenly stopping, and flinging himself upon a chair; 'true, it was not me he cursed. I believe my reason is disordered by the sudden change in my situation. Ah! would to heaven,' said he in a half-stifled voice, 'since so long delayed, that change had never taken place!'

'Would to heaven it never had!' said Madeline.

'Oh! my child,' resumed St Julian, rising and embracing her, 'you have no reason to join in that wish; the Castle of Montmorenci can

lead you to no dreadful retrospections, can awaken no torturing recollections in your breast.'

'Alas! my father,' replied Madeline, 'if it has that effect upon your mind, mine must necessarily be disturbed: she whom you nurtured with tenderness, the child of your bosom, cannot, without the most agonizing sorrow, behold your distress.'

At this moment a servant rapped at the door to announce dinner. Madeline declared herself unable either to go down or take any refreshment at present. But she promised her father she would exert herself to be able to attend him and the Marquis in the evening, and reluctantly he left her.

But how vain were the efforts she made to fulfil the promise she had given to her father; as well might she have attempted to still the wild waves of the ocean as the agitations of her breast, proceeding as they did from her newly-revived suspicions concerning him.

She hesitated whether she should disclose them or not. 'Shall I throw myself at his feet,' cried she, traversing her chamber with hasty steps, 'and entreat him to confirm my horrors, or dissipate my fears? Ah! what rapture to think he could do the latter!—but, alas! his unguarded expressions, the mysterious circumstances that have happened since our arrival at the castle, leave me little reason to imagine he can.'

Absorbed by the dreadful ideas which had taken possession of her mind, Madeline heeded not the passing minutes, and was surprised by her father in a situation that made him start as he entered her apartment.

Never indeed was anguish more strongly depicted than by her; her hair, dishevelled, fell partly on a bosom whose tumultuous throbs indicated the disorder of her heart; and the wildness of her eyes declared the agitation that had mantled her cheeks with a feverish glow.

'Madeline,' said her father as he approached her, 'is it thus you have kept your promise with me?'

She sighed.

'Your countenance,' resumed he in a solemn voice, and taking her hand, 'renders concealment with you impossible; I shall not therefore ask what has disordered you, for your looks have informed me.'

Madeline involuntarily averted her head.

'Yes,' continued he, 'I know your present ideas. But, Oh, Madeline! reflect on the tenor of my conduct, on the precepts I instilled into your mind, and then think whether you have done me justice or injustice in harbouring them?'

Madeline withdrew her hands, and covered her face.

'I forgive you, however,' proceeded St Julian, 'from my soul I

forgive you. I know a strange combination of circumstances excited your suspicions—circumstance which I may yet perhaps satisfactorily account for: at any rate, be assured, at some period, perhaps not far distant, I will elucidate all the mysteries of my life, explain my reasons for sinking to the Marquis, and not to you, my intimacy with my brother.'

'Oh! my father,' cried Madeline, throwing herself at his feet, 'how can I ever sufficiently evince my gratitude for your forgiveness—a forgiveness which cannot be followed by my own. True, a strange combination of circumstances led me into error; but nothing can now justify me in my own opinion for it. Ah! never can I reflect without horror, that there were moments in which I doubted your integrity,—ah! never can I think myself punished enough for doing so; though my feelings, in consequence of such doubts, were such as almost to annihilate existence. You say you forgive me; but ah! my father, can I hope that you will ever look upon me again without internal resentment?'

'Without a trace of it shall I regard you,' cried he, raising her from the ground: 'had our situations been reversed, I make no doubt I should just have thought as you did: let us now endeavour to banish all that is disagreeable from our recollections.'

'With ecstasy,' said Madeline. 'Oh! never, my father, shall my faith in your virtues be again shaken. Ah! happy should I now be, could I be reconciled to myself. Your words have removed a mountain from my breast; and all the horrors of doubt and suspicion are over.'

'My happiness depends on your's,' said St Julian; 'the best proof, therefore, you can give me of your regard, is by endeavouring to recover your spirits.'

'Every effort then shall be made,' replied Madeline; 'and efforts in a right cause are generally successful.'

Her father then led her to the apartment where the Marquis sat, who expressed much pleasure at seeing her better.



with her! would to God I was now permitted to pay to the daughter the debt of gratitude I owed the parent!

'Impossible,' cried the Marquis; 'Madame D'Alembert, accompanied as she is, cannot require additional attendance: besides, your presence in the castle is absolutely requisite, as an entertainment is already planned, and will be given in a few days, in honour of you and your father, at which you must preside. Of the travellers we shall receive the earliest intelligence, as Monsieur D'Alembert promised to write immediately on their arriving at Bareges: let this promise therefore contribute to quiet your mind.'

Madeline bowed, and endeavoured to appear composed; but her heart swelled with sorrow at the idea of being separated from her friend, at a time when her attentions would have been so acceptable, perhaps necessary; and with difficulty she suppressed her tears.

When coffee was over, the Marquis and St Julian sat down to chess, and Madeline withdrew to the court, from whence she was soon tempted to wander into the forest.

It was now the still, the dewy hour of eve, an hour in which she particularly loved to walk; and she proceeded, thinking of the happy period in which she had wandered, devoid of care, through the wild-wood walks surrounding her native valley; and sighing at the idea, that felicity such as she then experienced would never, never more return.

Unheeding whither or how far she went, she rambled on till her progress was unexpectedly stopped by the monumental pillar of Lord Philippe.

A kind of awful fear now took possession of her; a fear, which the idea of the distance she had wandered from the chateau, the lateness of the present hour, and the deep gloom surrounding her, inspired; a

*long cathedral aisle of shade*

led to the pillar, around which clustered

*cypress and bay,  
Funereal, pensive birch, its languid arms  
That droops, with waving willows, deem'd to weep,  
And shiv'ring aspens*

The yellow radiance, diffused over the tall trees and the antique turrets of the castle, at her first setting out, was now entirely withdrawn, and scarcely a star-light ray penetrated to the spot on which she stood; whilst a breeze swept through the forest with a hollow murmur, that to her ear sounded like the lamentings of a troubled spirit.

The dreadful fate of him to whom the pillar was dedicated, rushed

upon her recollection; and, shuddering, she was moving from it, when a deep groan arrested her steps. She paused,—she trembled; the surrounding trees faintly rustled; a figure slowly emerged from them, and gliding by her, gave as it passed a look at once tender and mournful—a look which presented to her view the exact features of de Sevignie.

‘Oh, God,’ cried she, recollecting the likeness between him and the picture of Lord Philippe, ‘is it de Sevignie I saw, or the spirit of the murdered Philippe?’

The pale and hollow cheek presented to her view, the melancholy eye that beamed upon her, inclined her to believe the latter; and while a cold perspiration burst from every pore at the idea of having seen a supernatural being, she fled trembling up the long avenue that led from the pillar: at its termination she paused, uncertain which way to go, for the paths were here wild and entangled; but as she despairingly struck her breast from a fear of not finding her way, she beheld a light suddenly glimmering through the trees: from the castle she knew this must proceed; darting forward therefore, and still keeping it in view, she soon found herself at home.

She stopped for a few minutes in the hall in order to regain her breath and some degree of composure; she then repaired to the parlour where she found the gentlemen just rising from chess. In answer to their enquiries as to where she had been, she briefly replied, rambling about, but did not inform them how far or whither. Her paleness struck both the Marquis and St Julian; both however imputed it to her grief for the illness of Madame D’Alembert.

On retiring to her chamber, Madeline was not sorry to find some of the servants stationed outside the chamber next to her’s, for the purpose of apprizing the Marquis and his son if there was any return of the noise that had alarmed the family the preceding night. Her spirits weakened by the idea of having seen a being of the other world she could ill have borne total solitude. Unable to sleep, she stood a considerable time at the window, contemplating that part of the forest where she had been terrified; yet without shuddering she could not look upon those trees, beneath whose covert she imagined the troubled spirit of Lord Philippe wandered.



nesses, the attentions, the nameless little offices of love, which soften the pangs of sickness and of death, had been paid to her.'

From her melancholy meditations she was roused by a knock at the chamber-door. She started; hastily rose, and opening it, beheld her father.

'I hope, my dear Madeline,' cried he, taking her hand, 'that the long and free indulgence of your grief has lightened your heart, and enabled you to make exertions against a sorrow, not only useless, but injurious. I hope,' continued he, observing her trickling tears, 'that in the grave of your friend you have not buried all consideration for your father's peace—a father, who can know no happiness but what is derived from witnessing your's.'

'Oh, my father,' exclaimed Madeline, unspeakably affected by his words, 'every exertion you desire I will make.'

Ever taught to consider her promise as sacred, she no longer gave way to her grief, and soon recovered, though not her cheerfulness, her composure.

The death of Madame D'Alembert caused the doors of the castle to be again barred against company, and an almost uninterrupted stillness once more reigned within it. Madeline rather rejoiced at than regretted the total solitude in which she lived; the spirits, the hopes, the expectations which would once have inclined her to gaiety, were fled, and she no longer wished to see or to be seen.

Nor did her father appear less pleased with his seclusion from the world; a deeper gloom than Madeline had ever before observed upon it, now almost continually clouded his brow. His wanderings from the castle became frequent; and were often prolonged till the curiosity of his father, and the fears of his daughter, were excited.

Tortured by beholding his increasing melancholy, Madeline was often tempted to implore him to reveal its source, from a hope that she might then be able to offer some consolation; but whenever she felt herself on the point of doing so, the solemn promise she had given her departed friend of never attempting to raise the veil which concealed the former events of his life, recurred to her recollection, and made her shrink back appalled from the idea.

'But has he not promised,' she would then cry, endeavouring to strengthen her resolution, 'has he not promised, since his arrival at the castle, that he would himself raise that veil, and elucidate every mystery; Oh! let me then terminate my incertitude, my suspense, by now imploring him to fulfil his promise.'

Still however, whenever her lips opened for that purpose, a secret dread would again close them; and she was soon convinced that she could not summon resolution to urge the disclosure she so ardently desired.

About a fortnight after they had received the intelligence of Madame D'Alembert's death, a letter arrived from the elder

D'Alembert, acquainting the Marquis with his intention of being at the castle that day. He arrived a short time before dinner, and paid his compliments to his newly-discovered relatives with the utmost warmth and affection. The prejudice Madeline had conceived against the son extended to the father; and, notwithstanding the warmth of his manner, she saw, or fancied she saw (which had just the same effect upon her mind), in his countenance a dissatisfaction that denoted his not feeling what he professed; his eye, she thought, often fastened upon her father with a malignant expression, as if the soul that animated it inwardly cursed the man who had stepped between him and the fortunes of Montmorenei.

After the first compliments were over, taking the hand of Madeline, he assured her that nothing but business of the most perplexing nature could have prevented his son from accompanying him to the chateau. 'He is impatient,' continued he, 'to be introduced to his amiable relations; above all, he is impatient for an opportunity of expressing to you his heartfelt gratitude for the attentions you paid to his wife.'

The heart of Madeline was too full to permit her to speak: she bowed, and hastily averted her head to wipe away the tears which fell to the memory of the unhappy Viola.

Her father, perceiving her emotions, led her to a seat, and changed the discourse.

D'Alembert now informed them that his daughter (of whom Madeline had before heard the Marquis slightly speak) was at the Chateau de Merville with her brother. 'In about a month I hope and expect,' continued he, 'they will join me here.'

'I hope so too,' said the Marquis; 'for I think it is the want of society that lowers the spirits, and hurts the bloom of Madeline.'

'Ah!' thought Madeline, ' 'tis not the society I am now debarred from, but the society I have lost, which deadens my cheerfulness, and fades my cheek.'

'I shall insist,' resumed the Marquis, 'on her father's taking her in the course of the winter to Paris; 'tis time for her to be introduced to the circles her rank entitles her to associate with.'

D'Alembert by a bow silently assented to what the Marquis said.

From this period Madeline had but few opportunities of indulging her love for solitude; D'Alembert either was, or pretended to be, so delighted with her society, that he could not for any length of time endure her absence. Complaisance compelled her to humour a relation advanced in life, and also the guest of her grandfather; but the interruption he gave to her favourite inclinations, together with the extravagant eulogiums he bestowed upon her person and all she said or did, heightened, if possible, the dislike she had conceived against him from their first interview—a dislike, however, which

she did not reveal; yet not without uneasiness could she hear her father declare he thought him a man worthy of esteem.

With the utmost pain she thought of the approaching visit from his son and daughter. 'Ah! never,' said she to herself, 'ah! never, without shuddering, without horror, shall I be able to look upon the man whose ill conduct I have reason to think occasioned the death of my beloved friend.'

Within a week of the time she expected him, as she was walking one morning in that part of the forest which immediately surrounded the castle she beheld her father and D'Alembert at a little distance from her, apparently engaged in a deep and interesting discourse. Their eyes encountered her's almost at the moment she saw them; they instantly stopped; and, after conversing together for about another minute, D'Alembert entered the court, and her father advanced to her: the gloom on his brow was somewhat lessened, and a languid smile faintly illumined his features.

'Madeline,' said he, taking her hand, and walking on with her, 'D'Alembert and I have been talking of you.'

'Of me!' cried Madeline.

'Yes, we have been sketching out a plan of felicity for you.'

Madeline sighed, and looked earnestly at her father.

'A plan,' resumed he, 'which I trust will meet your approbation.'

'Explain yourself, my dearest father,' cried Madeline, 'I am all impatience.'

'To be explicit then,' said St Julian, 'D'Alembert has proposed an union between you and his son.'

'Between me and his son!' repeated Madeline, involuntarily drawing her hand from her father's, and starting back a few paces—'between me and his son!—and you approved of the proposal!—Oh! my father, is this the felicity you planned for me?—sooner, ten thousand times sooner, would I immure myself for ever within the walls of a cloister, than become the wife of D'Alembert.'

'Compose yourself,' said St Julian, 'you have no cause for the violent emotions you betray. You have always, I hope, found me, in every sense of the word, a parent: you should therefore have restrained your apprehensions, by being convinced I never would urge you to an act directly contrary to your inclinations. But whilst I give this assurance, I also declare that I will not, by rejecting every overture which may be made for your hand, sanction your attachment to an object who ought long since to have been forgotten.'

'I solemnly declare,' cried Madeline, clasping her hands together, 'that my repugnance to the union you have proposed, proceeds not entirely from the attachment you allude to.'

'From what other cause,' demanded St Julian, 'can it proceed? you cannot have conceived a dislike against a man you never saw.'

'Tis true,' replied Madeline, 'I know not the person of D'Alembert, but I am acquainted with his character,' She then briefly related all she had heard concerning him from Floretta and Agatha, the favourite and confidential servants of the Countess de Merville.

'I am shocked, I am astonished,' cried St Julian, 'at what you tell me; and with you I can readily believe, that the knowledge of his depravity accelerated the death of the mother, and occasioned that of the daughter.'

'But had I never been informed of that depravity,' resumed Madeline, 'I should have conceived an unconquerable dislike against him for his indelicacy in proposing for me so soon after his wife's death, and without being in the least degree acquainted with me.'

'I own that part of his conduct appeared reprehensible to me,' said St Julian, 'and I gave my opinion of it to his father. He attempted to justify it by saying, that it was natural so young a man, and one of so domestic a turn as his son, should soon make another choice.'

'But why let that choice devolve upon an object he had never beheld?' asked Madeline.

'Because a prepossession had been excited in her favour by the eulogiums of his wife; and he entreated his father to hasten to the castle, in order to pave the way for his addresses,' St Julian replied.

'Oh, my father,' cried Madeline, 'I trust you will not delay declaring my utter repugnance to those addresses.'

'Depend on me, my love,' he said, 'for taking the earliest opportunity of informing D'Alembert they never can be successful: your grandfather, I hope, will be equally inclined to let you reject them.'

'My grandfather!' repeated Madeline; 'was he then consulted on the subject?'

'So I understand from D'Alembert, and that he highly approved of the projected alliance: he wishes to have the fortunes of the family united.'

'The fortunes of the family!' Madeline repeated; 'and are such the considerations that sway the great world?—Ah! no wonder, if the union of fortunes, not of hearts, is alone considered, that misery, vice, and dissipation from such connections should ensue.'

'I am almost convinced,' resumed St Julian, 'that the Marquis will not attempt to control your inclinations. But, my dear Madeline, though all idea of a connection between you and D'Alembert shall on my part be relinquished, from a conviction that it never could promote your happiness, do not flatter yourself that, if a proposal came from an unexceptionable character, I would sanction a second rejection: 'tis not, be assured, from a vain pride of desiring an illustrious name to be continued to posterity, that I wish you to be married—no, 'tis from a wish of ensuring you protection when I shall be no longer able to extend it. I long to lodge my treasure in

safe and honourable hands, ere I visit that country, from whose bourn I never shall return.'

The words of her father opened a new source of disquietude to Madeline, who had flattered herself that her attachment to a single life would never be opposed: and still she tried to sooth her uneasiness by thinking, notwithstanding what he said, her father would never exert an arbitrary power over her.

They continued to walk till dinner time. At table Madeline turned with disgust from D'Alembert, whose looks expressed the utmost exultation. She withdrew almost immediately after dinner, and repaired to the garden, where she continued a considerable time uninterrupted, and deeply meditating on the conversation of the morning. At length she beheld D'Alembert approaching; and the alteration of his countenance convinced her that her father had communicated her sentiments to him.

She would have passed him in silence, but he prevented her by catching her hand.

'I came hither, Madam,' said he in a sullen voice, 'on purpose to converse with you; I cannot therefore let you depart abruptly.'

'Well, Sir,' cried Madeline, 'I am ready to hear whatever you wish to say.'

'But will you promise not to hear without regarding it?' demanded he in a gentler tone than he had before used.

'I never make promises I am not certain of fulfilling,' replied Madeline.

'Tis impossible,' said he, 'to express the mortification, the disappointment, I feel in consequence of your rejection of the proposals which I made this morning; proposals approved by your father, and also sanctioned by the Marquis. Surely,' he continued, 'you should not have rejected them, without being assured that their acceptance never could have contributed to your happiness; an assurance it is impossible you can have from your total ignorance of my son.'

'Hopes which cannot be realized, cannot be too soon suppressed,' exclaimed Madeline.

'And why, without knowing him, can you be so determined on destroying his hopes?' asked D'Alembert. 'Only see him—only hear him,—and then reject, if then you can disapprove.'

'Was your son,' said Madeline, 'all that the most romantic imagination can conceive of perfection, I would reject him.'

'You would!' exclaimed D'Alembert, dropping her hand.

'I would,' repeated Madeline.

'Did you ever hear aught against him?' demanded he, again catching her hand, and looking steadily upon her.

'Even supposing any thing could be alledged against him,' replied Madeline, wishing to evade this question, 'in the family of his

wife and mother-in-law, was it likely, do you think I should hear any thing to his prejudice?’

‘’Tis evident,’ said D’Alembert, after musing a few minutes, ‘that your heart is pre-engaged; nothing else could account for your absolute rejection of a man you never saw.’

‘Nothing else,’ repeated Madeline involuntarily, and looking in his face.

‘No! confess, therefore that what I say, is true.’

‘Well,’ cried Madeline, ‘if I do confess that my heart is devoted to another, will you drop all solicitation for your son?’

‘No, never,’ exclaimed he in a furious voice, and with an inflamed countenance.

Madeline now attempted to free her hand. ‘I insist, Sir,’ said she, ‘upon your releasing me immediately.’

‘I will, if you first promise to let my son plead his own cause on coming to the castle.’

‘Never,’ cried Madeline with vehemence, and struggling to disengage herself.

‘Are you then indeed inflexible? does that soft bosom really hide an obdurate heart? can no pity influence you to compassionate the pangs my son will feel when he hears of your rejection?’

‘I never can feel pity for the pangs of disappointed avarice and ambition,’ replied Madeline; ‘and avarice and ambition, I am convinced, alone influence your son’s addresses to me; for how can he love or admire an object whose virtues he never knew, whose form he never saw? Your persecution, Sir, has forced me to be explicit: drop it, if you wish me to conceal my opinion.’

‘Insolent girl!’ cried D’Alembert, flinging away her hand, and stamping on the ground.

A kind of terror pervaded the breast of Madeline at his violence; and she was hurrying to the castle when he overtook, and again stopped her.

‘Insolent girl!’ he repeated, grasping her hand, and looking at her with a fiend-like countenance; ‘but such is the effect which unexpected elevation ever has upon little minds, raised from a cottage to a palace. Your head grows giddy, and you think you may with impunity look down upon the rest of mankind with contempt; you imagine there’s nothing to fear;—but beware of indulging such an idea, lest too late you should find it erroneous. The pinnacle of greatness upon which you stand, already totters: beware lest by your conduct you provoke the breath which can in a moment overthrow it.’

So saying, he once more flung her hand from him; and, turning into another path, left her abruptly, so much thunderstruck by his words, that for a few minutes she had not power to move. At length recovering her faculties, she condemned herself for weakness in per-

mitting his expressions to affect her; expressions which she could only impute to malice and resentment for her rejection of his son. 'He wished,' said she, 'by alarming me, to be revenged in some degree, or else he imagined me weak, and hoped, by raising bugbears to my view, to terrify me to his purpose.'

Her contempt and dislike were both increased by these ideas; and she resolved never more, if possible, to avoid it, to listen to his particular conversation.

She hastened to the castle, and in the gallery adjoining her chamber, met her father. 'Well,' asked he, 'has D'Alembert declared his disappointment to you? he sought you I know for the purpose of doing so.'

'He has,' replied Madeline; 'and I sincerely hope for the last time.' She then enquired how her grandfather bore the rejection of his relative.

'As I expected,' answered St Julian; 'he declared his readiness to relinquish any alliance that accorded not with your inclination.'

Madeline, without repeating all D'Alembert had said, now acknowledged that she felt herself too much agitated, in consequence of his conversation, to be able to mingle in society again that evening. Her father accordingly promised to apologize for her absence below stairs; and the remainder of the evening she passed alone.



to regain some composure; let me also endeavour not to be too ready in anticipating evil.'

She felt still disinclined to sleep, yet gladly would she have closed her eyes upon the gloom of her chamber—a gloom, rendered more awful by the profound stillness of the castle, and which was calculated to inspire ideas not easily to be resisted in the present state of her mind.

In short, imaginary horrors soon began to succeed the real ones that had lately agitated her; yet scarcely was she infected by them ere she blushed from a conviction of weakness, and resolved on going to bed. She began to undress, though with a trembling hand; nor could refrain from starting as the low murmurs of the wind (which now, in the decline of autumn, frequently growled through the forest, and shook the old battlements of the castle) sounded through her chamber.

She had not proceeded far in undressing, when she was suddenly alarmed by the shaking of the tapestry which hung behind the table at which she stood. Appalled, she started back; yet at the next instant was returning, under the idea of its having only been agitated by the wind, when again she saw it raised, and could then perfectly distinguish a human form behind it: with a wild and piercing shriek she instantly fled to the door; but ere her trembling hand could withdraw the rusty bolt, she was rudely seized.

Hopeless of mercy, she attempted not to supplicate it, but closed her eyes, unwilling to behold her executioner; for that a ruffian had secreted himself in her apartment, for the purpose of robbery and murder, she could not doubt.

From agonies, which only those who have been in a situation of equal danger can imagine or describe, she was soon however relieved by the voice of D'Alembert.

'Madeline,' he cried, as he supported her upon his breast, 'revive; I come not to injure, but to entreat.'

'Oh, heavens!' said she, opening her eyes, and wildly gazing on him, 'do I hear, do I behold aright?'

'Be composed,' exclaimed he, 'I again entreat you; you have nothing to fear.'

'Nothing to fear!' repeated Madeline as she disengaged herself from him, 'if I have nothing to fear, I have at least much to be offended at. Whence this intrusion, Sir?—Is it right, is it honourable, to steal like a midnight assassin to my chamber?'

'You yourself have compelled me to this conduct,' he replied; 'you refused to hear me, and consequently forced me to devise a scheme to make you listen—'

'To make me listen!' repeated Madeline with haughtiness; 'no, Sir,—no scheme, no stratagem shall effect that purpose. Begone!'

cried she, laying her hand upon the door, 'if you wish to avoid the punishment your temerity deserves.'

'Suppress this haughtiness,' said he, seizing her hands, and dragging her from the door ere she had power to open it; 'believe me, like your threats, it is unavailing. Hear me you must—hear me you shall: nay, more, you shall comply with what I desire.'

'Never!' exclaimed Madeline in a resolute voice, and struggling to free herself.

'Then you shall tremble for the safety of a father,' cried D'Alembert.

Madeline trembled; her heart grew cold; she ceased her struggles, and looked with mingled terror and melancholy upon him.

'Yes; I repeat,' said he, 'you shall tremble for the safety of a father: I am the minister of fate to him; and only your acceptance of the proposals of my son can save him from that which now hangs over him.'

'What fate that is not happy can he have provoked?' asked Madeline in a faint voice.

'I will not shock your ear,' he replied, 'by divulging to you the one he merits; be satisfied, however, that all I know concerning him, and with the most important events of his life I am acquainted, shall be carefully concealed, if you swear solemnly, swear this minute to accept the hand of my son.'

'No,' cried Madeline, after a moment's consideration, during which an idea struck her, that his insinuations against her father might be false, invented merely for the purpose of terrifying her into a promise which could not afterwards be cancelled, 'I will not swear; I will not take an oath my soul revolts against fulfilling.'

'You are determined then,' said D'Alembert with a forced calmness, while an ashy paleness stole upon his cheek.

'Unalterably determined,' replied Madeline.

'But your resolution could be shaken, if you believed my allegations against your father.'

'I trust I never shall have reason to believe them,' said Madeline.

'Unhappy girl! dearly will you pay for your want of faith in me.'

As he spoke, he put his hand into his bosom, and drew forth a small dagger.

Madeline recoiled a few paces, and involuntarily dropped upon her knees. 'Oh, D'Alembert!' cried she with a quivering lip, 'have mercy upon your own soul, and spare me!'

'Be not alarmed,' said he, 'I mean not to harm you; the blood of innocence shall not again, at least by my means, pollute this dagger: receive it,' continued he, 'as a present for your father; when he looks upon it, you will be convinced I spoke but truth this night.'

'Oh! in pity tell me,' said Madeline with clasped hands, 'what you know concerning him, and terminate the horrors of suspense.'

'No; the events of his life will come better from himself; events, which his knowing this dagger comes from me, will convince him I am acquainted with; events, which shall be buried in oblivion, if you remain no longer inflexible. To-morrow I shall again enquire your determination; if unpropitious, the long-suspended sword of justice shall at length strike. Farewell! your own obstinacy has provoked your present pain.'

So saying, he abruptly quitted the chamber, notwithstanding the entreaties of Madeline to remain a few minutes longer, and explain his terrifying and mysterious language.

Left to the dreadful solitude of her chamber, she continued a considerable time longer upon her knees, with her eyes fixed upon the dagger, which lay at a little distance from her. At length, slowly rising, she advanced to it, and taking it up, brought it to the light to examine it; the hilt was curiously studded with precious stones, but the blade was almost entirely covered with rust.

'He said,' cried Madeline in a hollow voice, 'that the blood of innocence polluted it. Oh, God!' continued she, letting it drop with horror from her, 'in whose hand was it clenched at that fearful moment!'

The suspicions, which had agitated her on her first entrance into the castle, again rushed upon her mind; but when nearly sinking beneath them, the assurance her father had given her of being utterly unconcerned in the fate of Lord Philippe recurred to her recollection, and cheered her fainting heart. 'He said he was innocent,' exclaimed she, 'and to doubt his truth were impious; what then have I to fear from the threats of D'Alembert?'

But the calm produced by this idea was of short duration. Though assured of his innocence relative to Lord Philippe, she recollected she had never received an assurance of his being equally guiltless with regard to every other being; she recollected also the words of her departed friend, that the characters of his life were marked by horror, and stained with blood; and she shuddered at the too probable supposition of his having been involved in some deed as dreadful as that which she at first suspected—a deed with which it was evident D'Alembert was too well acquainted.

'Oh, let me then no longer hesitate how to act,' exclaimed she,— 'let me no longer delay devoting myself to save my father! and yet,' continued she, after the reflection of a minute, 'how am I convinced that my father is in the power of D'Alembert? may he not have said so merely for the purpose of frightening me into compliance with his wishes? should I not therefore be rash in the extreme if I doomed myself to misery without a conviction that my father's preservation depended on my doing so? But how can I doubt his veracity,' proceeded she, wildly starting from the chair on which she had flung herself, 'how imagine he would ever make

allegations he could not support? and yet, perhaps, he made them under the idea that I would never enquire into their truth: but shocked, appalled at the first intimation of danger to my father, promise at once to become the wife of his son: I will not then make that promise, till assured there is a necessity for doing so.'

But how was she to receive this assurance? how—without enquiring from her father concerning the former events of his life? and, in making those enquiries, what painful recollections might not be awakened? what horrible fears might not be suggested?

'Oh, God!' cried she, kneeling upon the ground, half-distracted with her incertitude how to act, 'teach me what I ought to do! Oh, let me not, in trying to avoid misery myself, draw misery upon him for whom I would willingly lay down my life.'

The night passed away in a state of wretchedness which cannot be described, and the morning surprised her still undetermined. The bustle of the rising domestics at length made her recall her scattered thoughts, and recollect the necessity there was for appearing composed. She accordingly adjusted her hair, put on a morning-dress, and seated herself at a window with a book. Never was dissimulation so painful; agonized by conflicting terrors, scarcely could she prevent herself from traversing her room with a distracted step.

At the usual hour, a servant came to inform her breakfast was ready. Madeline desired her to bring up a cup of coffee as she was rather indisposed; but charged her, at the same time, not to alarm the Marquis or her father. As soon as she was gone, Madeline took up the dagger, which the skirt of her robe had concealed, and went into her dressing-room, with an intention of locking it up in a cabinet; resolving, in the course of the morning, to have another conversation with D'Alembert, and determine by that how she should act.

She had just unlocked the cabinet, when she felt her arm suddenly grasped. She started; and, turning with quickness, beheld her father. The dagger instantly dropped from her trembling hand; and, recoiling a few paces, she stood motionless, gazing alternately at it and St Julian.

With the quickness of lightning he snatched it from the ground: but scarcely had his eye glanced on it, ere he let it fall; and, turning with a death-like countenance to her, demanded, in a faltering voice—from whence, or from whom she had got it?

'From D'Alembert,' replied the almost fainting Madeline.

'From him!' repeated St Julian, striking his breast, and starting; 'Oh, heavens! by what means did it come into his possession?'

'I know not,' said Madeline.

'But you know the fearful story with which it is connected.'

'Oh, my father!' cried Madeline, 'do not question me.'

'This instant,' exclaimed he in a frantic manner, advancing to her, and grasping her hands, 'declare what D'Alembert said; without hesitation, without equivocation, let me know all he told you.'

'Oh, my father!' said Madeline sinking on her knees, 'do not be thus agitated.'

'Once more,' cried he, 'I command you to tell me all that passed between you and D'Alembert; if you longer delay, you will work me up to frenzy.'

Thus urged, Madeline, in scarcely intelligible accents, and still kneeling, revealed the dreadful conversation. After she had concluded, St Julian continued some minutes silent, immoveable, and in an attitude of horror which almost froze her heart. He then knelt beside her; and, wrapping his arms round her, strained her in convulsive agitation to his breast, and leaned his head upon her shoulder.

At length, raising it, he looked up to heaven—'Almighty God!' he cried, 'I bend before thy will; thy chastisement is just, though dreadful; and vain are the arts by which we would elude it. The hour of retribution, though sometimes delayed, is never forgotten. Oh, my child! dear pledge of a tender, though disastrous love! sweet image of the most lovely and injured of women! conscious that I merited the vengeance of Heaven, not on my own account, but thine, did I wish to ward off the blow of justice; I wished to save thy gentle nature from the bitter pangs of seeing thy father dragged to torture, and the yet bitterer pangs of knowing he deserved it. But that wish is frustrated at the very time when its frustration was least expected; no doubt for the wisest purposes, to prove to mankind that guilt can never hope for lasting concealment. How my unfortunate story became known to D'Alembert, I cannot conceive; but that it is, that fatal instrument of death too plainly proves. Yes, he spoke truth when he said the blood of innocence had polluted it; it did, and now cries aloud for mine.'

'Oh, horror!' groaned Madeline.

'In mercy, in pity to me,' exclaimed St Julian, again straining her to his bosom, 'try to compose your feelings! Oh, let me not have the excruciating misery of thinking I destroyed my child: exert your resolution, my Madeline, and live to reconcile mankind, by your virtues, to the memory of your father.'

'But though D'Alembert,' cried Madeline, whose recollection sudden horror had for a few minutes suspended, 'is acquainted with your story, there is a method,' she continued, rising from the floor, 'to prevail on him to conceal it.'

'A method which I will never suffer you to adopt,' exclaimed St Julian; 'Oh, never shall my child be sacrificed to save my life.'

'Ah, little do you know the soul of your child, if you suppose she will leave untried any expedient that may save you. Hear her

solemnly swear,' cried she, again kneeling, 'by that Being she worships—by the spirit of her mother—by all that is holy in his sight, to become the wife of young D'Alembert, if by doing so she can bind his father to inviolable secrecy.'

'My inestimable child!' said St Julian, raising and embracing her; 'alas! what a wretch am I to think I have doomed you to misery!'

'No,' cried Madeline, 'you have not; my fate cannot be miserable if I know it has mitigated your's.'

'I will no longer delay revealing my sad story to you,' said St Julian; 'perhaps after hearing it, some other expedient than a marriage with D'Alembert may strike you for preserving me.'

'You expect, no doubt,' resumed he after he had secured the doors, and seated himself by her, 'a tale of horrors; alas! that expectation will be but too dreadfully fulfilled!'



extremely ill he could not leave his room; and therefore requested, as the length of his confinement was uncertain, I would no longer delay returning home on his account.

Notwithstanding this request, notwithstanding my strong anxiety, my ardent wishes to be again in that dear home, which contained a being more precious to me than existence, I could not bear the idea of departing, till assured he was at least out of danger.

I wrote to this purpose, and entreated to hear from him as soon as possible. The day wore away, however, without any other tidings from the castle. As I sat, at its close, in a melancholy manner in my little chamber, ruminating over past scenes, and sometimes trying to cheer my heart by anticipating the happiness I should experience in again folding my Geraldine to it, I was suddenly startled by a loud knock at the cottage-door. Full of the idea of receiving a letter from the castle, I was rushing all impatience from the room, when the sound of a strange voice arrested my steps, and I was soon convinced that the man whom my host admitted had no business with me.

I therefore returned to my seat, and was again sinking into a reverie, when a few words from the next room, which was only divided from mine by a thin partition, completely roused me, and made me, I may say, become all ear.

“Well, Claude,” asked my host in a familiar voice, “what journey have you been taking this time?”

“The old one,” replied Claude; “I have been to see my godfather who lives upon the Alps; he always makes me a handsome present when I visit him.”

“So he should, I am sure,” said his companion; “visiting him must be plaguy troublesome, considering the long and dangerous way you have to go.”

“Who do you think I met travelling that way this morning?” cried Claude.

“I am sure ’tis impossible for me to guess,” replied Josephé, the name of my host.

“No other than our young Lord the Marquis of Montmorenci’s son,” said Claude, “posting away as if the devil was at his heels.”

“Our young Lord!” repeated Josephé in a tone of astonishment, “no, I’ll be sworn you did not meet him; why, man, he is at this very moment confined to his room by a violent illness.”

“Well or ill, I say I met him,” vociferated Claude, as if angry at being doubted, “and your brother Lafroy along with him.”

“Your eyes certainly deceived you,” said Josephé; “what in the name of wonder should induce him to report he was ill except he really was so, or bring him the way you said you met him.”

“I certainly cannot assign a reason for his pretending illness,” replied Claude; “but I can give a very sufficient one for his journey to the Alps; has Lafroy never informed you?”

“No, never.”

“Ah, he is a close dog; he could have told you a great deal if he had had a mind, for he is quite in the confidence of his master. But to my story; you must know near the cottage of my godfather there stands a fine old castle, now inhabited by an Irishman of distinction, who was driven from his own country by some troubles in the state. On the two daughters of this nobleman the daughter of my godfather attends. About five months ago I was at his cottage. One evening, as the sun was setting, I attended him to collect his flocks which fed upon the heights surrounding the castle, and pen them for the night. While thus employed, from the court of the castle the most enchanting music stole upon mine ear: delighted with the sounds, I instantly paused, and turned to the place from whence they proceeded.

“‘Tis the two young ladies you hear,’ said my companion; ‘they both sing, and play upon the lute divinely; it often does my old heart good to hear them.’

“‘Lord,’ cried I, ‘I wish I could have a peep at them.’

“‘You may easily gratify that wish,’ replied he, ‘the wall about the court is broke in many places.’

“I instantly flew to it, and beheld two of the most lovely creatures imagination can conceive. After feasting my eyes some minutes, I carelessly cast them upon two gentlemen who sat beside them; guess the astonishment of that moment when I discovered one of those gentlemen to be the Count St Julian.”

“I directly hastened to my godfather; informed him of the discovery I had made; and enquired from him whether he knew what had brought the Count to the castle.”

“He smiled, and shook his head significantly. ‘Chance,’ said he, ‘first brought him to it, and inclination made him afterwards repeat the visit; he is a great friend to the family; he has lately provided a husband for the younger daughter.’

“‘He was secure of the eldest himself then I suppose,’ said I; ‘for faith I think no man of any feeling could give up one handsome girl till sure of another to supply her place.’

“My godfather smiled; and some expressions dropped from him which excited my curiosity: but I questioned him in vain; like your brother Lafroy, he was a close codger, and refused to gratify me. I then determined to apply to his daughter: she came generally every morning to pay her duty to him. If a real woman, said I to myself, she will be glad of an opportunity to communicate a secret. I accordingly watched for her the next day: she came as I expected; but, instead of letting her enter the cottage, I prevailed on her to

take a walk with me. I soon introduced the subject I wished to converse about.

““Your father, my dear,’ said I, ‘informs me that my Lord is a great friend to the family you live with.’

““‘Ah, Mr Claude,’ cried she, ‘those who imagine he is a friend to the family are sadly mistaken; it would have been a happy thing he had never entered it.’

““‘Why, my soul,’ asked I, ‘has he stole away the heart of one of the young ladies?’

““‘She shook her head;—‘It does not become me to tell family secrets.’

““‘No, to be sure,’ said I, ‘not to strangers; but to a person you know so well as you do me, there is not the least harm in the world in telling them.’

““‘Ah, if you could but make me believe that, I could tell you something would astonish you.’

““‘When a woman once begins to waver, we are sure of our point: I soon prevailed on my little companion to open her whole budget.’

““‘Tis now some months,’ said she, ‘since the Count St Julian first entered Lord Dunlere’s castle. Returning from Italy, he met with an accident near it which induced my Lord to offer him a lodging till able to continue his journey. The moment he and my Lady Geraldine beheld each other, they were mutually smitten; and, in consequence of this attachment, they both devised a thousand excuses for his staying in the castle long after he was expected to leave it. At length he departed. Never shall I forget the wailing and weeping his going occasioned; my Lady Geraldine became but the shadow of herself, and wandered about like a ghost.

““‘One morning she called me into her chamber; and, after locking her door, “My dear Blanche,” said she with a flood of tears, “I am now going to place the greatest confidence in you; a confidence which must convince you I think you a prudent, sensible, clever girl, one quite above the lower class.”

““‘I was quite confused by her praises, and could only courtesy, and say I hoped she never would have reason to repent any confidence she reposed in me.

““‘She then proceeded to say that the Count St Julian had not only engaged her affections, but injured her honour; and that she was now in a situation that must soon expose her to open disgrace.

““‘“I dare not tell my father or my sister,” cried she; “counsel me therefore, my dearest girl, how to act; though, alas! I have little hope that any advice will benefit me, as the silence of the Count since his departure inclines me to believe he will never fulfil his promises of marriage.”

““‘“You must try him, Ma’am,” said I as soon as I had recovered from my astonishment, and collected my wits together; “write him

one of the most cutting letters you can think of; and tell him you expect, as a man and a gentleman, he will make you immediate reparation for his injuries, by giving you his hand in marriage."

"She accordingly wrote a letter to this purpose; and, at the expected time, an answer arrived, in which he informed her he still loved her to distraction; but that as to marriage, it was quite out of the question on account of his father, who would, he knew, if he so united himself, deprive him of all provision. He bid her, however, keep up her spirits, adding he would soon be at the castle; and had devised a scheme for preserving her from the indignation of her father, should her situation be discovered to him.

"Well, you may be convinced, we waited most impatiently for his arrival. He came soon after the receipt of his letter, accompanied by a very fine young man, the same you saw with him in the court last night; and my young lady was all anxiety till the scheme he had hinted at was disclosed to her. A villainous scheme, you will say,—no other than to have a marriage made up between my young lady and Monsieur Lausane, his companion.

"He is a natural son of my father's," said he to my lady; for I was in a closet adjoining the chamber in which they sat, and consequently heard all their conversation; "and I mean, as soon as I come into possession of my paternal fortune, to make a handsome provision for him; this I shall mention to the Earl as a means of inducing him to consent to your union with him—an union, by which you will be guarded against your father's indignation should he ever discover our connection, as he must then know the dreadful consequences that would attend its exposure;—an union also, which will give me a pretext, from our relationship, of visiting you much oftener than I could otherwise do."

"It was long, however, ere he could prevail on my poor lady to agree to his proposal; and nothing at last could have extorted her consent to it, but the hope of being shielded by her marriage from the rage of her father. Her consent once obtained, every thing was soon settled according to the Count's wishes. It was with difficulty,' continued Blanche, 'I could prevail on myself to keep what I knew a secret from Monsieur Lausane; it grieved my very heart and soul to think so fine a young man should be so imposed upon.'

"But, Blanche,' said I, 'did you not say that Lady Geraldine was in a certain situation, and will not a premature birth open the eyes of her husband to the deceit that has been practised on him?'

"Oh, we have guarded against all that,' replied she; 'about the time she expects to be confined, the Count St Julian is to feign illness at the castle of Montmorenci, and write to his brother to pay him a visit. He is then to keep him there till my lady is recovered, and the child sent out of the way, whom he has promised to provide for.'"

'How shall I describe the feelings that rose in my soul,' proceeded St Julian, 'as I listened to this horrible narrative? Not a doubt could I entertain of its authenticity; every recollected circumstance—the sudden friendship of my brother, notwithstanding the prejudices instilled into his mind against me by his father—the ready compliance of Lady Geraldine with my wishes, notwithstanding the short time we had been acquainted, and her knowing that I was an outcast from the house which should have sheltered me,—altogether proved that I was a dupe to the most perfidious art.

'Yes,' I exclaimed within myself, 'my credulous nature has been imposed upon; and those whom I most loved, most trusted, have undone me. In the language of a poet of a sister country I might have said—

*'Two, two such,  
 (Oh! there's no further name), two such to me,  
 To me, who lock'd my soul within your breast,  
 Had no desire, no joy, no life, but you.  
 I had no use,  
 No fruit of all, but you;—a friend and mistress  
 Was all the world could give. Oh!—  
 how could you betray  
 This tender heart, which, with an instant fondness,  
 Lay lull'd between your bosom, and there slept  
 Secure of injur'd faith. I can forgive  
 A foe, but not a mistress and a friend;  
 Treason is there in its most horrid shape  
 Where trust is greatest, and the soul resign'd  
 Is stabb'd by her own guards.'*

'I could only restrain myself till the narrative was concluded. The tempest in my bosom then broke forth, and, rushing into the next room, with the gripe, the fury of a lion, I seized the narrator, and bid him, as he valued his existence, instantly prove or disprove the truth of his assertions.

'“By what right,” cried he, “do you desire this?”

'“By the right of Lausane,” vociferated I, in a voice of thunder.

'“Lausane!” repeated he, looking steadily upon me; “ah! 'tis but too true; I now recollect your features. Well, it can't be help'd; the mischief is out, and there's an end of it. If it will give you any satisfaction, master, I will solemnly swear, that what I have told my friend Josephe here, I heard from Blanche, and she, I am sure, would not utter a falsehood; people seldom commit a sin without intending to derive some benefit from it; and what could accrue to her by defaming her mistress? I will also swear, that I met your brother this morning ascending the Alps; and that, while I was at the cottage of my godfather, Blanche told me that you had left

home, and that her lady had lain in two days after your departure of a fine boy, who had been removed by her to a neighbouring cottage."

"Ere I go in quest of vengeance," I cried, relinquishing my hold, "I will ascertain whether the Count has left the castle."

I muffled myself up in a large cloak, and directly hastened to it. I thought my heart would have burst my bosom while waiting to have my enquiry answered.

"My young Lord," said the porter, "departed this morning, attended but by one servant; where he is gone, or when he will return is not known."

"Never will he return to these walls, exclaimed I inwardly as I turned from them.

I re-entered the cottage merely to procure a horse from Josephe, in order to expedite my journey to the foot of the Alps; he tried to make me delay it, and endeavoured to allay my fury; I cursed him for the effort.

"You only aggravate the poor gentleman's feelings," said Claude to him; "Lord! who can wonder at his being enraged at the vile imposition practised upon him? for my part, I think him so injured, that I am determined he shall have my services, if he will accept them, to the last drop of my blood; I would assist him in punishing his perfidious brother."

I extended my hand. "I accept your proffered services," cried I; "not to punish my deceiver, but to trace out for me every minute particular of his guilt, ere my vengeance falls upon him."

He accordingly accompanied me to the Alps. We travelled with almost incredible expedition, and the second evening I found myself near that spot which but the day before I had thought of as a paradise. Unable to support the sight of it, I stopped, and, seating myself in the cavity of a rock, desired Claude to proceed, and gather what particulars he could from Blanche concerning the visit of the Count; charging him, at the same time, carefully to conceal my return from her, also my knowledge of the base deceit which had been practised on me, lest her regard for her mistress should make her inform her of the whole, and thus, in all probability, by putting her and my betrayer upon their guard, baffle the revenge I meant to take—a revenge which to hear of will make you tremble! I resolved on murdering my brother! after which it was my determination to hasten to the castle, acquaint the Earl with the baseness of his daughter, and terminate my existence in her sight.

To his own ingenuity I left Claude to account for his unexpected return to the Alps; the minutes seemed hours till he came back to me.

"At length he appeared, and with a face full of importance—"Well, master," said he, "I have seen Blanche. I shall not tire you

by mentioning the excuses I made to her for my sudden appearance; suffice it to say, they were received in the manner I wished."

"The Count," cried I impatiently.

"Arrived a few hours ago," said he, "and is now in the chamber of Lady Geraldine, to which he was privately conducted by Blanche, who, in consequence of her lady's letter, was on the watch for him.

"She assigned a reason for what appeared so strange to us, namely, his having requested you to return home. He told Lady Geraldine he did so, fearful that, if you longer continued in the vicinity of Montmorenci Castle, you would discover his absence from it, and well knowing that here he could be concealed from you. He is now about leaving her for the night."

"And whither does he go?" cried I, starting from my seat.

"He is to lodge in the cottage where his child is," replied Claude; "it stands upon yonder acclivity, and this is the way to it."

"Enough," said I, "retire."

He began to entreat permission to remain with me, but I hastily interrupted him. "I must not be opposed," cried I; "my conversation with my brother will not admit of witnesses. Farewell! retire to repose, and accept of my thanks and purse for your services."

"Neither, master," replied he; "what I did was not from interested motives, but a pure wish of having perfidy punished."

I flung away the purse he had rejected, and motioned him to depart.

The moment he was out of sight, I drew forth a dagger with which I always travelled, the one which the father of Elvira had given me, and the same with which I had attempted my life in the forest of Montmorenci; and, stationing myself behind a projecting fragment of rock, impatiently watched for my destined victim. The place in which I stood, seemed particularly adapted for a scene of horror: it was a little gloomy vale, sunk between stupendous mountains, bleak and bare of vegetation, crowned with snow, and full of frightful cavities, through which the wind grumbled with a dreadful violence. At last Lord Philippe appeared. Notwithstanding the detestation with which I then regarded him, never had he appeared so interesting to me; his pace was mournful and slow; and ever and anon he paused, and looked back, as if, inspired by some prophetic spirit, he was bidding what he knew would be a last adieu to the mansion he had quitted. As he drew near, I saw his cheek was pale, and the traces of tears upon it:—tears, said I, which he has shed over his Geraldine, at the relation of the dangers she has passed.

When he was within a yard of my concealment, I sprung out. He started back astonished, and surveyed me for a minute with

that kind of expression which seemed to say he could scarcely credit the evidence of his eyes; then approaching me with extended arms, he exclaimed, "Ah, my brother! what—"

'I interrupted him: "I disclaim the title," cried I, stepping up to him, and rudely seizing his arm; "villain! I am well acquainted with thy perfidy; and this to thy heart to reward thee for it!"'

Madeline at those words instinctively caught hold of her father. She panted for breath, and her changing colour shewed her strong emotions.

'My fears were but too just,' said St Julian; 'I was almost convinced my tale of horror would overcome your gentle nature.'

'No, no,' cried Madeline, after the pause of a few minutes, 'my fortitude will not again droop, for I have now surely heard the worst; go on therefore, my dearest father.'

'The unhappy Philippe instantly fell,' resumed St Julian; 'he writhed for a moment in agony, and then expired with a deep groan.'

'There is something dreadful in the sight of human blood to a heart not entirely callous. As his blood flowed at my feet, a faintness stole over me, and I leaned for support against the projecting fragment which had before concealed me. The scene in the forest of Montmorenci rushed upon my recollection. "He could not bear to behold my blood," said I, "and yet I spilled his without mercy!—Mercy!" repeated I starting, "what mercy should I have extended to him who preserved my life but to entail dishonour upon it? I have taken but a just revenge," continued I; and my spirits were re-animated by the idea.

'Casting a look of savage triumph upon the body, I darted across it, and fled almost with the velocity of lightning towards the castle. As I was entering the court, I met a holy man, who lived in a neighbouring monastery, the confessor of the Earl and his family, coming out; I would have pushed by him, but he caught my arm.

' "Alas, my son!" said he, in an accent of pity, "your disordered looks too plainly prove your knowledge of the sad event which has happened in the castle during your absence. How unfortunate that you could not be found yesterday when your brother wrote to inform you of it, and request your company hither; your presence might have mitigated his transports."

'A convulsive laugh broke from me at the idea of deception having also been practised upon the old man; yet, at the next instant, it struck me as something strange that he should know of my brother's visit to the castle.

' "You speak enigmatically, holy father," said I; "I know nothing of any letter my brother wrote, nor of any sad event that—"

'I suddenly paused;—the dying groan of Philippe again, methought, sounded in my ear, and stopped my utterance.

“If the meaning of my words is incomprehensible,” said the monk, regarding me with mingled horror and surprise, “so is also the meaning of your looks: explain what has disordered you.”

“First say,” cried I, “what you know about my brother’s visit to the castle; explain the reason of it.”

“Concealment is no longer necessary,” said he; “the Count came to the castle to receive the last sigh of his wife.”

“His wife!” repeated I, starting and staring wildly.

“Yes, the lovely Elenora.”

“Elenora the wife of Philippe! no, ’tis not to be believed,” exclaimed I; “I see”—endeavouring to shake him from me—“you are but a sanctified villain, and in league with the rest to deceive me!”

“I know not what you mean,” said he; “I know nothing of any deceit that has been practised on you. Elenora was, by the holy cross I swear,” and he touched that which hung beside him, “the wife of your brother.”

“I could no longer doubt his truth; a confused idea of treachery, of a snare having been spread to involve my unhappy brother and self in destruction, darted into my mind; all hell seemed opening to my view; I grew giddy, and would have fallen, but for the supporting arm of the monk.

“You are ill,” said he; “let me call for assistance.”

“No,” replied I, exerting myself, “I am now better. Tell me, ere I enter the castle, what has happened since my departure from it; and why the marriage of the Count with Elenora was concealed from me.”

“It never was the wish of your brother to have it concealed from you,” said the monk, sitting down on the pavement, where I had seated myself unable to stand.

“’Tis now near a twelvemonth,” continued he, “since it took place; the ceremony was performed by me. The accident which introduced your brother to the castle you already know: almost from the first moment he and Lady Elenora beheld each other, they became mutually enamoured; the watchful eyes of a parent easily discovered their attachment; and the Earl soon demanded an explanation of your brother’s intentions.

“It was his most ardent wish, the Count said, to be united to Lady Elenora; but it was a wish, he candidly confessed, which he durst not reveal to his father, whose avarice and ambition he knew, notwithstanding his extravagant partiality for him, would forbid his union with any one who could not increase the consequence, and add to the opulence of his house.

“Upon hearing this, the Earl, though gently, blamed him for having encouraged a tenderness for his daughter, and explicitly desired him to leave the castle. The Count, instead of promising to

do so, fell at his feet, and besought him not to banish him from the woman he adored. 'Suffer me to marry her', cried he, 'and whilst my father lives to conceal my marriage.'

'The pride and rectitude of the Earl for a long time resisted this entreaty; but the repeated solicitations of the half-distracted St Julian, and the tears of his daughter, at length extorted a consent to their union.

'On St Julian's return to the habitation of his father, he met with you. Soon after that meeting, he planned a scheme for again visiting his lovely bride; you were the companion of his journey. Ere your appearance at the castle, the family were apprized of your intended visit and connection with him.

'In his letter to the Earl, acquainting him with those particulars, he also said—'Against the loveliness of your Elenora I have guarded my Lausane, by informing him she was already engaged; but to the beauties of Geraldine I hope he will be as susceptible, as I wish her to be to his merits.'

'You came; and his wishes were accomplished by the attachment that grew between you.

'The Count mentioned to Lord Dunlere his intention of revealing his marriage to you; but the Earl opposed it. A long intercourse with the world had rendered him suspicious; and he feared your knowing of the affair, lest you should betray it to the Marquis, from a hope of benefiting by the resentment you would excite against your brother: 'and little pleasure,' added he, 'should I derive from having one daughter enriched at the expence of the other.'

'Though the Count would not act in opposition to him, he resented the suspicion he harboured of you. 'In doubting the honour of Lausane,' said he, 'you are guilty of the greatest injustice; no nature can be more noble, more pure than his; and I am confident he would sooner lose his life than harm me.'

'Oh, Philippe!' I groaned aloud.

The monk looked earnestly at me. "You are ill my son," said he.

'Dear father," cried I, "do not mind me; I am all impatience for you to go on."

'About the time you were married to Lady Geraldine, the Count beheld a prospect of an increase to his felicity; Elenora was with child. In pursuance of the Earl's advice, it was settled that when the period for her confinement arrived, your brother, pretending illness, should invite you to see him, and keep you away till she was recovered. It was also settled, that the child should be nursed at a neighbouring cottage, and, when weaned, be brought back to the castle as the deserted orphan of some poor peasant.

'About ten days ago, almost immediately after your departure, Elenora lay in of a lovely boy. She continued as well as could be

expected for a few days; a violent fever then seized her, and in a short time her life was despaired of. She retained her senses, and, sensible of her danger, begged her husband might be sent for, that she might have the pleasure of presenting her child to him, and breathing her last sigh in his arms.

“An express was accordingly dispatched; Geraldine and I met him upon his arrival; on not seeing you, as she expected, with him, she wildly demanded where you were. He replied, that the moment he had finished perusing the Earl’s letter, he had sent it to you with a few lines, imploring your pardon for having had any concealment from you, and requesting your immediate attendance; but, to his great mortification, you were absent from the cottage; nor did the owner of it expect you back for a considerable time, as you had told him, he said, that you were going out upon a long ramble; to wait for your return was therefore, in his situation, impossible.

“He was conducted to the chamber of his Elenora; the agonies of death had already seized her; and he arrived but in time to receive the last sigh of her fleeting spirit. She has been dead some hours, but it is only a few minutes ago since he could be torn from her remains; nor could he then have been forced from them, but by the mention of his child; he is gone to weep over the poor babe, and I am now about following him.”

“You will wonder, no doubt, my dearest Madeline, how I could listen with calmness to this recital; you will wonder that I did not start into instant madness, and with a desperate hand, terminate my wretched existence; but horror had frozen up my blood, and suspended every faculty; my silence astonished the monk, and he looked steadily at me. At length I spoke—“Father,” said I, in a hollow voice, “do you not believe that evil spirits are sometimes let loose upon this world, to plague the sons of men, and tempt them to destruction?”

“Heaven forbid I should think so,” he replied; “the Almighty has declared his creatures never shall be tempted beyond their strength; ’tis not the ministers of darkness, but their own impetuous passions which hurry them to destruction.”

“I started up; “farewell!” I cried; “remember me in your prayers, and bid Geraldine not forget me in her orisons.”

“Whither are you going?” said he.

“To join my brother,” replied I.

“No doubt I looked wild. He seized my arm—

“Your brother!” repeated he.

“Yes, to accompany his soul in its flight from this world.—His soul!” I repeated, starting and shrieking aloud with agony. “Oh, no! heaven opens to receive his spirit, but the deepest abyss in hell now yawns for mine!”

“Some dreadful mystery lurks beneath those words,” cried he; “tell me, my son, what has distressed you?”

“To tell you my distress is useless, since you cannot relieve it.”

“Though not able to remove, I might at least be able to mitigate it,” said he.

“No; except you could re-animate the dead;—except you could raise Philippe from the bloody turf, and bid him live again!”

‘I tried to disengage myself, but he held me fast: in the conflict my strength and senses failed, and I fell fainting to the earth.

‘When I recovered, I found myself in the hall of the castle, supported by my wife and the monk, and surrounded by the domestics, amidst whom the Earl stood. The minute I regained my senses, the monk dismissed the servants, and none remained with me but Geraldine, her father, and himself.

‘He then besought me to reveal the cause of my distress. Geraldine and the Earl joined in his supplication. I raised my head from his shoulder, and withdrew myself from the arms of my wife. I knelt down; the fury of my soul had subsided.—

‘“Oh! my friends,” I cried, while tears gushed from me, “I am unworthy of your tenderness—I am unworthy of the light of heaven—I am the destroyer of your peace—the murderer of my brother!”

‘“Impossible!” cried Geraldine, whilst the deadly paleness of her cheek proved that her heart felt not the doubt her tongue implied.

‘“He raves,” said the Earl.

‘“Alas!” exclaimed the monk, “I fear he utters a fatal truth. Be explicit,” continued he, laying his hand upon my head, “and sport not with the feelings of your friends.”

‘He raised me to a seat. He again urged me to speak; and in faltering accents I began my tale of horror. As I ended it, Geraldine dropped, to all appearance lifeless, at my feet. I threw myself beside her. “Oh, Philippe!” I cried, “is the life of my wife required as an expiation of my crime?”

‘Her wretched father hung over her.—“She dies!” said he; “childless and forlorn I am doomed to descend to the grave!”

‘The monk was alone collected; he raised her from the ground, and chafed her hands and temples; in a few minutes she shewed signs of returning life. At length she opened her eyes: I was the first object they fell upon. “Unhappy man!” she sighed, “how could you doubt me?”

‘“Thus humbly kneeling, let me implore forgiveness for doing so,” said I. “Oh! amply, amply shall you be avenged; I fly this instant to throw myself into the arms of offended justice; and, by an ignominious death, atone for my wrongs to you and Philippe.”

‘“And destroy your wife and her unborn infant,” cried she.

‘This was the first time I had heard there was a prospect of my

becoming a father; an idea of the felicity which but a few days before I should have received from such an intimation rushed upon my mind; and I sunk groaning to the earth at the contrast I now drew between it and my present feelings.

“Do not, by yielding to this wretchedness,” said the monk, “aggravate the misery of your wife and her father; ’tis the guilty heart, not the guilty hand, my son,” proceeded he, trying to compose my mind, “which merits the vengeance of heaven; your hand, not your heart, is guilty: the vilest arts could alone have turned it against your brother; and upon the contriver of such diabolical schemes, his blood must certainly rest; compose yourself, therefore, and you may again experience some degree of happiness.”

“I started up; “repeat that word no more,” cried I with fierceness; “happiness and I must henceforth be as distant from each other as heaven and hell.”

“Promise,” said Geraldine kneeling before me, and laying her cold and trembling hands upon me, “promise that you will be guided by the holy father, and try to save a life upon which mine depends.”

“I snatched her to my breast. “And can you wish to have the being saved,” I asked, “who doubted your purity?—Ah! surely the severest punishment is not more than he merits for having done so: yet, as you desire, he will act; here my friends,” I continued, relinquishing her, “I stand, the veriest wretch upon earth; death would be a release from torture; but do with me as you please; as you wish, I will either try to live, or prepare to die.”

“My son,” said the monk, “you must retire immediately to your chamber: night draws on apace; as soon as it is dark, I will repair to you, and inform you of the plan I have conceived for your avoiding the treachery by which I fear you are surrounded.”

“May I not accompany him?” said Geraldine, catching my hand as he was leading me from the room.

“No; I wish for your presence in order to consult with you as to the best mode of securing his safety.” This reason for preventing her attendance conquered all opposition.

“I shall not dwell upon the minutes I passed alone. The monk came according to his promise as soon as it was dark; he opened the door softly, and held a glimmering lamp in his hand. “Follow me, my son,” said he.

“I implicitly obeyed, and pursued his cautious steps through winding passages, and down innumerable descents of steps. At length we stopped, and I found myself in a spacious and gloomy vault.

“Have you changed your mind,” demanded I, after looking round me for a minute; “have you at last thought me deserving of punishment, and brought me hither as to a prison.”

“You wrong me by the supposition,” said he; “I have brought you to this vault but to secure you from danger; your destruction I have no doubt was intended as well as your brother’s; the motive for such an intention I cannot conceive, nor perhaps may never be able to discover. Blanche has disappeared: I have every reason to believe she has joined that villain Claude. The moment I returned from your chamber, I sent for her, determined on trying to extort from her a confession of her guilt, but she was just gone out. On hearing this, I directly repaired to her father, a simple shepherd, long known to me, and one whom I have ever found conscientiously just in all his dealings. I enquired for his daughter; he had not seen her the whole day he said. I then in a careless manner asked him if he knew a person of the name of Claude?—No, he instantly replied.

“From his cottage I hastened to the valley where you said your brother had fallen; but the body was gone. Struck by a circumstance so strange, I stood as it were transfixed to the spot for a few minutes; at last I was turning away, when deep groans pierced my ear, and made me again pause.”

“As the monk uttered those words, I shrieked aloud—“Oh, God!” I cried, “is it possible?—could I be mistaken—does Philippe live?”

“The monk shook his head; “would to heaven he did!” said he. “But to proceed; the shades of night fell thick around me, and prevented my seeing to any distance; the groans still continued;—‘in the name of God,’ cried I, ‘I conjure you, whoever you are, from whom those groans proceed, to speak, and direct me to your assistance.’

“‘Ah! father,’ said a voice, which I instantly recollected to be that of Lafroy, your brother’s valet, ‘heaven surely sent you hither.’

“Directed by his voice, I went up to him and found him sitting behind a low mound at a little distance from the spot on which I had first heard him. I enquired into the cause of his present situation; he burst into tears—‘Ah! father,’ said he, ‘do you not know what has happened? do you not know of the horrid murder that has been committed?—Ah! who could have thought that the hand of a brother could have perpetrated so cruel a deed!’

“I was wounded to the heart,” said the monk, “at hearing he was acquainted with the dreadful affair. I asked him what he knew concerning it.”

“‘I left the castle,’ answered he, ‘a considerable time before my Lord, in order to apprise the nurse of his intended visit to the child. Tired at last of waiting for him, or rather apprehensive, from his long stay, that he was taken ill, and could not come, I was returning to the castle to terminate my suspense, when, in this very spot, I was suddenly stopped by surprise at seeing Monsieur Lausane a few yards before me, with a dagger in his hand, and an expression of

the most violent rage in his face. I will not deny that I was panic-struck and unable to move even when I saw my Lord approaching. Oh! never shall I cease to regret my want of courage; though, alas! nothing but the greatest, the quickest exertion of it could have saved his life; for scarcely had his brother cast his eyes upon him, ere he stabbed him to the heart! Horror overcame me at that instant, and I fainted away, nor recovered my senses till a few minutes ago: when I recovered, I had not however power, or rather resolution to move; I feared beholding or stumbling over the body of my dear and murdered Lord.'

'“I dreaded Lafroy's testimony against you,” continued the monk; “I therefore endeavoured to extenuate your conduct, and excite his pity by relating the artifices which had been practised on you. What I said had the desired effect; he no longer, he declared, considered you guilty, and, of his own accord, took a solemn oath never to give information against you.

'“I asked him whether he had any knowledge of Claude, and also whether he did not think his brother in league with him? He had no personal knowledge of the villain, he replied; all he knew concerning him was that he was a vine-dresser, who lived a little way from his brother's cottage. As to his brother, in the most impassioned manner he protested a heart more noble, more humane than his never lodged within a breast; consequently it could not be supposed he had entered into so horrible a plot.

'“I enquired whether he could form any conjecture about the first contrivers of it? None, he replied in a solemn manner. I then told him of my not being able to find the body: this renewed his grief, and by the first dawn of day, he said he would endeavour to discover it. As to Claude, he agreed with me there was little probability of any search after him being successful.

'“I bid him return to the cottage, nor come to the castle unless sent for. I think his fidelity may be depended on; but I shall not put it to the test by entrusting him with your situation.

'“The domestics are at present ignorant of the cause of your disorder, as well as of the death of your brother; there is no doubt but what they will soon be acquainted with the latter—they may then perhaps suspect the former; there is no knowing how they would act. I shall therefore, as soon as I leave you, inform them that you have been compelled to quit the castle, in order to attend a most particular friend to Italy; this will change the search, should one be made after you.”

'“But think you not,” cried I, “that death would be preferable to a confinement here, which will deprive me of the society of all I love?”

'“Your confinement here will not subject you to such a loss,” he replied; “a constant intercourse can easily be kept up between you

and your Geraldine; and every thing that can possibly be brought hither for the purpose of adding to your comfort, shall be conveyed by me; the castle-vaults communicate with those belonging to the monastery—I shall therefore have free access at all times to you.”

‘I shall no longer dwell upon the conversation that passed between us, neither upon the agonies I fell into on being left alone; pity for Geraldine only prevented me from dashing my desperate brains out.

‘The next day the monk came to me sooner than I expected. “Alas!” exclaimed he as he advanced, “the unhappy father of your wife has not yet drained the cup of misery!” I thought of no sorrow but that which the death of Geraldine could occasion. Starting, therefore, I wrung my hands, and cried—“She is dead! my wife is dead, and I have murdered her!”

‘“No,” replied he, “’tis not his Geraldine, but the babe of his departed Elenora he has lost.

‘“On coming to the castle this morning, I was surprised to see Lafroy just entering the hall before me. I accosted him in rather an angry tone, and asked what had brought him to it without my permission? He soon assigned a sufficient reason for his unexpected appearance. On returning to the cottage, he said he had thrown himself across a bed, where, overcome by grief and fatigue, towards morning he had fallen asleep. ‘From my repose,’ he continued, ‘I was soon roused by piercing shrieks; I instantly jumped up, and darted into the outside room, from whence they proceeded. Here I found the woman of the house alone, and almost in a state of distraction. It was some time ere she could speak and explain the cause of her disorder: at length she said the infant she had received from the castle was stolen whilst she was out milking her goats. That Claude was the author of this new misfortune I could not doubt; and I deemed it my duty to lose no time in informing the Earl of what had happened.’

‘“Alas!” resumed the monk, “it was a heavy stroke to him; through the child he hoped to have received some little consolation for the death of the mother. This very day it was his intention to have written to the Marquis of Montmorenci to acquaint him with the marriage of his son, and implore his protection for the offspring of it; an intention he has now laid aside as unnecessary, except the child is found, to search for whom I have dispatched some agents I can depend upon. The death of your brother is now known throughout the castle; I invented a plausible story for Lafroy to repeat, which he did with little hesitation; and it is believed that your brother fell by the hand of a ruffian belonging to one of the numerous gangs of banditti which infest these mountains. Lafroy sets out this day for the castle of Montmorenci; and has solemnly promised

to adhere to my instructions in announcing the death of his lamented master."

"I asked the monk whether the body of the unfortunate Philippe had been discovered?—he replied in the negative.

"What he told me, if possible, increased my anguish. I then enquired when I should behold my Geraldine?—"At night," he replied. I counted the tedious moments till she appeared. Ah! how pale, how languid, how different from the Geraldine I had left! She wept bitterly in my arms. "Oh! my love," I exclaimed, "your tears distract me: yet I cannot wonder at your shedding them; you have reason indeed to weep the hard fate which united you to a murderer!"

"Ah! never, Lausane," said she, "shall I lament the fate which bound me to you. Exclusive of your misfortunes, have I not reason to weep for the loss of my Elenora—the sister of my love—the sweet play-fellow of my infancy—the dear, the inestimable friend of my youth? Oh! Lausane, the most exalted prosperity with you could not have silenced my grief on her account."

"A month passed away without any incident occurring to alarm my friends, and without any determination being formed relative to my future destiny. At the expiration of that time, the monk came to me one night at a very late hour; his countenance was disordered, and for a few minutes he could not speak.

"My son," said he at length, "'tis well that we took the precautions we did."

"What has happened?" demanded I eagerly.

"To-night," resumed he, "as I was returning to the monastery, I heard, from behind a low rock which lies at a little distance from the castle, a low murmur of voices. I paused and listened, for I thought I distinguished your name: I was not mistaken; in about a minute after I stopped, it was repeated. I then crept to the spot determined to run every risk rather than not try to discover any plot that might be forming against you. As I approached, I beheld two men, from whom a projection of the rock concealed me.

"'To Italy,' said one of them, 'you say he is gone.'—'Tis so reported,' replied the other. 'Well, it shall be my business,' again spoke the first, 'to discover what foundation there is for that report;—earth shall be searched for Lausane; for, whilst he lives, my wishes can never be accomplished."

"They then walked away," continued the monk, "and I hastened back to the castle to consult with your wife and her father about you. We soon agreed that a report of your death could alone, in all probability, save your life. I shall therefore send a young man, whom I can depend upon, to-morrow to the castle, for the purpose of declaring that you are no more. He shall say that in a small town in Italy, from whence he is just returned, he met you; that

shortly after that meeting, you were taken ill; and, knowing whither he was bound, in your last moments had requested him to call upon your family, and inform them of your fate.

“This report will put a stop to all enquiries; and, as soon as your Geraldine has lain in, I will assist you in escaping with her to a part of the world where there can be no fear of your ever being discovered. To prevent any suspicion, Geraldine is to declare a resolution of renouncing the world as soon as her child is born; and, under the pretext of entering a cloister, she is to quit the castle: when settled in the manner you wish, the Earl and the infant are to follow.”

I attempted not to oppose the scheme of the monk; any scheme, indeed, which flattered me with a hope of again enjoying the company of my Geraldine without interruption, was to me acceptable. 'Tis unnecessary to say the anxiety with which she longed for my release from confinement—a confinement which she endeavoured to soften by the most unremitting attentions. Oh! with what agony have I gazed upon this matchless woman in my dreary dungeon! pale, weeping, emaciated, sinking with horror, yet trying to conceal it! Oh! surely the wretch extended upon the rack could not have felt greater tortures than I at those moments experienced.

The period now arrived for making me a father: my Geraldine did not come near me one entire day, and my heart throbbled with tumultuous fears on her account. The monk came at night; with an eagerness which shook my frame, I enquired for her. “She is well,” said he, “but the Earl is indisposed; and, without exciting suspicion in the servants, she could not leave him:”—this excuse pacified me. Another day arrived without bringing her; two more followed, and still I saw her not. I then again began to be alarmed: “I have been deceived I fear,” said I; “if Geraldine was well, she would surely have contrived some method for seeing me: to-night, though I rush into the arms of destruction by doing so, I will terminate my suspense.”

Accordingly as soon as the monk came, I told him my determination of seeing her; he looked shocked, and endeavoured to oppose it; I hastily interrupted him—“No,” cried I, “I am resolved this night to know whether or not I have been deceived.” As I spoke, I rushed by him; and, with a velocity which mocked pursuit, fled through the intricate passages of the castle, nor stopped till I reached the chamber of Geraldine, which I gained without meeting with a being. I flung open the door—Ah, heavens what a sight presented itself! on the bed lay the lifeless body of Geraldine, already prepared for the grave, and bending over it the almost equally lifeless form of her father! For a minute I stood motionless; then shivering, shrieking with despair, I sprung to the bed, and fell fainting upon the clay-cold bosom of my love!—Short was the privation of my misery. When I revived, I found myself supported

by the monk. I shall not attempt to describe the extravagancy of my grief, nor repeat the frantic reproaches I uttered at the deception practised on me. "Oh! cruel, cruel," I cried, "to deny me a last embrace! had the last beam of her eye fallen upon me—had her last sigh been breathed in my arms, I should not have been so wretched!"

"Mistaken idea!" said the monk; "your wretchedness must have been augmented by witnessing the agonies of a creature so beloved. It was by her command alone any deception was practised on you. She knew her danger from the moment she lay in; and she knew, if acquainted with it, you would have insisted on seeing her. She charged me, therefore, not to acquaint you with her fate till her interment had taken place. And she charged me also to tell you, that if the love you professed for her was sincere, you would endeavour to combat your affliction, in order to support her father, and supply to her infant the loss she would sustain by her death."

"Does my child then live?" said I.

"Yes," replied the monk; "Providence is kind, and still reserves some blessings for you; forfeit them not by murmuring at its decrees. Look at that miserable old man," continued he, pointing to the Earl, "and learn from him a lesson of submission to the will of the Almighty. Think you the anguish which wrings the heart of a husband can exceed that which rends the bosom of a parent? no—believe me it cannot: and yet, notwithstanding his deprivation, no loud complaint, no impious murmur, breaks from him; he bends before the stroke without repining, confident that it proceeds from a hand which cannot err."

"The language of the venerable man allayed the tempest of my soul: I suffered him to lead me to the Earl, at whose feet I sunk. He turned from the bed, and attempted to speak, but his voice was inarticulate, and tears burst from him. I almost envied him the tears he shed; they relieved his oppression; but mine I could not lighten in that manner; mine was that deep, that silent grief which whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break.

"They are gone!" said he at length, and extending his trembling hand, he laid it on my shoulder; "the pillars of my age are gone! No more shall the soft accents of my children attune my soul to peace! no more shall their bright eyes be opened to inspire me with gladness! the shroud already covers both, and on the cold bed of Elenora my Geraldine will soon be laid!"

"I groaned—grasped his hands convulsively in mine, and, in frantic exclamations, expressed my grief. The monk endeavoured to moderate my transports, and the Earl made a feeble effort to aid him.

"Oh! my son," said he, "in pity to me, in pity to your child,

exert yourself; let me not descend forlorn to my grave, neither let her be cast without a friend upon the world!"

'I started from the ground, and demanded to see my babe. You were laid in a distant chamber, and the monk instantly proceeded thither to dismiss the attendants, after which he cautiously conducted me to it. Oh, my child! how utterly impossible to describe the feelings which pervaded my breast as I gently raised the mantle that covered your sleeping face, and first cast my eyes upon you! I longed to strain you to my breast; yet I feared to breathe upon you lest I should injure you. I kneeled down, and gazed upon you till my sight grew dim! With difficulty the monk could tear me away. When he did, he would have reconducted me to my dungeon, but I pushed him aside, and again rushed to the chamber of death. For a long time I resisted his entreaties to leave it; nor should I at last, I believe, have been prevailed on to do so, had not the Earl at length bent his knee to me: I could not refuse the kneeling father of my Geraldine; and half-dragged, half-supported by the monk, I descended to my prison. Oh! what a night was that which followed the knowledge of my Geraldine's death: on the damp ground I lay stretched, and the gloomy echoes of the vaults were awakened by my moans!

'But I will not, by any longer dwelling on my feelings, lengthen out my story. It was determined that I should remain in my present situation during the life of the Earl, and, after his decease, seek another asylum with my child. Contrary to all expectation, the Earl survived the loss of his Geraldine two years; during which period no occurrence happened to disturb the melancholy quiet of the castle. As the infirmities of Lord Dunlere prevented his coming to me, I was frequently conducted to him by the monk, who, whilst I continued with him, always remained near the chamber to prevent our being surprised.

'Never shall I forget the last hours I passed with the father of my love at the decline of a lovely summer's day; I was brought to him to pay my then almost daily visit; I found him seated near an open window inhaling the sweet breeze which played around, whilst the setting sun beaming through it, cast a kind of luminous glory on the portraits of his daughters, before which, exhausted by play, you had fallen asleep.

'"Ah!" said he, motioning for me to sit near him, "how much should I have enjoyed the calmness of this delightful evening, had the blessings I once possessed been still mine! but let me not murmur at the decrees of the Almighty; something whispers to my soul I shall soon be re-united to those I regret. Oh! my son," he continued, observing a tear starting from me, "do not too bitterly mourn my death; rather rejoice at what to me will be a release from misery as incurable as unspeakable: sink not beneath affliction at the very

period your exertions will be most requisite. Oh! rouse your fortitude for the sake of Geraldine's child, and live to preserve one relique of the noble house of Dunlere! Yes, I repeat, noble was the house of Dunlere: and should any chance ever lead you to the isle in which it stands, you will find I have not been a vain boaster in calling it so. True, its honours are departed, its possessions are divided; but though its glory has set, it has set like yon bright orb, leaving a long tract of radiance behind it: 'tis on the flowery banks of the Shannon you would hear of the fame of my ancestors; 'tis there you would hear that they were ever foremost in the ranks of virtue and of valour; that their arms were never stretched against the feeble, nor their swords stained with the blood of innocence." His eyes sparkled as he spoke, and the vigour of his soul seemed revived; but, alas! his was but the emanation of a departing spirit.

'Early the ensuing morning, contrary to his usual custom, the monk came to me. His unexpected visit, and agitated countenance, instantly alarmed me; and, in faltering accents, I pronounced your name.

' "Your child is well," said he; "the Earl too is well—he sleeps in peace; his soul has this day been called to heaven."

'I could not refrain my tears on hearing of this event; in losing the Earl, I lost the friend who soothed my sorrows by talking to me of my Geraldine. "All then that now remains to me," cried I, "of the friends I adored, (the wife I must eternally regret) is a poor helpless infant!"

' "For her sake," said the monk, "you must now exert yourself. Oh! rouse yourself," he continued, seeing me despondently shake my head, "to guard her tender years from the cruelties and snares of the world! Ah, let not the sweet blossom, which gives so early a promise of perfection, fade untimely for want of a paternal shelter!"

'By degrees his language re-animated me to exertion, and we began to arrange plans for the future. He enquired to what part of the globe I was inclined to bend my steps? My broken spirits, I told him, rendered me, not only unwilling, but unable, to acquire new habits. I had, therefore, an unconquerable aversion to any strange country; and thought, from being so little known in my own, that I might, particularly as the story of my death was credited, remain in it with safety. The monk expressed his regret at my disinclination to quit France, but did not attempt to oppose it. After some consideration he mentioned the place he had come from, as a situation well calculated for retirement. I was enamoured of it from his description; and he assured me he would dispatch a confidential person that very day to procure a residence in it for me. He had already, he said, prepared the servants for dismissal; and, before others came to supply their place, from the real owner of the castle,

who had only lent it to the Earl as a temporary asylum, "my messenger," said he, "will be returned, and every thing prepared for your departure. I have," continued he, "prevented all enquiries as to the destination of your child, by declaring her solely committed to my charge: and when the hour for your quitting the castle approaches, I shall send the woman who now takes care of her after the other domestics."

'Every thing succeeded according to our wishes. At the expected time the messenger arrived, after having taken the cottage for me in which you were brought up, and I set out for it a few days after the interment of the Earl. At the moment I was bidding a last adieu to the castle, the monk put you into my arms in order to revive my resolution, which he saw drooping. 'Tis said that our first parents lingered as they were quitting paradise; so I lingered as I was leaving what to me had been a paradise—so I paused and cast my tearful eyes upon it. With difficulty the monk could prevail on me to proceed; he insisted on accompanying me to the place, about half a league from the castle, where a guide and mules were stationed for me. As we proceeded thither, he exhorted me to patience and submission to the Divine will. Our farewell was solemn and affecting; I strained him to my breast, and attempted to express my gratitude for all his kindness. "Oh! my son," cried the holy man, while tears bedewed his venerable face, "I do not merit such thanks; I but performed my duty in the services I rendered you and the family of the Earl; for am I not the servant of a God, who pities the frailties of his creatures, and pours balm upon the wounds which his justice sees proper to inflict?" He promised to keep up a constant correspondence with me. "When I cease to write," said he, "you may be convinced that either my faculties have failed me, or—I am no more."

'Our journey commenced at night; the ensuing day we lay by in an obscure cottage, and the following night reached our habitation. My domestic arrangements were soon made. I changed my name; and, from the retirement of my house, and its being entirely out of the beaten track, had not a fear of being discovered. Here had my bosom been free from the pangs of conscience, I might again have experienced some small degree of peace; but horror and remorse had taken possession of me, and the spirit of the murdered Philippe continually haunted my steps; life was so great a burthen, that often should I have been tempted to raise a desperate hand against it but for your sake.

'To hide from you an anguish which I could not at times suppress, have I frequently wandered away to the wildest and most forlorn spots in our neighbourhood. No weather, no circumstance, could at these periods prevent those rambles; the dews of summer, the rains of winter, the closing hour of day, the midnight one

of darkness were alike disregarded by me. Oh! how often have I stretched myself upon the damp earth, whilst the bleak winds of winter have whistled round me, to deprecate the wrath of Philippe's angry spirit: "I plead not on my own account," I have cried, "Oh! my brother, 'tis for the sake of my child I plead; in pity to her let not the thunders of vengeance burst upon my head! in pity to her, let me sink without infamy to my grave, that, as she bends over it, she may sooth the sorrows of her heart by saying, My father was virtuous, and his memory shall live for ever."

'When I told you I would at some period or other elucidate the mysteries of my life, I said so but for the purpose of allaying your suspicions, hoping that, in consequence of such a promise, you would no longer imagine I had any dreadful secrets to disclose.

'Exclusive of the misery I felt from conscious guilt, I felt a considerable portion also from reflecting on the distresses to which, in all probability, you would be exposed after my death, as I could not hope that the farm would then, under the superintendence of a less interested person, yield such profits as it had before done; and I knew the small remainder of your grandfather's wealth, which the monk had deposited in my hands, and which I had most carefully husbanded, would be quite inadequate to your support.

'From this uneasiness I was relieved by our blessed friend the Countess de Merville. I should previously have told you of her seeing your mother; the visit I paid her on my way to Montmorenci Castle, was discovered by her guardian, and awakened his apprehensions. He wished to unite her to his son; and, ignorant of my situation, he imagined I had come back to the neighbourhood for the purpose of disappointing that wish, and profiting by the ascendancy he knew I had over her: he therefore, in order to baffle what he supposed were my designs, immediately determined on taking her to Italy. As he did not assign his real motive for this sudden journey, of course he received no explanation from her relative to me. They stopped for refreshment near the castle, and she contrived to escape to it to pay a visit to my wife; a visit, however, little attended to by Geraldine, who was then nearly distracted by the danger of her sister.

'In Italy the Countess first saw the Count de Merville, a French nobleman of amiable manners and illustrious descent; reason had conquered her hopeless passion, and in his arms she gladly sought a shelter from the tyranny of her guardian. They remained abroad some years after their marriage; and when, on their return to France, they stopped at the castle for the purpose of enquiring after me and mine, they could only receive a confused account of the sorrows and death of the family from an old woman who then took care of the mansion.

'To the Countess, on our unexpected meeting, I imparted all the

particulars which I have related to you. She heard them with horror, grief, and astonishment; and, her emotions a little abating, bitterly regretted my not having applied to her friendship for protection; the reproaches she uttered for my not having done so, I at length stopped by reminding her of the danger which would have attended an application.

'She told me of the marriage of her daughter, and her connection in consequence of it, with the House of Montmorenci. "But though allied now in some degree to the Marquis," cried she, "I never could prevail on myself to see him, so abhorrent to my soul has his cruelty to you and your mother made him: yet did I imagine that I could, by personally imploring his protection for you and your child, obtain it, I would instantly conquer my repugnance to an interview; but I am well convinced, that all supplications for justice would be unavailing, as I am confidently assured by those I cannot doubt, that he execrates the memory of those whom he has injured."'

'How much was she deceived when she believed that assurance!' exclaimed Madeline; 'my grandfather's acknowledging you as his rightful heir almost the moment he discovered your residence, proves he spoke truth when he assured us that his penitence for the injuries he had committed was extreme, and that his soul rejoiced at an opportunity of doing justice. The unworthy husband and father-in-law of her daughter were, I fear, the wretches who imposed upon her. But I interrupt your narrative.'

'The Countess,' resumed St Julian, 'assured me that, since her child was to be enriched by my birthright, she would take care to guard my daughter against the ills of poverty. How this generous intention was frustrated you best know.

'You may imagine I was not a little confounded when, on arriving at the castle, the first object almost I beheld was Lafroy: the alarm of my soul, which my countenance I believe too faithfully depicted, he however tried to dissipate by a secret look, and a slight pressure of his hand upon his heart, as if to assure me of his fidelity.

'At night, when I was undressing, he entered my apartment—"Pardon my intrusion, my Lord," said he, "but I could not refrain from coming to express my joy at seeing you, as I may say, risen from the grave; for the monk assured me you were dead. He might have confided in me; I pledged a solemn oath never to betray you; and, though but a servant, I have ever been taught to consider a promise as sacred."

'"Excuse the caution of old age, Lafroy," replied I; "'twas not by my desire the monk deceived you."

'"Certainly, my Lord," said he; "I allow too much caution could not be practised then, nor is there less occasion for it now; as I am convinced, if the Marquis knew you were but accessory to the

death of Lord Philippe, he would punish you with the most implacable vengeance. For my part, I think you more to be pitied than condemned; and that those who instigated you to the destruction of your brother, alone merit punishment."

"Did you ever," asked I, "discover any clue to unravel the horrid mysteries which involved me in guilt?"

"I once," cried Lafroy, "had an opportunity of doing so, but, alas! I lost it."

"Lost it!" repeated I; "explain yourself."

"About seven years ago," resumed he, "as I was attending the Marquis to a seat of his near Paris, at a post-house, to which I rode before the carriage for the purpose of securing horses, my eyes encountered that villain Claude: I instantly seized him by the arm, and, dragging him into a room, bolted the door—'Accursed wretch!' cried I, 'the long delayed punishment of heaven has at length overtaken you; the Marquis of Montmorenci approaches, and into his hands I shall consign you, as the immediate cause of his son's death.'

"'Oh! have mercy,' he exclaimed, and dropped upon his knees; 'I am not quite so guilty as you imagine: my poverty exposed me to temptation, and a base enemy of Lord Philippe's, by lavish promises, seduced me to evil. I have already made a full confession of every circumstance to a relation of the Marquis's; and I am ready to repeat the same to you, if you but promise not to give me into his power.'

"'Well,' said I, after some minutes of consideration, 'on this condition I give the promise you desire.' I accordingly raised him from the ground, and with an impatience which made me tremble, seated myself near him to hear his narrative. He had just opened his lips for the purpose of beginning it, when a violent knock came to the door, and the post-master bid me come out directly, for the Marquis of Montmorenci was dying. All horror and consternation, I obeyed him, and found a fellow-servant in the hall, who told me his Lord was in violent fits.'

"'Secure the man in the parlour,' cried I to the post-master as I sprung upon my horse to ride off to the carriage, which the servants had stopped for fear of rendering their Lord worse by the motion. It was long ere he regained his senses. We then slowly proceeded to the post-house; but think of my rage, my regret, when, upon enquiring for him, I learned that, during the bustle in the passage, Claude had slipped from the parlour, and escaped from the house by a back way, fearing, no doubt, that I would not keep my promise to him. 'Tis a true saying, my Lord, that a man generally judges of the disposition of others by his own, so Claude, being himself a deceiver, feared deception from me."

Lafroy then proceeded to inform me, that he had, ever since the

death of my brother, been immediately about the person of the Marquis, and ended his conversation with assurances of being ever faithful to me and mine.'

'It must have been to D'Alembert that Claude confessed his guilt,' said Madeline.

'So I think,' cried her father; 'I know of no other way by which he could have attained a knowledge of my life.'

'Ah! what a base advantage does he take of the secret reposed in him!' said Madeline.

'A base one indeed,' repeated St Julian. 'Oh! my child, never can I consent to bribe him to silence by sacrificing you. What, to save a life upon which misery is entailed—a life already in its decline—shall I devote my heart's best treasure to wretchedness?—no, Madeline, no; sooner will I brave the threats, will I meet the vengeance of D'Alembert, than consent to such a measure.'

'And do you think,' cried Madeline, 'in an union with D'Alembert's son I could feel half the wretchedness I must experience if, by persevering in your present intentions, you provoke his resentment, and become its victim? no—believe me I could not. But I have sworn,' continued she, wildly starting from her seat, 'I have sworn to become the wife of D'Alembert, if by no other means I can prevail upon his father to keep secret the fatal events of your life; the oath is recorded in heaven—what mortal then shall be daring enough to bid me break it?'

'My Madeline! my love!' cried her father, terrified by her strong emotions, and catching her hand, 'a thought has just struck me, which may perhaps extricate us from our present trouble; 'tis evident that neither D'Alembert nor his son would desire an union with you, but for the sake of the fortune you are to possess.'

'Evident indeed,' repeated Madeline.

'I think then,' resumed St Julian, 'that if we were to promise to resign that fortune to them, they would cease all further solicitations for your hand.'

'A merciful God has surely inspired you with the idea,' said Madeline, while tears of joy fell from her. 'Oh, I have no doubt but our persecution would immediately cease, if their avarice was once satisfied.'

'Send then for D'Alembert,' cried St Julian, 'and tell him, if he vows inviolable secrecy with regard to me, and promises to relinquish all ideas of an union between you and his son, both you and your father will, without delay, sign any paper he may please to draw up, resigning to him and his heirs for ever all right and title to the fortunes of Montmorenci.'

'I will send for him directly,' exclaimed Madeline.

'Ah! my child,' said St Julian, still detaining and looking mournfully at her, 'must I then bid you sign away your birth-right? must

my crimes doom you to obscurity?—for me must you forfeit that wealth, that rank, you are entitled to?—’

‘Talk not to me of wealth or rank,’ said Madeline; ‘what happiness have I experienced from the possession of either?—Oh! my father, never did I know real peace since I left the dear cottage where I was brought up; to be again its humble inmate is the summit of my wishes.’

‘Gladly indeed shall I resign all pretensions to rank and splendour,’ cried St Julian; ‘gladly shall I quit this mansion, where the spirit of a murdered brother takes its nightly rounds to fill my soul with horror. Yes, Madeline, in the dead of the night, when all but misery and despair are sunk in repose, my ears are often pierced by dreadful groans and melancholy cries, such as disturbed the tranquillity of the family the first night we entered within these walls.’

‘Oh! would to heaven,’ exclaimed Madeline, shuddering and appalled, ‘that our departure from the castle immediately followed our renunciation of the fortune appertaining to it.’

‘Would to heaven it did!’ said St Julian; ‘but to quit it during the life-time of the Marquis is impossible.’

‘Let me no longer delay sending for D’Alembert,’ cried she. As she spoke, she disengaged her hand, and, flying to the bell, rung it with violence. A servant almost instantly obeyed the summons, by whom she dispatched a message to D’Alembert, requesting to see him directly. Unwilling to meet him in the present agitated state of his mind, her father tenderly embraced her, and then left the room.



either he or I are insensible of the value of riches, but we are not quite so interested as you imagine. The fortunes of Montmorenci would, to him, lose half their estimation, if the lovely Madeline was not attached to them. His therefore she must be, if she wishes to preserve the existence of her father, for on her compliance my secrecy depends.'

Madeline dropped on her knees—'Kneel by me then,' she exclaimed, 'and swear, if I promise to sacrifice myself, that that secrecy will never be violated.'

'I swear,' said D'Alembert, bending his knee to the ground, 'that if you become the wife of my son, all that I know concerning your father shall be buried within my breast.'

'Dispose of me then,' cried Madeline, 'as you please. Yet, Oh! D'Alembert,' she continued, in a voice of agony, and raising her eyes to his face, 'if you value the happiness of your son, give not to his arms a reluctant wife—cold and joyless must be such a gift! In pity to him therefore, as well as me, give up all idea of our union.'

'Never,' said D'Alembert, as he raised her from the floor; 'though you may marry with indifference, the tenderness of my son will soon, I am confident, convert that indifference into love.'

'Love!' repeated Madeline. She involuntarily cast her eyes upon the portrait, which bore so strong a resemblance to de Sevignie. It was her disordered fancy, no doubt, which made her at that moment imagine the eyes regarded her with an expression of the deepest melancholy; every tender scene she had experienced with him rushed to her recollection. She felt she could never cease to adore him; she felt that, in the arms of another, she must still sigh for him: and, shuddering, almost shrieking, at the idea of the dreadful destiny which would soon render such sighs a crime, she fell in convulsive agitation upon the bosom of D'Alembert. He supported her to a window, and in a few minutes she began a little to revive. She then disengaged herself from his arms.

'You are still ill,' said he; 'permit me therefore to support you.'

'No,' replied she, withholding the hand he attempted to take; 'upon the bosom which cannot pity me, I will not lean.'

'You are now prejudiced against me,' said D'Alembert; 'my professions, therefore, you would disregard; but I trust the period will shortly arrive in which you will believe me sincere when I say, that the esteem, the tenderness, your virtues merit, I feel for you. Will you now permit me,' cried he, after a pause, 'to go and acquaint the Marquis with the happiness which awaits my son?'

Anxious to be relieved from his presence, Madeline desired him to do as he pleased, and he directly left her. The agonies of her soul then burst forth, and in tears and broken exclamations she vented her feelings. In this situation her father surprised her:—Pale,

trembling, the very picture of melancholy and despair, he approached her.

'D'Alembert was then inflexible,' said he. 'He has just announced to the Marquis and me your acceptance of his son. Oh! my child, can you pardon the father who has doomed you to wretchedness?'

Madeline flung herself into his arms. She would have spoken—she would have assured him, that the wretchedness of her destiny could not be as great as he imagined, from knowing that it had mitigated his; but sighs and sobs impeded her utterance. At length, raising her head—'Oh! my father,' she said, 'do not torture me by such language; strengthen, instead of weakening me; aid me—advise me; enable me to perform the duties of the station I am about entering into. That God,' cried she, lifting her streaming eyes to heaven, 'that God whom we both worship and adore, delights not in the miseries of his creatures: when, therefore, acting right, we may surely hope that he will mitigate our sorrows.'

A summons to dinner prevented all further conversation. Madeline declared her utter inability of obeying it, and entreated her father to apologize for her absence.

Reluctantly he left her. Nothing could have prevailed upon him to do so, but a fear of distressing the Marquis if he absented himself from the table; and he promised to return as soon as he possibly could to her.

During his absence, Madeline determined to exert herself in order to regain some degree of composure. 'But little shall I serve him,' cried she, 'by the sacrifice of myself, if I let him know the anguish excited by that sacrifice.'

He had been gone about half an hour when she heard a gentle knock at the dressing-room door. She started, but instantly recollecting herself, and supposing it to come from some one of the servants, she desired the door to be opened. She was obeyed directly, and a man, whom she had never seen before, made his appearance.

Madeline rose from her chair, and surveyed him with astonishment. He approached her with evident diffidence and agitation, and offered her a letter. 'From whom does it come?' said Madeline without taking it.

'From a friend to virtue,' he replied. 'Delay not to read it,' continued he, dropping it at her feet, for surprise rendered her unable to extend her hand: 'observe its advice, and avoid destruction.' So saying, he rushed from the room, and closed the door after him.

Madeline remained many minutes without motion. She then repeated his words—'And will this letter,' cried she, taking it up, 'point out a way by which I can avoid destruction?' She broke the seal with a trembling hand, and read as follows:—

LADY,

The unhappy wife of young D'Alembert still exists; the story of her death was invented for the vilest purposes—purposes which, under Providence, I trust I shall be the humble instrument of defeating. Too long have I been the slave of vice—too long an accessory in all the horrid schemes of an iniquitous father and son! but heaven has at length awakened me to remorse; and, if the sincerest penitence for past enormities, and most strenuous endeavours to undo all the mischief I have done, can expiate error, I hope to be forgiven. I am now hastening to the place where the most lovely and most injured of her sex groans in captivity! but, till her liberation is effected, as you value her life (my worthless one I will not mention), keep secret the contents of this letter; were they prematurely known, there is no doubt but her death would be the immediate consequence. Oh! Lady, pray for her; pray that the efforts of a sorrowing and repentant wretch may be successful in rescuing virtue, and preserving innocence: and may that heaven, which must ever regard purity like thine, ever render abortive all schemes that wickedness may plan against thee!

No language could do justice to the feelings of Madeline on perusing this letter; but the astonishment, the ecstasy, with which the knowledge of her friend's existence inspired her, soon gave way to apprehensions for her father. She trembled to think of the horrors which D'Alembert might entail upon him in revenge for the disappointment of his hopes. 'It will gladden his cruel and malicious soul,' cried she, 'to plunge my father into the gulph of destruction—that gulph, into which the discovery of his own crimes must precipitate himself.'

Her heart throbbing with impatience, she anxiously listened for her father. The moment he appeared, she flew to him, and put the letter into his hand. Her looks prepared him for something wonderful, and he eagerly cast his eye over it.

'Oh, villains!' exclaimed he, ere he had half perused it, 'what punishment can be adequate to your crimes! My child,' resumed he, after finishing the letter, tenderly embracing her as he spoke, 'thou art indeed, as the good must ever be, the peculiar care of Providence. Oh! with the most heartfelt gratitude do I acknowledge its goodness in preserving you from the snare which was set for you:—this instant would I expose the execrable contrivers of it to the fate they merit; this instant, notwithstanding the power which treachery has given them over me, brand them with infamy, did I not fear, in consequence of some part of this letter, taking any step of the kind till after the liberation of the unhappy Madame D'Alembert is effected. It would be an ill requital for the kindness of my dear lamented friend if, to gratify myself by punish-

ing immediately an injury meditated against my child, I occasioned the destruction of her's.'

'Oh! my father,' cried Madeline, whose heart was now solely occupied by fears on his account, 'think not of punishing the monsters—think only how you may avoid their malice.'

'Avoid it!' exclaimed St Julian, looking sternly at her; 'no, I will brave it, I will brave their threats—I will brave the horrors they may draw upon me, to have the satisfaction of punishing myself their meditated injury against you.'

This was what Madeline had dreaded; his indignation at their designs against her would, she feared, transport him beyond all consideration for himself.

She threw herself at his feet, and with tears besought him to sacrifice his resentment to his safety. 'You have ever told me, ever taught me to believe,' she exclaimed, 'that you tenderly regarded your Madeline; Oh! now, my father, prove that regard by endeavouring to preserve a life with which her's is entwined.'

Her entreaties had at length the desired effect; passion gave way to pity; and, raising her from the ground, while he pressed her to his heart, St Julian told her that the value she set upon his life made him in some degree value it himself. 'I will therefore go,' said he, 'to Lafroy—he is faithful and clever, and consult with him how I may best brave the coming storm: for, like you, I am convinced that, when once the villainy of D'Alembert is discovered, and consequently his hopes relative to you overthrown, he will reveal all he knows concerning me.'

'Oh, go—go,' cried Madeline, disengaging herself from his arms; 'go directly to Lafroy, and be quick, I entreat you, my father, in your return.'

She followed him to the gallery, determined to wait there till he came back. A considerable time elapsed without bringing him; and the fears of Madeline were at length so excited by his long absence, that she was just going in quest of him, when she saw him and Lafroy approaching.

'I fear you have been uneasy at my not returning sooner,' said he; 'but it required time to deliberate on what was to be done.'

'What have you determined on?' said Madeline as they entered the dressing-room, and closed the door.

'On parting,' replied he, in an accent of the deepest sorrow.

'On parting!' repeated Madeline, stepping back, and looking wildly at him.

'Yes; to remain in the castle, would be to await quietly the fate to which D'Alembert will expose me.'

'It would indeed,' said Lafroy; 'I have no doubt but that the moment his baseness is discovered, Monsieur D'Alembert will reveal every particular he knows concerning you: and I am sorry to

say, from my knowledge of the Marquis's disposition, I am sure he will admit of no circumstance as a palliation of the murder of Lord Philippe.'

Madeline shuddered at the word murder, and involuntarily averted her head from Lafroy.

'Murder sounds harshly in my daughter's ears,' cried St Julian in rather a resentful tone.

'I beg your pardon, my Lord,' said Lafroy, 'for having spoken unguardedly; nothing, I can assure your Lordship, would distress me so much as to offend or give pain to either you or Lady Madeline; 'tis my most ardent wish to serve you both.'

'And whither,' cried Madeline, turning to her father, 'Oh! whither, if you quit this castle, can you betake yourself?'

'With the most wild and romantic solitudes of the Alps I am well acquainted,' said he, 'and amongst them I mean to seek a shelter.'

'The holy man, who was so kind to my mother and her unfortunate family, may then again befriend you,' cried she.

'Alas!' exclaimed St Julian, 'he is gone long since to receive the blessed reward his virtues merited: about eight years ago I was assured of his death by the termination of our correspondence.'

'Oh! my father,' cried Madeline, grasping his arm, 'may I not accompany you?'

'Lord! my Lady,' exclaimed Lafroy, 'surely you could not think of such a thing; surely you could not think of abandoning all prospect of rank and independence?'

'Yes,' replied Madeline; 'to have the power of mitigating a father's distresses, I would abandon every prospect this world could present.'

'But by accompanying him you would rather increase than mitigate his distresses. Situations which, on his own account, he would not mind, he would then tremble at on your's. Besides, you would retard the expedition it is necessary for him to make, and prevent his exploring the places best calculated for affording him an asylum.'

'What reason can be assigned, what excuse offered to the Marquis for his quitting the castle, clandestinely quitting it,' demanded Madeline.

'He must write a letter to the Marquis,' resumed Lafroy, 'to be delivered the day after his departure, informing him that the misfortunes of his early life had given him such a distaste to society, that he had formed the resolution of renouncing the world; a resolution which, for fear of opposition, he would not acquaint him with till he had put it into execution.'

'But when he finds, as no doubt from D'Alembert he will, that this was not his real motive for quitting the castle, how—how,' cried Madeline, 'shall I be able to support his reproaches?'

'You must summon all your resolution to your aid,' said Lafroy, 'and brave the storm from a certainty of having it soon over. The Marquis is old; he cannot punish you for an action committed by your father; and, after his death, if the Count is still compelled to seclude himself from a fear of the connections of Lord Philippe, you may visit him without control.'

'Well,' said Madeline, 'I will exert myself; and, confiding my father to the mercy of a God whom he never wilfully offended, look forward to happier days. When must we part?' cried she, turning to St Julian, who had thrown himself upon a sofa.

'To-night,' replied he in a melancholy voice.

'To-night!' repeated Madeline.

'He must go while the coast is clear,' said Lafroy; 'you know Monsieur D'Alembert's son is now shortly expected; and were he and his numerous retinue of servants once arrived, it would be impossible for my Lord the Count to escape without observation.'

'Was it from a servant of young D'Alembert's I received the letter?'

'Yes, from an old confidential servant, well acquainted, no doubt, as he himself has said, with the villainy of his master.'

'How does my father travel?' asked Madeline, 'or how, or by whose means am I to hear from him? for except I do hear, I shall be distracted.'

'It shall be my care to settle every thing to his satisfaction and your's,' said Lafroy: 'as soon as it is dark, I will conduct him to the house of a friend I can rely upon, a little beyond the forest, from whence he can procure a conveyance to the Alps, and to which his letters can be directed; by the same channel too you can forward your's, and also remit any supply of money he may want.'

'Your ingenuity has obviated all our difficulties,' said St Julian, rising from the sofa. 'I trust I may yet have power to reward you, my good friend, for your zeal and fidelity; but if not, my beloved child will, I am convinced, readily pay off any debt of gratitude I may incur.'

Every plan relative to him being now arranged, and the day declining, St Julian sat down to pen his letter to his father, whilst his agonized Madeline hung over him, and Lafroy retired to pack up a few necessaries for him.

The letter concluded, he devoted the little time he had to remain in the castle to the purpose of consoling his Madeline, and exhorting her to fortitude. She promised to exert herself, but it was a promise given in such a manner, with such tears and sobs, as gave her father little hope she would ever be able to fulfil it.

With streaming eyes she watched the last lingering beams of day, and fancied that darkness had never before been so quick in its approach. At length Lafroy appeared; he carried a glimmering

light, which he laid upon a table, and told the Count, in a whispering voice, that it was time to depart. He instantly arose—'Farewell! my child,' said he, straining his Madeline to his heart, 'soul of my soul, life of my life—farewell!—Oh! for the sake of thy wandering and exiled father—Oh! to be enabled to give him future comfort, such comfort as shall repay him for past troubles, exert thyself!'

'I will, I will,' cried Madeline; 'when the bitterness of this moment is over, I shall be better.'

'Do not longer delay, my Lord,' said Lafroy; 'I fear if you do, some interruption from the servants, who will soon be busy preparing for supper.'

St Julian gently withdrew his arms from his daughter. She did not attempt to detain him; and yet her very soul seemed fleeting after him as he turned from her. 'Lafroy,' cried she, following them to the gallery, 'the moment you return to the castle, you must come up to me.'

'You may depend on my doing so,' said he.

'And you, my father,' she resumed, 'must write to me without delay, if you wish to save me from distraction.'

'The very minute I arrive at a place of safety, I will write to you,' he replied, again embracing her.

Once more Lafroy conjured St Julian to hasten with him; and, sighing out another adieu, the unhappy father turned from his weeping child. When she could no longer hear his steps from the gallery, she flew to her chamber, and, flinging up the sash, bent from the window to try if she could hear them in the forest; but a cold wind whistled through it, which prevented any other sound than that of its own murmurs from being distinguished; yet, though she could neither see nor hear him, she continued at the window till a sudden light flashing behind her, made her start from it; and, turning round, she beheld one of the female servants.

'I hope I have not frightened your Ladyship,' said the girl, curtesying; 'I have brought you some refreshments from Mrs Beatrice; and she desired me to say that she would have sent something before, only she heard you were engaged with my Lord the Count, and also that she would have come herself only she was unwell.'

'I am sorry to hear she is ill,' cried Madeline, sinking into a chair.

'She is indeed; but bless me, your Ladyship looks very ill too; had you not better take something, for you seem quite faint?'

Madeline was quite overpowered by weakness, and gladly took a little bread and wine to try and support her sinking frame.

'The cold wind which comes through this window, is enough to pierce your Ladyship,' said the maid.

'It does,' cried Madeline to herself, and sighing heavily, 'it does

indeed pierce me to the heart, because I know my father is exposed to it. Good night, my good girl,' said she, addressing her attendant, 'good night; say nothing of my indisposition; I am sure I shall be better to-morrow.'

'Your Ladyship will not then come down to-night.'

'No;—who is with the Marquis?'

'Monsieur D'Alembert; my Lord the Count I understand is out. 'Tis very bold to be sure of me to speak on the subject, but I cannot help saying I wonder how he can like to ramble through the forest after it is dark.'

Madeline rose in much agitation—'I suppose the Marquis,' said she, wishing to change the conversation, 'will soon go to supper.'

'Oh yes, Ma'am; you know, since my Lord the Count's custom of rambling has been known, the Marquis never waits for him after a certain hour.'

'True,' cried Madeline. She then repeated her good night, and the maid retired.

Alternately traversing her chamber, alternately looking from the window, Madeline passed two tedious hours ere Lafroy appeared. He then knocked gently at the door, which she eagerly opened, and as eagerly enquired about her father.

'He has begun his journey,' said Lafroy; 'I readily procured the assistance of my friend, who will be his companion some part of the way.'

'And can your friend really be depended on?' asked Madeline.

'I can as safely answer for his fidelity as my own,' replied Lafroy; 'and mine I hope you do not doubt.'

'No,' cried Madeline, 'if I did, I should be completely wretched. Oh! Lafroy,' she continued, 'how I dread to-morrow; I tremble to think of the interrogations of the Marquis; as long as it is possible to do so, postpone the delivery of the letter.'

'You may be assured I shall not deliver it till there is an absolute necessity for doing so,' he replied, 'and then I shall pretend I found it in the chamber of the Count.'

'I shall keep out of the Marquis's way till he has read the letter,' said Madeline.

'I think you will be right in doing so,' cried Lafroy; 'you can plead indisposition, and confine yourself to your chamber entirely to-morrow; and depend on my ingenuity for devising some scheme to prevent your being disturbed either by the Marquis or the servants, even after the discovery of the Count's departure has taken place.'

'Alas!' said Madeline, 'how trifling will be all I shall perhaps endure after this discovery, to what, in all probability, I shall suffer when the real cause of his departure is known!'

'You must only,' cried Lafroy, 'as I said before, brave the storm,

from a hope of having it soon over. The Marquis no doubt will be violent, and endeavour to wrest from you the secret of your father's residence; you must therefore deny your knowledge of it.'

'No,' exclaimed Madeline, 'I disdain a falsehood; to deny it would be to doubt my own resolution of keeping it. After all,' continued she, 'upon reflection I do not think the Marquis can be so violent as you imagine; he must be convinced, and that conviction must surely mollify his resentment, that, had interested motives caused the death of Lord Philippe, my father, instead of retiring to obscurity, would have made some effort to obtain his favour.'

'But to refute that idea, may it not be said,' cried Lafroy, 'that he remained in obscurity so many years but to avoid suspicion, which he feared might be excited if he sooner threw himself in the way of his father?'

'He never threw himself in the way of the Marquis,' interrupted Madeline.

'No, but he threw you, which was just the same thing; that is, I mean it may be said he did; it may be said that design, not chance, brought you to the castle; D'Alembert is equal to any falsehood.'

'Heaven defend us from his machinations!' cried Madeline.

'I will now leave you to repose,' said Lafroy; 'I am sure you need it, for the events of this day must certainly have agitated you not a little.'

Madeline conjured him to come to her as soon as he possibly could after the delivery of the letter, which he promised to do, and then retired.

Kneeling down, Madeline then implored the protection of Heaven for her father, and its support for herself through the numerous trials she feared she had to encounter; after which, faint and exhausted by the agitations she had experienced, she went to bed. Her mind was too much disturbed to permit her slumbers to be tranquil; and she arose unrefreshed at the dawn of day. At the usual hour, a servant (the same who had attended her the preceding night) appeared to inform her breakfast was ready. Madeline said she was too unwell to go down, and desired her's to be brought to her dressing-room. She was accordingly obeyed; and, as the maid was laying the table—'The Count has gone out to ramble again this morning, Madam,' said she; 'Lafroy went to call him to breakfast, and found his chamber-door locked on the outside.'

The conversation her attendant was inclined to enter into was truly distressing to Madeline, and she soon dismissed her. In a state of perturbation which rendered her unable to read or work, or do any thing to try and amuse her thoughts, the heavy hours wore away without any creature coming near her till dinner time; Nannette then again appeared, and desired to know whether she

would come down. Madeline replied in the negative, and dinner was brought to her.

'Tis very extraordinary, Madam,' cried Nannette as she stood behind the chair, 'very extraordinary indeed that the Count has not yet returned; don't you think so?'

'You may take away the things,' said Madeline; 'and, Nannette, you need not come again till I ring for you.'

'Very well, Madam. But dear heart! my Lady, you really have eaten no dinner; I am afraid you are fretting about the Count.'

Madeline made no reply, but took up a book to signify her wish of being alone, and Nannette left her.

The moment she had retired, Madeline threw aside the book, and walked about the room in an agitation which shook her frame. 'The hour approaches for the delivery of the letter,' cried she; 'Oh! heaven forbid the Marquis should come to me after perusing it! this evening I could not summon sufficient spirits to support an interview.'

She now every instant expected Lafroy; but two hours passed away without bringing him, during which she frequently stole to the gallery to try if she could hear him approaching. Tired at length of listening for him, she threw herself on a chair by the window, and gave way in tears to the oppression of her heart. Never had she before experienced such a degree of wretchedness; she felt neglected, abandoned by all! the gloom of closing day, the cold wind which rustled through the forest, bringing the leaves in showers from the trees, and bearing to her ear the dismal tolling of a distant convent bell, heightened if possible her melancholy.

'Oh! my father,' she cried, 'to what misery have you left your Madeline!' The door creaked upon its rusty hinges; she started, and beheld Lafroy.

'Ah!' she exclaimed, rising to meet him, 'I thought you had forgotten me.'

'Forgotten you!' he repeated as he cautiously closed the door.

'Has the Marquis received the letter?' eagerly interrupted Madeline.

'Yes.'

'Well, and what,' cried she, gasping for breath, 'does he say?'

'Ah! my dear young lady, I have bad news for you,' exclaimed Lafroy.

'Bad news! what—does the Marquis suspect the truth? Has he sent to pursue my father?'

'He has not yet sent any one to pursue him,' replied Lafroy, 'but he soon will; for—D'Alembert has discovered all.'

The shock which those words gave to Madeline, was almost more than she could support, and she sunk, nearly fainting, against the shoulder of Lafroy.

'Do you think,' cried she, raising her head in a few minutes from it, 'do you think that my father can baffle the pursuit?'

'I trust he may have a safe retreat secured ere it commences. But you must not turn your thoughts entirely upon him; you must now think of yourself—think of escaping from the castle.'

'Of escaping!' repeated Madeline.

'Yes, if you wish to avoid cruelty and oppression.'

'Explain yourself,' said Madeline.

'I will if you promise to compose yourself—if you promise not to interrupt me—briefly and explicitly inform you of the sufferings which await you if you continue in the castle.'

'I promise,' cried Madeline.

'To begin then,' said Lafroy. 'After I had delivered the Count's letter to the Marquis, I stepped into an adjoining room to listen to the conversation which would ensue between him and D'Alembert in consequence of it. Long I had not remained in my concealment, ere my ears were shocked by hearing D'Alembert deride the assertion contained in the letter, and begin a horrid narrative of all he knew concerning your father. I will not pain you by repeating what the Marquis said; suffice it to say, he vowed the most implacable vengeance against the Count, and swore the world should be searched to discover him.'

'"His daughter to be sure," cried D'Alembert, "who 'tis obvious wishes to have you, as well as your father, put out of the way in order to gain, without division, the fortunes of Montmorenci, is acquainted with the secret of his retreat."

'"No doubt," replied the Marquis, "and I will obtain it from her."

'"I have little hope of your being able to do so," cried D'Alembert.

'"If gentle means will not prevail on her to reveal it," cried the Marquis, "other methods shall be tried; every torture, every suffering, which can be devised, shall be practised upon her in this castle to wring it from her."

'On hearing this,' continued Lafroy, 'I hastened to you to apprise you of your danger, and assist you in escaping it.'

'This instant let me go,' cried Madeline, 'this instant let me fly from those hated walls—let me pursue the steps of my father.'

'To do so would be madness,' replied Lafroy; 'to follow his steps, would be to give a clue to his pursuers to discover him.'

'Then guide me to a convent,' cried Madeline.

'No; for a convent would be the worst asylum you could enter. The Marquis's power is great; and missing you, he will naturally conclude you have taken shelter in one, and will, I am confident, immediately get himself authorized to search throughout the religious houses for you, in order to get you again into his hands.'

'Whither then,' said Madeline in an agony, 'Oh! whither shall I go?'

'I have a female relation in Paris,' cried Lafroy, 'who I am sure would be happy to afford you an asylum. She is far advanced in life; a woman of an amiable disposition, and housekeeper to a gentleman of large fortune, who, on the death of his wife, which happened some years ago, betook himself to travel, and left his house, a very fine one, to the entire care of my aunt; to her I can get my friend (the same who assisted your father in escaping) to convey you, and also a letter to her, imploring her protection for you.'

'What reason will you assign for my requiring that protection?' demanded Madeline.

'I shall say (I trust you will excuse me for it),' cried Lafroy, 'that your father is a particular friend of mine, who, from embarrassed circumstances, has been compelled to quit his residence near the castle of Montmorenci, for the purpose of seeking one elsewhere, and that, till he procures it, he has consigned you to my care.'

Madeline felt truly grateful to Lafroy for the readiness with which he offered his services, yet at the same time most unwilling to accept them; and again she expressed a wish to retire to a convent—a wish, which was again opposed with vehemence by Lafroy, who assured her he was confident, if she went to one, that in a few days she would be dragged from it by the Marquis.—'By this,' he continued, 'I dare say every plan relative to you and your father is settled; no time, therefore, is to be lost, for if the Marquis and D'Alembert once seize you, to escape will be beyond your power.'

'I am ready,' cried Madeline, 'I am ready this moment to fly.'

A scarf hung upon the back of a chair, which Lafroy took up and wrapped about her; he then drew her trembling hand under his arm, and with light steps they stole down a flight of back stairs, and through a back court entered the forest.

They proceeded a considerable way through the forest before Lafroy would permit Madeline to slacken her pace for the purpose of asking whither they were now going.

When at length she had power to make the enquiry, 'we are going,' said he in reply to it, 'to the cottage of my friend, where every thing relative to your journey can be adjusted, and where it never will occur to the Marquis or D'Alembert to search for you.'



frayed,' said Lafroy; 'do not, my dear young lady, speak upon the subject; the money I acquired in your family can never be better expended than in the service of any one belonging to it.'

'I cannot express my feelings,' cried Madeline, melting into tears; ' 'tis only Heaven, Lafroy, that can properly reward your humanity.'

'I must now bid you farewell, my dear lady,' said Lafroy; 'if I stay much longer from the Castle I fear being missed, and my absence at this juncture would, I make no doubt, excite suspicion.—Farewell! May Heaven and all its holy angels for ever watch over you!'

'Stop for one instant,' cried Madeline, catching his arm. 'Oh! Lafroy! I entreat—I conjure you—the moment a letter arrives from my father, to forward it to me. I shall be all impatience—all agony—all distraction—till I hear of his safety, and know where or when I may rejoin him!'

'Rest assured,' said Lafroy, 'that I shall do every thing you can wish. Once more, my dear young lady, farewell! Oliver has a letter to deliver to my aunt, which I wrote in the cottage; I am confident she will do every thing in her power to make you happy.'

Madeline mournfully shook her head.—'Alas!' she cried to herself, 'any effort to make me happy will now, I fear, be unavailing.'

'Come, Mademoiselle,' said Oliver, as Lafroy turned from her, 'you had better step into the house.'

'I will,' replied Madeline, as with streaming eyes she still pursued the steps of Lafroy; 'but first tell me how long you think it will be ere you return with a carriage.'

'About three hours, I think,' said Oliver; 'I shall ride to L—, and will, you may assure yourself, make as much haste as possible.'

He now led her into the house, and conducted her to a chamber, at the door of which he left her, telling her, as he retired, that he should send his daughter Theresa to her with a light and supper. Left to herself, Madeline, instead of indulging tears and lamentations, tried to suppress both, and regain some little degree of composure.—'I am embarked upon a stormy sea,' said she, 'and I must resolutely brave its dangers if I hope to gain a port of safety.'

She every instant expected Theresa, but the minutes passed away without bringing her; this was a circumstance Madeline did not by any means regret, as solitude and silence best suited her present feelings. She continued a considerable time deeply ruminating over past events, when she was suddenly awakened from her reverie by strains of soft music from without the house; they were strains at once tender and solemn, and while they delighted, affected her to tears.—She went to a window, but just as she had gently opened it, for the purpose of more distinctly hearing them, they entirely ceased. The beautiful prospect, however, which the window

commanded of the opposite mountains and the river, prevented her withdrawing immediately from it. It was a prospect to which the beams of a rising moon, and the stillness of the night gave additional charms—a stillness which (to borrow a description from a much-admired work) rendered the voice of the mountain waterfalls tremendous, as they all, in their variety of sounds, were re-echoed from every cavern, whilst the summits of the rocks began to receive the rays of the rising moon, and appeared as if crowned with turrets of silver, from which the stars departed for their nightly round.

'Ah!' cried Madeline, to whose recollection the present scene brought those she had been accustomed to, 'perhaps at this very moment my father gazes upon a landscape as sublime and beautiful as the one I now behold, with sadness, at the uncertainty of his Madeline ever again enjoying with him the works of nature.'

She ceased, for again she heard the soft breathing of the oboe, though at a considerable distance from the house.

*Thro' glades and glooms the mingl'd measure stole,  
Or o'er some haunted streams with fond delay,  
Round an holy calm diffusing,  
Love of peace, and lonely musing,  
In hollow murmurs died away.*

The pensive pleasure which communicated itself to the feelings of Madeline, as with deep attention she listened to the enchanting strains, was soon interrupted by the now unwelcome appearance of her long expected visiter.

'Dear Mademoiselle!' cried she, as Madeline turned from the window to receive her, 'dear Mademoiselle!' as she laid down a little tray with refreshments, 'I hope you will have the goodness to excuse my not coming to you before, but I would not come to you till I brought you something to eat; do pray sit down and try this omelet! I flatter myself you will find it good.'

'I am afraid,' said Madeline, 'I have been the cause of a vast deal of trouble to you.'

'Of pleasure, instead of trouble,' replied the little voluble Theresa; 'but, Lord! Mademoiselle,' continued she, going to it, and putting it down, 'how could you bear the window up so cold a night?'

'I opened it,' said Madeline, as she seated herself at the table, 'for the purpose of listening to the most enchanting music I ever heard. Pray who plays so divinely on the oboe?'

'My brother,' replied Theresa.

'Your brother!' repeated Madeline, somewhat surprised, 'why he seems a perfect master of music.'

'Yes, that he is,' said Theresa, 'and of many other accomplishments too. Lord! if I had but the key of that cabinet; for you must

know, Mademoiselle, we are now in his room; it being the best in the house, my father procured it for you, I could shew you such drawings of his as would I dare say astonish you: there is one hangs just over your head, a view of some fine place he saw, for he has been a great traveller.'

Madeline stood up to examine it; but, Oh! what was her surprise, what the feelings of that moment, on beholding the landscape which de Sevignie had sketched of her native valley.

'Are you sure,' cried Madeline, looking wildly at Theresa, 'are you sure your brother drew this landscape—are you sure it is not a copy instead of an original?'

'Very sure indeed,' replied Theresa; 'he told me himself he had drawn it, and I know he would not utter a falsehood.'

'Yes,' cried Madeline to herself, ''tis evident de Sevignie is the son of a cottager, and every thing which before appeared strange and mysterious in his conduct, is now explained. Oh! de Sevignie, had no false pride restrained you—had you candidly, explicitly confessed your situation, what happiness might now have been our's! for well am I convinced that neither my father nor my friend would have objected to our union when once thoroughly assured of your worth.'

'What is your brother's name?' asked Madeline, wishing to remove every doubt, as to what she suspected, from her mind.

'Henri de Sevignie Melicour. Melicour is the name of his family, and he was called Henri de Sevignie after a great gentleman who stood godfather to him, and by whose desire he received so different an education from the rest of his family.'

'And did he do nothing more than desire him to be well educated?' said Madeline.

'Why—yes—he made him handsome presents at times, and enabled him to travel and keep fine company; and I believe that lately he would have made a certain provision for him, but that they have disagreed.'

'Disagreed!' repeated Madeline, in an agitated voice.

'Yes—Henri's patron wants him to marry some great young lady, who has fallen desperately in love with him, and he has positively refused to do so.'

'Who is the lady?' asked Madeline, in a voice scarcely intelligible.

'I really don't know, Ma'am; if I did, I would tell you; but my father never entrusts me with a secret, lest I should blab it; though I am sure I should never think of doing so; and so 'tis only by listening here, and listening there, I ever come to the knowledge of any thing. Poor Henri! my father has also quarrelled with him, because he has rejected this great offer: 'tis a cruel thing to do so; for, to be sure, it is but natural to suppose he would accept it, if he could; but when a person is already in love, what can one do?'

'In love!' repeated Madeline, 'do you think your brother is in love?'

'Yes, I am sure he is.'

'But how sure: did he ever tell you he was?'

'No—but one can easily guess he is, by the alteration in his looks and manner.—Lord, he is grown so pale, and so melancholy, he mopes about the whole day by himself; and at night he wanders away to the bleak mountains, where he passes whole hours playing that melancholy music, which almost breaks one's heart to hear.'

'It does indeed,' said Madeline with a deep sigh.

'Bless me, Mademoiselle, how pale you look; let me give you a glass of wine.'

Madeline felt almost fainting, and took one in silence; after which, recovering a little, she begged Theresa to leave her—'I will lay down upon the bed,' cried she, 'and try to rest myself till your father returns.'

'Well, Mam'selle,' said Theresa, 'since you desire it, I will bid you good night; but had I not better draw the window-curtains, and leave you a light?'

'No,' replied Madeline, 'I prefer the shadowy light of the moon to any other; good night, as soon as your father comes back, let me be called.'

Theresa promised she should, and retired.

'Oh! de Sevignie, dear, unhappy de Sevignie!' exclaimed Madeline the moment she was left to herself, 'what an aggravation of my misery is the knowledge of your wretchedness—is the conviction of its being experienced on my account?—Yes, I well recollect your telling me, that it was on my account your youth was wasted, your hopes o'erthrown, your prospects blasted!—Yet, notwithstanding your sufferings, I could cruelly, unjustly condemn you, and expose you to the censure of others; falsely and rashly I judged your conduct, and for ever shall I regret my doing so.'

'It was him no doubt,' she continued, 'whom I beheld near the monumental pillar of Lord Philippe; from his vicinity to the castle, he must have heard of the occurrences which took place there, and he wandered to the forest perhaps from a hope of seeing me.'

'What would he feel if now acquainted with the reverse in my situation? what will he not feel when he hears it—when he hears that his Madeline was sheltered beneath the roof of his father? But perhaps the latter circumstance he may never learn;—if it would add to his misery, Oh! may he never hear it!—Oh! may sorrow and unavailing regret be removed from his heart;—may his hopes be revived, his prospects rebrightened, and may—!' She paused—she could not bring herself to wish him united to another—could not bring herself to wish that he should take another to his heart, and expunge her for ever from it. 'And yet am I not selfish,' cried she,

'in still desiring to retain his regard? our union is now impossible; for was he even to see me again (which 'tis very improbable he ever will), and offer me his hand, I would reject it;—reject it, because I could not now in dowry with my heart, bring any thing but simple wishes for his happiness. My destiny is fixed; the lonely solitude of my father shall be my home: and should he descend before me to the grave, the remainder of my days I'll pass within a cloister.'

Exhausted by fatigue and agitation, she threw herself upon the bed, but sleep was a stranger to her eye-lids: she wept bitterly—wept o'er her misfortunes—yet wept with a kind of pleasure at the idea of her tears falling upon the pillow on which, perhaps, de Sevignie had often sighed forth her name.

The day was just dawning, when she heard the rumbling of a distant carriage. She directly started from the bed, and the next instant Theresa entered the chamber.

'My father is come, Mademoiselle,' said she, 'and impatient for you to be gone; I have brought you a hat, and given him a bundle of things for you.'

Madeline, as she tied on the hat, thanked her for her kindness and attention; and then with a fervent, though silent prayer for the happiness of de Sevignie, whom she never more expected to hear of, or behold, she quitted the chamber.

Oliver was waiting for her in the hall; he told her he had left the chaise at the opposite side of the river, but that they had only to cross the bridge, which was but a little way above the cottage, to reach it. He offered her his arm, which, weak and trembling, she accepted, and in a few minutes found herself within the carriage.

From their quitting the cottage to their arrival in Paris, nothing happened worth relating; they were three days travelling to it, and entered it when it was almost dark. The dejection of Madeline was not in the least abated; nor could the busy hum of voices, the bustle in the streets, or the rattling of the carriages, for a moment divert her attention from her sorrows.

After going through a considerable part of the town, the chaise stopped, and Oliver exclaimed, 'We have at length reached the habitation of Madame Fleury.' Madeline directly looked from the window, but could only distinguish a black wall. Oliver desired the postillion to alight, and knock at a small door he pointed to:—the postillion accordingly obeyed, and in a few minutes the door was opened by a female; but what kind of female it was too dark for Madeline to perceive.

'Is Madame Fleury at home?' asked Oliver.

'Lord, that she is,' said the woman; 'it is many a good day since my mistress has been out at so late an hour as this.'

'I'll step in before you,' cried Oliver to Madeline, 'and present

Lafroy's letter; as soon as she has read it, I will come back for you.'

He accordingly left the carriage. In about fifteen minutes he returned to it—'Madame Fleury,' said he, as he opened the chaise door, 'is impatient to see you.'

He handed Madeline across a spacious court; and they entered a hall so long and badly lighted by one small lamp, that Madeline could not perceive its termination. Here Madame Fleury waited to receive her. She took her hand, and as she led her into an old fashioned parlour, scarcely less gloomy than the hall, welcomed her to the house. 'I shall be happy, my dear,' said she, 'to render you every kindness in my power, not only on my nephew's account, but your own; for your countenance is itself a letter of recommendation.'

Madeline attempted to express her thanks, but an agony of tears and sobs—an agony excited by the idea of the forlorn situation which had thus cast her upon the kindness of strangers, suppressed her utterance; and, sinking upon a chair, she covered her face with her hands.

'Come, come,' said Madame Fleury, tapping her upon the shoulder, 'you must not give way to low spirits. Come, come,' continued she, going to the side-board and bringing her a glass of wine, 'you must take this, and I'll answer for it you'll be better.'

It was many minutes, however, ere her emotions were in the least abated. As soon as Oliver saw her a little composed, he declared he must be gone. Madame Fleury asked him if he could not stay the night? he replied in the negative, saying he had some relations in Paris whom he wished to visit; and as he meant to leave it the ensuing morning, no time was to be lost.

Madeline conjured him to remind Lafroy of his promise, which he solemnly assured her he would; and she saw him depart, though the father of de Sevignie, without the least regret; for neither in his looks or manner was there the least resemblance to his son, or any thing which could conciliate esteem.

As her composure returned, she was able to make observations upon her companion—observations by no means to her advantage; and she felt, that if she had been at liberty to chuse a protector, Madame Fleury would have been the last person in the world the choice would have devolved upon. Like Oliver, neither her looks or manner were in the smallest degree prepossessing; the first were coarse and assured, the latter bold and vulgar.

Almost immediately after the departure of Oliver, she ordered supper; and as they sat at table, attended by an elderly female servant, dirty and mean in her appearance, Madame Fleury tried to force consolation as well as food upon Madeline.

'You must not, my dear,' cried she, 'as I have said before, give

way to low spirits; there is nothing hurts a young person so much as melancholy—it destroys all vivacity; and what is a young person without vivacity? why a mere log. You must reflect, that when things are at the worst, they always mend; and that a stormy night is often succeeded by a fine day. Come, take a glass of wine,’ continued she, filling out a bumper for herself, and another for Madeline, ‘it will cheer your heart. Nothing does one so much good when one’s melancholy as a little wine: I speak from experience; I have led a dismal life, one that has hurt my spirits very much for some years past. My nephew, I suppose, told you about the gentleman to whom this house belongs.’

Madeline bowed.

‘Well, upon his quitting it, for the purpose of travelling, all the servants were discharged; and ever since, that poor woman and I’, pointing to the servant, ‘have led the most solitary life imaginable, just like two poor lonely hermits.’ (Madeline could not forbear smiling at those words; very like hermits indeed, thought she, as she cast her eyes over the table, which was covered with delicacies.)—‘Just like two poor lonely hermits, fasting and praying,’ said Madame Fleury, with a deep sigh.

It may easily be supposed that Madeline soon grew tired of conversation of this kind; her timid heart shrunk from the attentions of Madame Fleury, instead of expanding to receive them; yet she condemned the strong prejudice which she had conceived against her.—‘I will try to conquer it,’ said she to herself, ‘because it is unjust—unjust to dislike a person merely because they have been cast in one of the rough moulds of Nature, and their manners, in consequence of the difference of education, are unlike mine.’

Madame Fleury seemed inclined to sit up to a late hour, which Madeline perceiving, she pleaded fatigue, and begged permission to retire to her chamber. Madame Fleury instantly rising, took up a light, and said she would conduct her to it. Madeline followed her down the hall, at the bottom of which was a folding door, that on being opened, discovered a spacious stair-case.—‘This appears to be a very large house,’ said Madeline, as ascending the stairs, she beheld numerous passages and doors.

‘Oh, quite a wilderness of a house,’ replied Madame Fleury; ‘I am sometimes a year without seeing half the apartments.’

‘I wonder you are not afraid to live in it,’ said Madeline, ‘without more servants.’

‘Why all the valuable things were removed from it on the desertion of its master, so that prevents my having many fears; besides, I take good care to see all the doors secured before I go to bed.’

The room allotted for Madeline was spacious, but dirty and ill furnished; nor was there aught within it that gave evidence of

better days, except a few faded portraits, large as the life, which still hung against the brown and dusty wainscot.

'Is your chamber near this?' asked Madeline, as she cast her eye around.

'Oh, yes, I shall be your neighbour; so don't be uneasy,' replied Madame Fleury. Madeline assured her she would not; and then, anxious to be alone, begged she might no longer detain her.—'Good night then, my dear,' said Madame Fleury; 'I shall call you when it is time to breakfast.'

Madeline looked behind the window-curtain ere she locked the door; she then recommended herself to the protection of Heaven; and, worn out both by bodily and mental fatigue, repaired to bed, where she slept till her usual hour of rising.

When dressed, she drew up the window curtain; but how different the prospect she beheld from the prospects she had been accustomed to; instead of sublime mountains towering to the clouds, or rich meadows, scattered over with flocks and herds, she now beheld high and dirty walls, which completely enclosed a small spot of ground planted with a few stunted trees. She sighed, and a tear stole from her to think she might never more enjoy the sweets of Nature, or mark

*how spring the tended plants,  
How blows the citron grove, what drops the myrrh,  
And what the balmy reed—how Nature paints  
Her colours—how the bee sits on the bloom  
Extracting liquid sweets.*

Her melancholy reflections were soon interrupted by the voice of Madame Fleury; she immediately opened the door, and, after the usual salutations of the morning were over, accompanied her to breakfast, which was laid out in the room where they had supped the preceding night, and which, like the chamber of Madeline, looked into what Madame Fleury called the garden.

After breakfast she rose, and told Madeline she must leave her—'I go every morning to church,' cried she; 'while I am absent, you can amuse yourself with reading; you'll find some books in that closet,' pointing to one at the end of the room.

Madeline thought it odd her not being asked to accompany her to church; and she was just on the point of requesting permission to do so, when she recollected, that perhaps Madame Fleury might have some places after the service was over to call at, which she did not wish to bring her to; she therefore timely checked herself, and said she would either walk in the garden, or read.

As soon as she was alone, she examined the books, but she found none that pleased her; and even if she had, her mind was too much disturbed to permit her to derive amusement from them; she

therefore went into the garden, where, deeply ruminating o'er past events, she heeded not the lapse of time, and was astonished when the maid came out to inform her that her mistress had been returned some time, and dinner waited. Madeline hastily followed her into the house, but on reaching the parlour, she involuntarily started back on perceiving a young man with Madame Fleury.

'Bless my soul,' said Madame Fleury, laughing immoderately, 'bless my soul,' cried she, taking the hand of Madeline, 'you look terrified. Well, you are the first girl I ever saw frightened at the sight of a young man; let me introduce my nephew to you, and you'll find you have no reason to be afraid of him;—Dupont, this is Mademoiselle Jernac,' the assumed name Lafroy had chosen for Madeline.

Dupont saluted Madeline with much politeness, and expressed his regret at having caused her any disagreeable surprise: she bowed, and endeavoured to recollect herself, in order to avoid the coarse raillery which her confusion excited in Madame Fleury, and permitted him to lead her to the table.

When they were seated at it, Madame Fleury began to sound the praises of her nephew;—'I can assure you, Mademoiselle,' cried she, 'when you know him better, you will like him much; he is a good soul, I cannot help saying so, though to his face: he is secretary to a nobleman of high rank and consequence; and, though from his situation he might be conceited and dissipated, he is neither the one nor the other, nor disdains to come now and then, and take a snug dinner with his old aunt.' While she was speaking, Madeline could not help attentively regarding Dupont, whose face appeared familiar to her; but where or when she had seen the person whom he resembled, she could not possibly recollect.

Dupont was young, handsome, and rather elegant; yet almost the moment Madeline beheld him, she conceived a prejudice against him;—his gentleness seemed assumed, and there was a fierceness, a boldness in his eyes, which at once alarmed and confused her.

When dinner was over, Madame Fleury proposed cards. Madeline immediately rose, and, declaring she never played, desired leave to retire to her chamber.

'No,' cried Dupont, also rising and taking her hand, whilst he gazed upon her with the most impassioned tenderness, 'we cannot let you go; we'll give up cards; we'll not think, not act, but as you like.'

'I should be sorry, Sir,' cried Madeline coldly, and withdrawing her hand, 'that the inclination of any person was sacrificed to mine; at present I am much better calculated for solitude than society, and must therefore again entreat Madame Fleury's permission to retire to my room.'

'Then you will entreat in vain I assure you,' cried she; 'I have no notion of letting you go to mope about by yourself.'

'If you thus restrain me, Madam,' said Madeline, who every moment grew more anxious to quit Dupont, 'you will prevent me from having the pleasure of thinking myself at home.'

'True,' cried Dupont, 'where there is restraint, there can be no pleasure; permit Mademoiselle Jernac, therefore, Madame,' addressing his aunt, 'to leave us, since she is so cruel as to desire to do so; perhaps our ready compliance with her wishes will at some other time incline her to be more propitious to our's.'

'Well, you may go, child,' said Madame Fleury; 'but indeed 'tis only to oblige my nephew that I let you.'

Dupont led Madeline to the door, where, in spite of all her efforts to prevent him, he imprinted a kiss upon her hand.

Her heart throbbing tumultuously, she hastily ascended the stairs; she saw, or fancied she saw, looks exchanged between the aunt and nephew which terrified her: stories of designing men and deceitful women rushed to her recollection; and she trembled at the idea of her forlorn situation—at the idea of being solely in the power of strangers, without a being near her to protect her, if protection should be necessary. She wished to know whether she was in an inhabited part of the town, which the darkness of the hour she had arrived at Madame Fleury's prevented her ascertaining, that in case there was a necessity for quitting her present residence, she might have a chance of easily procuring another; and accordingly determined to avail herself of the present opportunity, and explore her way, if possible to the front of the house. The gallery in which her chamber stood, was terminated by a door, which she softly opened, and discovered a winding passage: without hesitation she entered it, and proceeded till stopped by another door; this she opened with difficulty, for the key was rusty, and for a long time resisted all her efforts to turn it: when at length she had succeeded, she found herself in a chamber as spacious as her own, but stripped of all the furniture except a bare bedstead. She stepped lightly to a window, and to her great mortification, found herself still at the back of the house; she directly turned away, and was hastening from the room, when, carelessly glancing her eye over it, a stain of blood upon the floor filled her with horror, and rivetted her to the spot. 'Oh! God,' she cried, while her arms dropped nerveless by the side, 'what dreadful evidence of guilt do I behold!' A heavy hand fell upon her shoulder; she shrieked—and, starting, beheld Madame Fleury—'What, in the name of wonder, brought you hither?' demanded she in rather an angry voice.

'I did not conceive there was the least impropriety in examining the apartments,' said Madeline.

'Impropriety, why no; but then you might have told me you were curious. Come, let us quit this chamber; I hate it.'

'Have you reason to hate it?' asked Madeline, her eyes still

fastened upon the blood-stained floor. She felt the hand of Madame Fleury tremble.—‘Why to tell you the truth,’ said she, going to the bedstead and sitting down, ‘my nephew, Dupont,’ speaking in an agitated voice, ‘once met with an ugly accident in it; he fell and hurt himself so much, we thought he never would have recovered; the stains of his blood are still upon the floor; nothing would take them out.’

‘Blood sinks deep!’ said Madeline in a hollow voice, and raising her eyes, she fixed them upon Madame Fleury.

‘Pray let us leave this chamber,’ cried her companion, rising in visible confusion. She seized the arm of Madeline, and drawing her from it, locked the door, and put the key into her pocket. ‘I came up,’ said she, as they proceeded to the chamber of Madeline, ‘to ask you whether you would not chuse a book, and if I should not send you some coffee.’

‘No,’ replied Madeline, ‘neither a book nor coffee; all I desire is to be left without interruption to myself to-night.’

‘I am afraid you are a fanciful girl,’ said Madame Fleury.

‘Would to Heaven I was only affected by fancies!’ exclaimed Madeline with fervour.

‘Well, since you wish to be alone, I will leave you,’ cried Madame Fleury, ‘nor shall you again be interrupted.’

‘In doubting Madame Fleury,’ said Madeline, when left to herself, ‘do I not doubt Lafroy, of whose fidelity I have received such proofs, that to harbour a suspicion of him, makes me feel guilty of ingratitude. Oh! surely,’ she continued, and her mind grew composed by the idea, ‘he never would have confided me to the care of his relation, had he not been convinced she was worthy of the trust; and, in giving way to my present fears, I torment myself without a cause. Every thing may be as Madame Fleury has stated; her nephew may have been hurt in the chamber; and his attentions to me may be dictated by what he imagines politeness. I will then exert myself,’ she cried; ‘I will combat my fears, nor to the pressure of real evils add those of imaginary ones.’

To reason herself out of her fears was not, however, as easy as she imagined; they still clung to her heart, and she wished, fervently wished, that she had never entered the residence of Madame Fleury. She determined the next morning to ask to accompany her to church—‘I shall then,’ said she, ‘know what kind of neighbourhood I am in, and whether there is any convent near the house, to which I could fly in case any thing disagreeable again occurred in it.’

As soon as it grew dark, the maid brought her a light, which she kept burning all the night. She was scarcely dressed in the morning, when Madame Fleury tapped at the door to inform her breakfast was ready. Madeline immediately opened the door, and attended her to the parlour, where, to her great vexation, she found Dupont.

'So, so,' said his aunt, as if a little surprised by seeing him, 'you are here! what, I suppose you could not rest till you had paid your devoirs to Mademoiselle?'

'I should be sorry,' said Madeline, with some degree of haughtiness, 'to place to my own account a visit which I neither expected nor desired.'

'And yet you would be right in doing so,' cried Dupont.

Madeline made no reply, but addressed herself on some indifferent subject to Madame Fleury.

After breakfast, which was rendered extremely disagreeable to Madeline by the looks and attentions of Dupont, Madame Fleury rose, and said it was time to go to church. 'I hope, Madam,' cried Madeline, also rising, 'you will permit me to accompany you this morning.'

'No, indeed I shall not,' exclaimed she; 'you can be much better employed at home, for my nephew will stay with you.'

There was something in those words which shocked Madeline so much, that for a moment she had not the power of utterance.—'I can assure you, Madam, then,' said she, 'that if you do not let me go, I will confine myself to my chamber until your return.'

'That is, if my nephew is such a fool as to permit you.'

Madeline could no longer restrain herself. 'If this is the manner in which you mean to treat me, Madam,' she exclaimed, 'you cannot be surprised if my continuance with you is of short duration. 'Tis not,' she continued, with increasing warmth, 'the mere shelter of a roof that I require—'tis kindness, 'tis protection, 'tis the attentions which sooth the sorrows of the heart, and lighten the pangs of dependance;—except assured of my receiving these, your nephew, Lafroy, I am confident would never have entrusted me to your care; and candidly and explicitly I now tell you, I shall withdraw myself from it, if longer subjected to freedoms I abhor.'

Madame Fleury only replied to this speech by a contemptuous smile; then turning on her heel, she darted out of the room, and shut the door after her. Madeline attempted to follow her, but was prevented by Dupont, who, seizing her hand, dragged her back to a seat. She grew terrified, but tried to conceal her terrors. 'I insist on your releasing me immediately, Sir,' said she.

'I cannot,' cried he, 'I cannot be so much my own enemy.'

'Though Madame Fleury has forgot what is due to her sex, I hope,' resumed Madeline, 'you will not forget what is due to your's; to insult an unhappy woman, is surely a degradation to the character of a man.'

'I do not mean to insult you,' replied Dupont; 'my honourable addresses cannot surely insult you?'

'Your honourable addresses!' repeated Madeline, surveying him with mingled surprise and contempt.

'Yes—I love, I adore you; and now entreat you to accept my hand and heart.'

'I shall not say I reject them,' replied Madeline, 'because I do not think you serious in offering them; I cannot believe that any man in his senses can offer himself to a woman he scarcely knows.'

'I am serious, by all that is sacred!' cried he with vehemence.

'Then believe me equally serious,' said Madeline, 'when I assure you, that could you with your hand and heart offer me the wealth of the universe, I would reject them. You are, no doubt, acquainted with my unhappy story—Oh! do not, therefore,' she continued, 'do not render unpleasant the asylum your aunt has afforded me, by persevering in attentions which never can have the desired effect.'

'Perseverance does much,' said Dupont; 'I will try it.'

'To my torment then, and your own disappointment you will try it,' cried Madeline.

'How can you be so inflexible?' said he, looking on her with the most passionate tenderness.

Madeline grew more alarmed than ever by his manner. 'If you have generosity, if you have compassion,' exclaimed she, 'you will now let me retire.'

'Well,' said he, 'to shew my readiness to oblige you, however I may mortify myself by doing so, I will now let you leave me; but ere you go, suffer me to say I never will drop my suit.'

Anxious to leave him, Madeline made no reply. Her first impulse on quitting the parlour, was to fly directly from a house in which she was exposed to insult and persecution; but a moment's reflection convinced her of the impracticability of such a measure at present, when in all probability Dupont was upon the watch: she therefore determined not to attempt escaping till a more favourable opportunity for that purpose offered. Still anxious, before that opportunity occurred, to discover in what kind of neighbourhood she was, instead of repairing to her chamber, she hastily turned into a long passage off of the great stair-case, in which several doors appeared.



but it was many minutes ere she shewed any signs of returning life. At length opening her eyes, she again fastened them upon Madeline with the wildest expression of fear, and in a feeble voice exclaimed, 'You are come then, come from the realms of bliss, for the purpose of summoning my soul to that tribunal where it must answer for all its crimes?'

'I know not what you mean,' said Madeline, endeavouring to raise her head, and support it upon her breast; 'the voice of distress drew me to this apartment, not from idle curiosity, but from a hope of being serviceable to the person from whom it proceeded; and my motive will I trust excuse any intrusion I may appear guilty of.'

'From whence, or from whom do you come?' demanded the unhappy woman.

'Alas!' replied Madeline, 'I have neither strength nor spirits now to enable me to relate my sad story; all I can tell you is, that I am an unfortunate girl, without any friend, I fear, to afford me the protection I require.'

'Perhaps I may be able to serve you,' said the stranger; 'that voice—that look—Ah! how powerfully do they plead in your behalf! What part of the house do you inhabit?'

'I am so little acquainted with the house,' cried Madeline, 'that perhaps I may confound one place with another; my chamber is at the end of a great gallery.'

'What kind of a chamber is it?'

''Tis wainscoted, and ornamented with faded portraits.'

'Amongst which is there not a remarkable one of a lady in mourning with a drawn dagger?'

'Yes.'

'Well, since I know your chamber, I will, if there is a possibility of getting to it, pay you a visit, and tell you of a plan I have thought of for your escape.'

Madeline, in an ecstacy of gratitude and hope, caught her hand, and was raising it to her lips, when a sudden, though distant, noise made her drop it.

'Oh! heavens,' cried the stranger, 'if we are discovered, we are lost!—Fly—regain your chamber, if possible, without delay; and as you value your safety, as you value your life and mine, keep secret our interview.'

Madeline started from the ground—'Oh! tell me ere I go,' she cried, 'when I may expect you.'

'Away, away,' said the stranger, 'a moment's delay may be fatal!'

Madeline could no longer hesitate about departing, and swiftly and lightly she descended the stairs; at the bottom she paused to listen and look down the passage, but she neither heard any noise, nor beheld any object: she was therefore proceeding with quickness when suddenly she heard an approaching step.

From the words of the stranger, she believed destruction inevitable if discovered in her present situation; she therefore determined to try and gain admittance into one of the adjacent chambers, and secrete herself within it till all danger of detection was over. She accordingly tried the nearest door, and, to her inexpressible transport, the lock yielded to her first effort. The instant she entered the room, she bolted the door, against which she then leaned to try if she could hear the approach of the step that had so much alarmed her; but all again was profoundly still. Somewhat composed by this, she ventured to turn, and to her infinite amazement, beheld herself in a most magnificent chamber. 'What new mystery,' said she, 'is this? Madame Fleury assured me her chamber was near mine; and yet who but Madame Fleury can occupy this room?'

This was a mystery soon explained; for as she was stealing from the door to the window, she beheld the clothes which Dupont had on the preceding day lying upon a chair.—'Ah! heavens,' exclaimed Madeline, recoiling with horror, as if it was Dupont himself she saw; 'Dupont then is the inhabitant of this chamber! Oh! for what vile purpose is his residence here concealed? Oh! Lafroy, you were either deceived yourself, or basely deceived me when you sent me to this house; new horrors every moment open to my view, and my senses are scarcely equal to the conflicts I endure!'

She was returning to the door for the purpose of endeavouring to quit the room, when some letters scattered upon a dressing-table caught her attention: she darted to them; but how impossible to describe the horror she experienced, when upon all the hated name of D'Alembert met her eye. She snatched up one, and while the blood ran cold to her heart, read as follows:—

The lovely Madeline will soon be in your power; Lafroy has completely secured her for you: may you profit by his stratagems! Adieu!—Believe me ever your affectionate father,

G. D'ALEMBERT

Not when she trembled beneath the poignard of a supposed assassin—when she shuddered at the idea of having seen a being of the other world—when she groaned from a conviction of her father's being a murderer—did Madeline receive such a shock, did she experience such horrors as she now felt on discovering Lafroy to be a villain! She dropped upon her knees, and raised her eyes and trembling hands to heaven, though unable to articulate a prayer.

She had not been in this situation above two minutes, when a loud knock came to the door. Madeline started wildly from the floor, and looked round to see if there was any place which could afford her concealment; but no such place presented itself to her view. The knock was repeated with increased violence; and scarce-

ly could she prevent the wild shriek of despair from bursting from her lips. Her silence, however, availed her but little; for the knock was repeated, and the moment after, the door burst open by Dupont; the room rung with the shriek which she uttered at that instant.

'Well,' exclaimed he, 'by coming to my chamber, you have saved me the trouble of going to your's.'

As he spoke, he attempted to catch her in his arms, but she eluded his grasp, and springing past him, fled towards her chamber; he pursued her, and, overtaking her just as she had reached the door, rushed into the room along with her.

She now threw herself upon her knees—'I am in your power,' said she, in almost breathless agitation; 'be generous, and use it nobly.'

'And do you deserve any thing like generosity from me?' cried he; 'do you not merit the severest punishment for having clandestinely entered my chamber, and treacherously examined my letters.'

The fear of Madeline gave way to indignation; her eyes flashed fire; she rose, and looked upon him with scorn.

'And what punishment does the villain merit who forced me to such actions?' she exclaimed. 'What punishment does he merit who assumes a name but for the purpose of deceiving, who spreads his snares for the friendless and unhappy?'

'You compelled me to assume another name,' said he, 'because you objected to me for bearing that of D'Alembert.'

Madeline turned from him with contempt; he followed her.

'Madeline,' cried he, 'let all trifling cease between us: you are, as you have yourself observed, completely in my power; be politic therefore, and no longer reject my overtures.'

'Monster!' exclaimed Madeline, 'do you insult me by still pleading for my hand, knowing, as you must, that I am acquainted with the existence of your wife?'

'I do not plead for your hand,' replied he with the most deliberate coolness, ' 'tis for your heart: consent to be mine; consent to accept the only proposals I can now make you; and, in return, I will not only secure you an independence and a delightful asylum, where you can fear nothing, but solemnly promise, if ever I have power to do so, to make you my wife.'

'I will not attempt,' said Madeline, 'to express my indignation and contempt—I shall content myself with merely saying, that, were you even dear to my heart, I would reject offers which could entail infamy upon me: think, therefore, whether there is a probability of my accepting them, when I tell you, that, united to my horror at your baseness, is an aversion to you too strong for any language to describe.'

The most violent rage took possession of D'Alembert at those words; but the terror which his rage inspired, was trifling to the shock which Madeline received, when in his inflamed countenance she traced the dreadful countenance of him beneath whose poniard she had trembled at midnight in the ruined monastery of Valdore.

'Oh! God,' she cried, starting back, 'do I behold the murderer of the Countess?'

The crimson of D'Alembert's cheek faded at those words; his eyes lost their fury, and he trembled, but in a minute almost he recovered from his confusion. 'Insolent girl!' cried he, stepping fiercely to Madeline, 'of what new crime will you next accuse me? Beware how you provoke me; do not go too far, lest you tempt me to retaliate—retaliate in a manner most dreadful to you—on your father.'

'He is beyond your power,' exclaimed Madeline, with a wild scream, and clasping her hands together; 'he is safe, he is secure.'

'As I could wish,' cried D'Alembert, with a malicious smile.

An idea of treachery having been practised upon her father as well as upon herself now started in the mind of Madeline, and her heart almost died away. 'My father is safe!' she repeated, with a quivering lip, and a faltering voice.

'Yes—beneath this roof.'

'Oh, God!' cried Madeline as she sunk upon the floor.

D'Alembert raised her, and used every method in his power to revive her: it was many minutes, however, ere she was able to stand or speak. At length, sinking from his arms—'Forgive me,' she exclaimed, as she knelt at his feet, 'Oh! forgive me if I have said aught to offend you; make allowances for my wounded feelings, for my distress, my irritation at finding myself deceived where I most confided, and drop all resentment; be noble, and give up every intention hostile to my father's peace and mine; restore me to his arms, and suffer us to depart together to some distant spot, where, in security and solitude, we may pass our days;—do this, and receive from me the most solemn assurances of our never disturbing your tranquillity, or uttering an expression which can be displeasing to you.'

D'Alembert raised and pressed her to his heart; she trembled—she resented. 'But I am in the grasp of the lion,' said she to herself, 'and I must try by gentleness to disengage myself from it.'

'You plead in vain, Madeline,' cried he; 'I have run every risk to secure you, and never will give you up. But while I say this, let me quiet your apprehensions by assuring you, that though solely in my power, I never will make an ungenerous use of that power by using any violence; I will not force you to return my love; but if you continue much longer to disdain it, I shall not hesitate to surrender your father to the fate he merits.'

'He is not, he is not in your power,' exclaimed Madeline; 'you have said so but for the purpose of awaking my fears, from a hope of being able to take a base advantage of them.'

'Well, though you doubt my words, I suppose you will not doubt the evidence of your own eyes.'

Madeline trembled; the faint hope which had just darted into her mind, of his assertion relative to her father being merely for the purpose of terrifying her, now utterly died away.

'I will this instant, if you please,' said D'Alembert, 'conduct you to the chamber of your father; but ere I take you to it, I must prepare you for the situation in which you will find him.'

'The situation!' repeated Madeline, starting.

'Yes; I had an idea I should be compelled to bring you to him, in order to convince you he was in my power; and therefore ordered an opiate to be given to him this morning, which has thrown him into a state of insensibility, and thus precluded all possibility of his either hearing or uttering complaints.'

'The ear of the Almighty will be open to his complaints and mine,' said Madeline; 'they will reach the throne of Heaven, before which you must one day answer for your crimes.'

'Do you chuse to see him?' asked D'Alembert.

Madeline made no reply; but, breaking from his arms, she moved towards the door; he followed her, and, taking her trembling hand, led her in silence to the end of the gallery, from whence they turned into a long passage, terminated by another door. D'Alembert took a key from his pocket, and unlocked it—'We are now,' said he, 'in the chamber of your father.'

The curtains of the bed were closed; Madeline snatched her hand from D'Alembert, and pulling them back, beheld her father extended on it—thin, ghastly, to all appearance dead. She shrieked aloud—'He is dead!' cried she, 'he is dead!—Oh! monster, you have murdered my father!'

'No,' said D'Alembert; 'you frighten yourself without a cause; the ghastly look of his countenance is occasioned by the opiate.'

Madeline laid her hand upon his heart; she felt it faintly flutter; and a scream of joy burst from her lips. 'Yet have I reason to rejoice at his existence,' she cried, 'when I reflect upon his situation?'

''Tis in your power,' said D'Alembert, 'to change that situation—to restore him to liberty, to free him from danger, to ensure him protection.'

'In my power!' repeated Madeline.

'Yes; accept my offers, and all that the most duteous, the most tender son could do for a father, I will do for your's.'

'And think you,' said Madeline, 'my father would thank me for freedom and security, if purchased by dishonour? no, believe me he would not; I know his soul too well—know that death, in its

most frightful form, would not be half so dreadful to him as the knowledge of his daughter's infamy:—never then will that daughter deviate from the path he early in life marked out for her to take:—never then, though surrounded by dangers and difficulties,—the dangers, the difficulties of him who is dearer, infinitely dearer to her than existence, will she act contrary to the principles he implanted in her mind, or forego her hopes of Heaven's protection, by striving to attain safety at the expence of virtue.'

'Your resolution is then fixed,' said D'Alembert.

'It is,' replied Madeline in a firm voice.

'Mine is also fixed,' cried D'Alembert. As he spoke, he approached her—'You continue no longer in this chamber,' said he.

Madeline retreated. 'You cannot, you will not surely,' she cried, 'be so inhuman as to force me from it? Oh! let me watch by my father!—Oh! suffer me to remain with him I entreat, I conjure you!'

'In vain,' said D'Alembert; and he again advanced to seize her. Madeline screamed; and, throwing herself upon the bed, she clasped her arms around her father—'Awake, awake,' she cried, 'my father, awake, and hear, Oh! hear the agonizing shrieks of your child!'

'It will be many hours ere he awakes,' exclaimed D'Alembert, as unlocking the hands of Madeline, he raised her from the bed; 'and when he does, it will be in an apartment very different from his present one, except you relent.'

She forcibly disengaged herself from him, and sunk at his feet—'Have mercy,' she exclaimed, with streaming eyes and uplifted hands, 'have mercy upon my father and me, and entitle yourself to that of Heaven! Oh! let those tears, those agonies, plead for us! let them express the feelings which language cannot utter!'

'I have already told you,' said D'Alembert, with savage fury in his countenance, 'that my resolution is fixed; I now swear it—swear to give up your father to the offended laws of his country, except you consent to return my love.'

He caught her in his arms, from which she vainly tried to disengage herself, and bore her shrieking and struggling to her chamber.

'Now, Madeline,' cried he, 'speak—but ere you speak, deliberate; for on your words depends the fate of your father.'

'Wretch!' exclaimed the agonized Madeline, 'you already know my determination.'

'Farewel! then,' said he, 'I go for the officers of justice.'

'Oh! D'Alembert,' cried Madeline, wildly catching his arm as he was about quitting the room, 'you cannot be so inhuman; you cannot surely think of giving up to death a man, who has been basely betrayed into your power—a man, infinitely more unfortunate than guilty!—Again I kneel before you to supplicate your pity for him.'

Oh! could you look into my heart, could you ascertain the dreadful feelings which now pervade it, I am convinced you would be softened to compassion.'

'My compassion can easily be obtained,' said D'Alembert—'your love.'

'Villain!' exclaimed Madeline, rising from the floor, 'begone! never more will I address you: to God alone will I look, up to him, whose power can in a moment defeat your purposes; he has promised to protect the innocent; I will think of that promise, and support my fainting heart.'

'Again then,' said D'Alembert, 'I bid you farewell! you have yourself provoked your father's fate.'

With feelings which can better be conceived than described, Madeline saw him quit the chamber. 'He is gone then,' said she, as she heard him close the door, 'he is gone for the ministers of justice!' The dreadful and approaching sufferings of her father rushed to her mind; she saw the torturing rack—she beheld his mangled form upon it—she heard his deep groans, expressive of excruciating agony, and the loud shouts of the rabble mocking his pangs, and applauding the hand which inflicted punishment upon the fratricide.

She shrieked aloud; she flew to the door, but it was fastened on the outside: she called upon D'Alembert; she conjured him to return—to return to assure her he would have mercy upon her father; but she called in vain. She then attempted to force the door, but her strength was unequal to the effort. The agony and disappointment she experienced were too much for her; her brain maddened; and wild as the waves which destroy the hopes of the mariners, she raved about the room, till, utterly exhausted by the violence of her emotions, she dropped upon the floor, where her shrieks sunk into groans, which by degrees died away in hollow murmurs, and a total insensibility came over her.

In this situation she must have continued many hours; for when she recovered, she found the gloom of closing day had already pervaded the chamber. Her ideas at first felt confused; but by degrees a perfect recollection of all that had passed returned, and clasping her cold and trembling hands together, she called upon her father.

As she called upon him, she heard a faint noise outside the door; she started, but had not power to rise; and almost immediately it was opened, and the miserable woman she had seen in the morning entered.

'Rise,' exclaimed she in a whispering voice, 'and follow me.'

'Whither?' said Madeline, without obeying her.

'To your father; he waits to conduct you from this detestable house. I released him from his chamber, in the door of which D'Alembert left the key when he dragged you from it. But ask me

no farther questions; D'Alembert but deferred going for the officers of justice till it grew dark; a moment's delay may therefore be fatal, and cut off all opportunity of escaping.'

'Oh! let us fly, let us fly then,' said Madeline, starting from the ground.

Softly and silently they descended to the hall, and turned down a long passage, terminated by a flight of steep stone stairs; these they also descended, and Madeline then found herself in a subterraneous room; a faint light glimmered from a recess at the extremity of it, which startled her, and she caught the arm of her companion.

Her terror, however, was but of short duration; almost instantly the voice of her father reached her ear, and she saw him approaching with extended arms; she sprung forward, and flung herself into them. 'Oh! my child,' he exclaimed, as he clasped her to his heart, 'in what a situation do I behold you!'

'My father, my dearest father,' cried Madeline, 'do not let us complain of our situation; Oh! rather let us express our gratitude to that Being who has alleviated it, by giving us a friend who will extricate us from this abode of terror and of death;—but the moments are precious; we should lose no time.'

'They are precious indeed,' said the old woman; 'that door,' pointing to one in the recess, 'opens upon a flight of steps which ascend to the court; here is the key of it,' continued she, presenting it to St Julian.

'But how shall we escape from the court?' demanded Madeline.

'Your father will be able with ease to unbar the door; and as Madame Fleury always sits at the back of the house, there is no danger of your being discovered.'

'Oh! let us be quick,' exclaimed Madeline.

St Julian advanced to the door; but scarcely had he attempted to open it, when a violent tumult was heard without the court, and immediately after the steps of many people entering it. He paused—listened—and looked at his daughter. Horror almost froze her blood—'They are come,' cried she, 'the ministers of death are come.'

'I fear so,' said the old woman. 'Hark! they have entered the house, and are now ranging through the apartments!'

'Is there no hope—is there no way of escaping?' asked Madeline distractedly.

'None,' replied the old woman mournfully, 'but through the court.'

'Is there no place of concealment?'

'No.'

'Nor any fastening to this door?' advancing to the one through which they had entered.

'None, except a weak bolt that could be burst in a moment.'

'Then all hope is over,' cried Madeline, turning to her father. 'Oh! God,' she continued, looking up to heaven, 'take me, take me from this scene of horror! let me die within the arms of my father!'—Almost fainting, she sunk upon his breast.

The tumult within and without became every instant more violent; and it was evident that one party surrounded the house for the purpose of guarding every passage, whilst another searched throughout it.

Madeline suddenly started from the arms of her father, and extinguished the light. 'Let us go within the recess,' cried she; 'if they do come down, they may not perhaps do more than merely look into the room.' They accordingly crept into it, and placed themselves as close as they possibly could against the wall.

They had not been in this situation above two minutes, when they heard descending steps. 'They are coming,' cried Madeline, with a panting heart, whilst a cold dew burst from every pore.

She had scarcely spoken, when a light glimmered through the room, and a party of men rushed in it. 'He is not here,' vociferated one.—'Let us search elsewhere then,' exclaimed another.—(Heaven hears our prayers, thought Madeline).—'We will first examine this room,' said a third; 'these subterraneous chambers are generally surrounded with places for concealment.'

The heart of Madeline died away at those words; and with a faint cry she sunk to the earth.

'Have pity upon my child,' exclaimed the wretched St Julian, bending over her, whilst the shouts of the men pierced his ears, and re-echoed through the chamber; 'have pity upon her, and aid me in recovering her ere you tear me from her!'

'Tear you from her!' repeated a voice which made him start from his daughter—the tender, the well-remembered voice of de Sevignie—'Oh! never,' cried he, darting from amidst his companions, and snatching the still senseless Madeline from the ground, 'Oh! never shall Madeline be torn from the arms of her father!'

Something like a ray of hope gleamed upon the mind of St Julian—'I am all amazement!' exclaimed he.

'You are free—you are safe,' said de Sevignie; ' 'tis friends, not foes, that you behold; but I can give no explanation till this suffering angel is revived.'

His promised explanation we shall anticipate in the following Chapter.



stands when unacquainted with the world, and unguarded by any friend. As a means of poisoning his mind, he had often wished to get Lafroy into his service; he knew of no person better calculated for sowing the seeds of vice, and leading the unwary into the flowery paths of dissipation. Accordingly, on a continental tour being settled for Philippe, he offered Lafroy to the Marquis for his son: having already made that tour himself, he said he knew the necessity there was for a young man being accompanied in it by some person on whom he could depend; he therefore recommended Lafroy as such a person, as one whose principles no temptation could warp, and whose integrity would be a guard for him against the designs of the artful.

The Marquis, who believed the offer of D'Alembert (as he himself indeed declared it) to be suggested by the purest friendship, accepted it with the most heartfelt gratitude, and Lafroy was taken into the suite of his son.

From Italy Lafroy wrote an account of all his operations to D'Alembert; and with the utmost chagrin, one declared, and the other heard, that the mind of Philippe was too well fortified by virtue and reflection to be led astray.

Notwithstanding the ill success of his plan, and the inconveniences he was often subjected to from the loss of Lafroy, D'Alembert would not recall him, still trusting that time and perseverance would sap the foundation which had hitherto resisted all the attacks that were made upon it.

So silent, so imperceptible were those attacks, that Philippe never was alarmed by them; they were like the sting of the asp,

*That best of thieves, who with an easy key  
Dost open life, and unperceiv'd by us,  
Ev'n steal us from ourselves, discharging so  
Death's dreadful office better than himself;  
Touching our limbs so gently into slumber,  
That Death stands by, deceiv'd by his own image,  
And thinks himself but sleep.*

Lord Philippe returned to France without the smallest alteration in his principles; and the hopes of D'Alembert died away—hopes, however, which revived on Philippe's declaring his resolution of going back to Italy, when he had been but a few months returned from it. Something more than a mere inclination to travel he was convinced attracted him so immediately from home; and he gave the necessary instructions to Lafroy to watch him narrowly.

Lafroy suspected an attachment between him and Lady Elenora Dunlere; and his suspicions were confirmed by Lord Philippe's passing that time at the castle of her father, which, on quitting his own home, he had declared he would spend in Italy. To know the

nature of the attachment, what kind of connection it had formed, or was likely to form, between them, he laid himself out to gain the confidence of Blanche, with whose perfect knowledge of all that passed in the family he was acquainted. Ignorant, innocent, the very child of simplicity, Blanche was not long proof to his artifices — artifices which were aided by every blandishment that had power to touch a susceptible heart, and her virtue and promised secrecy to her ladies were soon sacrificed to him. From being taken into the family of the Earl when quite a child, and brought up in a great degree with his daughters, Blanche was treated more as an humble friend than servant, and entrusted with the most important secrets. Her protectors doubted not the principles which they had implanted, nor the sincerity of the attachment which their tenderness deserved, and she professed. With the marriage of both her ladies, with the relationship between their husbands, and the concealment of Lord Philippe's marriage from his brother, she was acquainted, and all those particulars she communicated to Lafroy, who transmitted them to his employer.

Scarcely were they known to D'Alembert ere they suggested a most horrid and complicated scheme of baseness and cruelty to him; a scheme of which there appeared every probability of success. That Lausane, the injured son of the Marquis, could easily be worked up to the destruction of a brother, who deprived him of his right, he could not doubt; and if Philippe fell, it would surely, he thought, be an easy matter to get rid of Lausane. On Lafroy's return to the Castle of Montmorenci, he finally adjusted and arranged his plans. The manner in which they were executed and accomplished is already known. Josephe, at whose cottage Lausane lodged, was, as has been already mentioned, the brother of Lafroy, and Claude was a companion and particular friend, whom D'Alembert, on parting with him, took at his recommendation to supply his place.

D'Alembert charged Lafroy to secure Blanche, lest any after-  
repentance should tempt her to betray them: he accordingly inveigled her from the castle, by representing the delights she would experience if she went to Paris; and immediately after the fatal encounter between the brothers, he put her into the hands of Claude, who conveyed her thither to the house of Madame Fleury. D'Alembert also charged him to destroy the son of Philippe, whose existence interfered as much with his prospects, as that of the father's had done. Lafroy promised obedience to all his commands; but the last was one he never meant to fulfil. He was so great a villain himself, he could place no confidence in others; and therefore believed, that if he had no tie upon D'Alembert, he never should receive the rewards he had been promised, and thought his services entitled to. He therefore determined to preserve the infant: nor was he

stimulated to his preservation by a mere distrust of D'Alembert; another motive equally powerful influenced him, namely the aggrandizement of his own family through his means. Proud, ambitious, and disdainful of his dependant situation, he resolved on bringing up the son of Lord Philippe as his own nephew, the child of his brother Joseph; and at a proper age, insisting on an union taking place between him and the daughter of D'Alembert; 'when supposed to be allied to the proud House of Montmorenci,' said he, 'I shall no longer be permitted to be a dependant in it; the family will then enrich, will then ennoble me and mine.'

As soon as he had securely lodged the child in the hands of Joseph, who, immediately after the departure of Lausane from his cottage, repaired to the Alps for the purpose of receiving it, and easily prevailed on his wife to acknowledge it as her's; he disclosed his scheme to D'Alembert, solemnly declaring at the moment he did so, that if he did not acquiesce in it, he would betray him to the Marquis. This threat—a threat which, from the disposition of Lafroy, D'Alembert doubted not his putting into execution if incensed, conquered all opposition to it; and he agreed, at a proper age, to give his daughter to the supposed son of Joseph.

But he was still more in the power of Lafroy than he imagined: Lafroy and Claude had watched the meeting between the brothers; and on Lausane's flying from the bleeding body of Philippe, they hastened to it. As they bent over it with a kind of savage triumph at the success of the execrable scheme they had been concerned in, they suddenly beheld it tremble. Lafroy was startled, and laid his hand upon the breast; he felt the heart faintly flutter; 'Lausane,' he exclaimed, 'has but ill-performed the work we gave him.'

'I'll try if I cannot do it better,' said Claude, and he snatched up the dagger, with which Lausane had stabbed Lord Philippe, and which lay beside him.

'Hold!' cried Lafroy, catching his arm as he raised it for the purpose of striking Lord Philippe to the heart, 'a thought strikes me—we had better endeavour to preserve than destroy his existence;—the life of his son is precarious; if our schemes relative to him are accomplished, we can easily destroy the father; if they are disappointed, our declaring his existence will at all times compel D'Alembert to comply with our demands, be they ever so extravagant.'

'True,' cried Claude; 'but how will you conceal him, or manage about his wounds?'

'There is an extensive cave,' replied Lafroy, 'contiguous to the vaults of the castle, known but to few, and which Blanche shewed to me; the former inhabitants of the castle used it as a place for depositing treasure in, and accordingly fortified it with iron doors. Thither, with your assistance, I can now convey him; and, as I have

a knowledge of surgery, I shall dress his wound, and from the castle bring whatever I deem necessary for him:—for the purpose of attending him, I shall continue here till Josephe has left the child with his wife; he shall then return to supply my place; and as his affinity to me is not known, his appearance can excite no suspicion.'

'But inhabited as the castle is,' said Claude, 'you cannot, without danger of detection, secrete him long within the cave.'

'No,' replied Lafroy, 'I cannot; as soon, therefore, as he regains sufficient strength to enable him to bear the fatigue of the journey, I shall return hither, and with your assistance and Josephe's convey him elsewhere.'

This cruel scheme, which doomed the unfortunate Philippe to worse than death, to lingering misery, was put into practice without farther hesitation; and Claude was then dispatched for Blanche, who waited impatiently to commence her journey with him to Paris.

No sooner was D'Alembert informed of the death of Philippe, than he devised a scheme for the destruction of Lausane. This, it may be supposed, he meant easily to effect by accusing him of murder, and consequently drawing upon him the vengeance of an enraged and afflicted father. But this was not by any means his intention;—an open accusation would, he knew, occasion a public trial, at which there could be no doubt but Lausane would declare the artifices which had instigated him to the destruction of his brother—a declaration that might, that would indeed, in all probability, D'Alembert feared, raise suspicions against himself. To prevent, therefore, all danger of such suspicions, he determined to have him privately destroyed; for which purpose, he meant to dispatch some of his well-tryed emissaries to the habitation of Lord Dunlere, habited as officers of justice, to demand Lausane as a murderer; whom, on getting into their hands, they were to convey to a proper place for such a deed of horror, and put to death, but in such a manner, that his death should seem the effect of some sudden disorder. To aid in this diabolical plan, he himself travelled in disguise to the Alps, with his emissaries; and he was the person who alarmed the good monk so much by declaring his intention of searching every where for Lausane. The story invented in consequence of that declaration, completely frustrated his designs; and he returned not a little delighted to his home, at the idea of Death's having proved such a friend to him, by freeing him both from the trouble and danger of putting Lausane out of the way himself. With him died away all apprehension of detection, and all fears of disappointment relative to the estates of Montmorenci; and his dissipation, in consequence of the certainty of his expectations being realized, was unbounded.

Lafroy still remained in the service of the Marquis, who felt

strongly attached to him from an idea of his having been a faithful and affectionate servant to his son. That unfortunate son recovered from his wound; and, as soon as he was able to bear a removal, was conveyed in the dead of the night by Joseph, Lafroy, and their partner in iniquity, Claude, to a lonely cottage at some distance from the castle, and well calculated, from its frightful solitude, for the purpose for which it was taken. Here, under the care of Joseph, he remained till after the death of Lord Dunlere; he was then re-conveyed to the castle, which Lafroy had art enough to prevail on D'Alembert to purchase, by pretending he should like it for a future habitation. In reality, he knew no place so well calculated for concealing the unhappy Philippe, no place in which he could so easily make away with him, when he should find his existence no longer necessary. As it was not possible to keep Joseph longer from his home without exciting suspicions and enquiries, he dispatched him to it, and placed in the castle a sister of their's and her husband, whose dispositions too much resembled his own to make him fear any thing from them.

Every thing now went smoothly on with D'Alembert: his wife, whom he had never loved, died shortly after the supposed death of the two brothers, and every one considered, and treated him with additional respect in consequence of that consideration, as the heir of Montmorenci. The unhappy Marquis, tortured with remorse, and anxious to expiate his crimes by atoning to those he had injured, made the most diligent enquiries after his eldest son—enquiries in which D'Alembert, with the warmest zeal appeared to join, but which in reality he baffled, wishing, for obvious reasons, to conceal from the Marquis every thing relative to him. The only drawback he had upon his happiness, was the idea of the degradation he should suffer by the union of his daughter with the supposed son of Joseph, a peasant upon the Montmorenci estate. But as he knew this was a measure which could not be avoided without the exposure of his iniquities, he tried to reconcile himself to it by a hope, that his rank and fortune would stifle at least the open censures of the world. The consequence which he knew he should lose by his daughter's connection, he determined to try and re-acquire by the marriage of his son; and for this purpose, looked out amongst the most illustrious for a partner for him. His choice soon devolved upon the young and lovely heiress of the Count de Merville, who was then just presented at the French Court by her mother, and was the most admired object at it. Her heart was not gained without difficulty; but when gained, her hand soon followed it. The prize attained, the tendernesses and attentions by which it was won, were soon discontinued; and the mask of gentleness and sensibility cast aside, discovered to the unhappy mother and daughter features of the utmost deformity and horror. To reform, instead of reproach,

was however the ardent wish of both—a wish which they were soon convinced was not to be accomplished; and with unutterable anguish, the Countess beheld her amiable and beloved child united to a hardened libertine. To try and alleviate her bitter destiny, she remained with her a considerable time after her marriage, till driven from her residence by the insulting treatment of D'Alembert, whose expences far exceeded both the fortune of his wife, and the income allowed by his father, made him demand supplies from her, which she refusing, provoked him to language and conduct not more wounding to her as a woman to receive, than degrading to him as a man to use. She refused those supplies, not only because she thought it a sin to furnish vice with the means of gratifying itself, but because she wished to reserve something like an independence for her daughter, in case she was ever plunged into pecuniary distresses (of which she beheld every probability) by the thoughtless and unbounded extravagance of her husband.

During her own life this independence could only be acquired, for at her death her fortune, which, in right of her father she enjoyed, was entailed upon her daughter; and would, she was convinced, on devolving to her, be swept, like all her other possessions, into the vortex of dissipation.

To avoid the insults of D'Alembert, and to diminish her expences, she was hastening to her chateau at the time she met with the accident which introduced her to the cottage of Clermont. No sooner was she acquainted with his situation, than she formed the resolution of taking his daughter under her protection, and dividing with her whatever she could save, and meant to have appropriated solely to Madame D'Alembert's use.

Her departure from the habitation of D'Alembert did not exempt her from his solicitations, or reproaches on finding those solicitations still unsuccessful. A letter from him, couched in a more insulting style than any she had before received from him, was the occasion of the illness and dejection which shocked and alarmed Madeline so much on her return from Madame Chatteneuf's—an illness and dejection, for which the Countess would never assign the real cause. To conceal domestic troubles—troubles which could not be remedied, she always conceived to be the wisest plan; rightly considering, that the world always took a divided part; and, though convinced one side was culpable, never exempted the other entirely from blame.

Enraged, disappointed, and distressed by her continued refusals, D'Alembert formed the horrible resolution of assassinating her—a resolution which he scrupled not to avow to his father, who had ever been his abettor in all his villainous schemes and profligate pursuits. His father did more than sanction it by silence; he commended it as a proof of real spirit, which would not quietly submit

to ill-treatment; and recommended Claude, who still continued in his service, as a proper person for assisting in such a scheme: of this young D'Alembert was already convinced, having before tried his abilities in one scarcely less iniquitous than the present. Disguised, they both travelled to the chateau, and in the ruined monastery acted the dreadful scene which has been already described. Notwithstanding her injuries, the just resentment she must have felt for them, the Countess determined never to reveal their author; the consequence of doing so would, she was convinced, be either death or distraction to her daughter. She died, imploring heaven to forgive him as she had done, and for ever conceal from his wife her having fallen by the hand of her husband.

Her solemn injunction to Madeline upon her death bed, not to continue in the house if he came to it, was occasioned by her perfect knowledge of his libertine disposition. Beauty like her's could not fail, she was sure, of exciting his regards: she was equally sure that he would not hesitate going any length to gratify his passions. She therefore, though without informing Madeline of the danger she dreaded on her account, earnestly conjured her to avoid it. Of his baseness and profligacy she had had a fatal proof during her residence beneath his roof.

Soon after his marriage, ere they were thoroughly acquainted with his disposition, she and Madame D'Alembert took under their protection a young and lovely girl, the orphan of a noble but reduced family, with whom they had been well acquainted. They took her with an intention of amply providing for her, and still keeping her amongst the circles she had been accustomed to. Long she had not been under their care, ere her charms attracted the admiration of D'Alembert; and, in defiance of the laws of hospitality, honour, and humanity, he insulted her with the basest proposals, and threatened revenge when he found them treated with the contempt they merited. Tenderness for her patronesses made her long conceal his conduct: at length she grew alarmed, and revealed it. In consequence of this disclosure, they determined to send her to a convent in Dauphine, and lodge her there till they could hear of a respectable family who would receive her as a boarder, and under whose protection she could with safety and propriety again enjoy some of the pleasures of life. Under the care of proper attendants she commenced her journey; but how great was the horror, the consternation of the Countess and Madame D'Alembert, when those attendants returned to inform them, that from the inn where they had stopped for the night, she had eloped.

The idea of her having eloped was not for an instant conceived either by the Countess or Madame D'Alembert; they knew the innocence of the unhappy girl—they knew her total ignorance of all with whom they were not acquainted, and suspicion immediately

glanced at D'Alembert: they hesitated not to inform him of that suspicion; they did more—they declared their positive conviction of his having had her carried off by means of some of his agents: he denied the justice of the charge—he resented it; and, in reply to their threats (for supplications they soon found unavailing), said he was ready to deny before any tribunal they might cite him to, the crime they accused him of. His declarations of innocence gained no credit with them; they were convinced of his guilt, but could not prove it; and the unfortunate Adelaide, who had no friends out of their family interested about her, was never after heard of by them, notwithstanding their diligent and unceasing enquiries, and promises of liberally rewarding any one who could give the smallest intelligence concerning her.

As fearful as her mother of having Madeline seen by her husband, yet unwilling to relinquish her society, Madame D'Alembert determined, instead of sending her from it, to secrete her in the chateau when Monsieur D'Alembert so unexpectedly announced his intention of coming to it, for the purpose, as Agatha suspected, of seeing what part of the estate would be the best to dispose of. Amongst the domestics who attended Madame D'Alembert to the chateau, was a young female, whose principles her master had entirely perverted. His improper influence over her was, however, carefully concealed from her mistress, over whom he placed her as a kind of spy, an office she too faithfully executed. She overheard the conversation between Madame D'Alembert and Madeline, and communicated it to D'Alembert almost immediately after his arrival at the chateau. Eager to behold beauty so extolled, he rested not till he had gained access to the chamber in which Madeline was concealed, and which he effected by means of a sliding-door in the closet, with which she was unacquainted.

The moment he beheld her, he was captivated by her, and determined to leave no means untried of securing charms which he had never seen equalled. For the purpose of concerting a plan for the accomplishment of his wishes, he appointed an interview in the ruined monastery with his female confidant. The shock which Madeline received in consequence of that interview, is already known. As she lay senseless at his feet, instead of being moved to pity by her situation, he conceived the horrid idea of availing himself of it; and determined to send to the chateau for some of his emissaries to carry her off, when the unexpected approach of his wife and Lubin frustrated this intention. Not knowing who were approaching, he and his companion fled at the first sound of their steps, and thus lost the conversation which took place between Madeline and her friend.

He returned the next morning to the monastery, and explored every part of it for her; the chateau next underwent a search. When

convinced she was gone, his rage knew no bounds; he openly accused his wife of perfidy, of meanness; insisted she had infringed her duty in having had any concealment from him; and peremptorily commanded her to tell him (if she hoped for his forgiveness), whither she had sent her lovely charge; this she as peremptorily refused doing. Words, in consequence of that refusal, grew high between them; and the party which had accompanied him to the chateau, were dismissed abruptly from it by him. As a justification of his conduct, and an excuse for it, he assured them that his wife's temper would not permit him to have them with pleasure to themselves any longer under his roof.

When freed from their observation, and the little restraint which they had imposed upon him, he treated the unhappy Madame D'Alembert with the utmost brutality. To avoid his inhumanity, she never stirred from her chamber, except compelled to do so by his commands; and now endeavoured to beguile her wretchedness by beginning her promised narrative to Madeline—a narrative, however, which she doubted ever having the power of sending to her, as D'Alembert solemnly swore she never should be permitted to leave the chateau, or hold converse of any kind with any person out of it, till she had communicated to him all he desired to know concerning her lovely friend.

His temper, it may be supposed, was not improved when his father arrived at the chateau to inform him of the existence of Clermont, and his being acknowledged as the son and rightful heir of the Marquis of Montmorenci. This was a blow not more unexpected than dreadful—a blow which completely demolished all his hopes of independence, all his hopes of being extricated from his difficulties. He raved, and imprecated curses upon the memory of those who had deceived his father relative to Clermont. His rage and regret at not having secured Madeline, were augmented when he understood that she was the daughter of Clermont; and reflected, that had she been carried off by him, the discovery relative to her father would never, in all probability, have taken place.

'How unfortunate,' exclaimed old D'Alembert, in reply to what he had said concerning her, 'how unfortunate that you are not at liberty to offer your hand, and thus gratify your love and your ambition. Were you free, I am convinced I could soon effect a marriage between you and St Julian's daughter.'

His son started; a flush of savage joy overspread his countenance—'I can easily regain my liberty,' said he; 'I have long sighed for it; a noble soul will ever try to break chains which are oppressive. My wife is but a mortal; the hand which gave a quietus to the mother, can easily give the same to the daughter. We can manage the affair between us so secretly, that no soul shall know of it, no eye behold it.'

His father sighed heavily, and shook his head. Remorse had lately begun to visit his breast; and he trembled to think there was an eye over all their actions—an eye which could not be deceived. ‘I like not the shedding of blood,’ said he.

‘You were not always averse to it,’ cried his son with a malignant sneer.

‘True, because my designs could be by no other means accomplished; where mercy can be shewn, I wish to be merciful; you can get rid of your wife without destroying her: the report of her death will as effectually serve your purposes as if she had really died; and in the castle on the Alps she can be too securely lodged ever to have an opportunity of proving the fallacy of that report.’

D’Alembert detested his wife; and could not, without the utmost reluctance, think of sparing her life; when his father at length prevailed upon him to promise to do so. They soon concerted their schemes relative to her. It was determined that he should apologize to her for his unkindness; and, as an atonement for it, insist upon her accompanying him to Bareges, in order to try and recover her health, which to herself alone he should acknowledge his fears of having injured. Their plans arranged, they immediately separated. Old D’Alembert was in haste to return to his house from whence he had privately departed for the purpose of consulting his son on the sudden change in their prospects; Claude alone knew of his departure, and was ordered to detain the Marquis’s messenger, and invent a plausible excuse for the letter he brought not being answered directly.

The purport of the letter which D’Alembert wrote in reply to it has been already mentioned. After writing it, he had a private interview with Lafroy, to whom he imparted the new scene of cruelty and baseness he and his son were about acting; and gave such instructions as he deemed necessary. These instructions were merely to do every thing which could gain the favour and confidence of St Julian, and render him unsuspecting of the designs upon his daughter. To forward which designs, it was determined that all the horrors of superstition should be awakened in his breast; when once infected, once enervated by them, he might easily, D’Alembert believed, be made the dupe of art and villany. For the purpose of exciting those horrors, Lafroy secreted himself in the chamber of Lord Philippe, to which he gained access by a way not known to many of the family, and forgotten by those who did know it, from its being long disused. Immediately behind the bedstead was a small door which opened into a dark closet, communicating with a flight of back stairs; those stairs, and this closet, previous to his residence at the castle, had been shut up, and chance first discovered them to him. A valuable ring of his Lord’s was mislaid one day, and, in searching for it, he pushed aside the bedstead, and per-

ceived the door; curiosity made him eagerly unbar it, and explore the places beyond it. Of those long deserted places he determined to avail himself when the plan of alarming St Julian was first suggested, and his was the hand which, extended through the tapestry, had so greatly shocked and terrified Madeline.

The rage of D'Alembert at her obstinate refusal of his son, was even greater than he expressed; he soon found that solicitations were vain, and that stratagem alone could effect his purposes. The stratagem he called in to his aid is already known: but whilst exulting at the idea of the success with which there was every appearance of its being crowned, he was suddenly plunged into despair by the intelligence of his daughter-in-law's existence being discovered to Madeline and her father—a despair, however, from which the ready genius of Lafroy soon relieved him.

The letter which Madeline received relative to her friend, was written and delivered by Claude. A fit of illness, which endangered his life, effected a thorough reformation in his principles; and he rose from the bed of sickness resolved to make every atonement in his power for his former enormities. To openly declare the existence of Madame D'Alembert and the unfortunate Philippe, would be, he was convinced, to occasion their immediate destruction; for so well was he acquainted with the hardened wickedness of D'Alembert, his son, and Lafroy, that he doubted not their declaring such an assertion the assertion of a madman, and instantly dispatching some of the well-tried and diabolical agents, by which they were surrounded, to destroy Philippe and Viola ere any person from the Marquis could be deputed to search for them. He knew the necessity therefore there was for going secretly to work, and, having once gained access to the castle, to warn Madeline of her danger, determined to set out alone for the Alps. He learned from a domestic of D'Alembert's who was sent home, that Madeline confined herself to her chamber; and, acquainted as he was with every avenue in the castle, he found it no difficult matter to steal to her unperceived by any of the family.

His letter, which St Julian, in the full conviction of his fidelity, imparted to Lafroy, was immediately shewn by him to D'Alembert. For leaving him so abruptly, Lafroy apologized to St Julian by saying he wished to be alone in his chamber, in order to consider what was to be done.

D'Alembert, on reading the letter, struck his forehead in a frenzy, and exclaimed that all was lost. Lafroy, however, soon convinced him to the contrary. The conversation which passed between him and Madeline, and which has already been related, sufficiently explains his plot.

St Julian, instead of meeting a friendly guide at the extremity of the forest, as he had been taught to expect, was met by two

ruffians, who rudely seized him, and forced him into a chaise, in which he was conveyed to Madame Fleury's, where too late he discovered, that by the person in whom he had most confided, he had been most deceived.

Joseph, Lafroy's brother, was the person who accompanied Madeline to Paris, under the assumed name of Oliver. An express from the Castle of Montmorenci informed young D'Alembert of all the transactions at it, and of St Julian and his daughter being consigned to the care of Madame Fleury till he had determined their fate. He immediately conceived the idea of passing himself as the nephew of Madame Fleury, and under that assumed character, offering his hand to Madeline, falsely imagining her friendless situation would make her readily embrace any offer which gave her a promise of protection. When tired of her, which he doubted not being soon the case, he resolved on destroying her, as a sure method of preventing another disappointment relative to the fortune of Montmorenci: her father's death he would not have delayed an hour, but that he was withheld from it, by considering, if artifice failed with Madeline, fears for her father might accomplish his designs. In the house of Madame Fleury, he knew any scene of iniquity might be acted with impunity. She was a woman of the most infamous description, and avowedly kept a house for the encouragement of vice. Beneath her roof the innocent and lovely Adelaide lost her life; bribed to the horrid deed by D'Alembert, the owner of the inn at which she slept put her into his power, and, on finding no other way of escaping his violence, she stabbed herself to the heart with a knife which she concealed about her; her body was thrown into a vault beneath the house; and it was the traces of her blood which had so much alarmed Madeline. Blanche, the once faithful servant of her mother's, was the unhappy penitent she discovered before the crucifix: the seeds of virtue which had been early implanted in her mind, the artifices of Lafroy had not been able entirely to destroy; and ere she was many months with Madame Fleury, Blanche bitterly regretted her misconduct, and wished to leave her. This was a wish, however, which Madame Fleury was peremptorily commanded by D'Alembert not to gratify, lest her releasement should occasion the discovery of his crimes.

The resemblance which Madeline bore to Lady Geraldine immediately struck her; the effect it had upon her has been already described. On Madeline's quitting her, she followed her to the head of the gallery, and heard the scene which passed between her and D'Alembert. Whilst he was pursuing Madeline, she stepped into his chamber, and read his letters, which clearly explained the real name of Madeline, and the situation of her and her father—a situation which, on discovering who they really were, Blanche was determined to run every risk to rescue them from. She was acquainted

with all the passages in the house, and knew she never was suspected of leaving her chamber; she therefore flattered herself she could easily effect their delivery. As soon as it grew dark, she unlocked the door of St Julian's prison, who had by that time entirely recovered from the effects of the opiate, and briefly informed him of her wishes and intention to serve him. He heard her with grateful transport; and was conducted by her to the vault communicating with the court, from whence she ascended to bring his daughter to him.

During this transaction D'Alembert was seated quietly with Madame Fleury, exulting at the probability there was of his schemes being now successful in consequence of the terror into which he had thrown Madeline, whom he meant shortly to visit, and inform that the officers of justice were coming to the house to seize her father. But great as was his exultation, it was trifling compared to that which his father experienced, who, on the removal of St Julian and Madeline from the Castle of Montmorenci, had not a fear remaining of any future disappointment. Till Madeline was secured, he deemed it unsafe to say any thing about her father to the Marquis; he therefore made him believe, till she had departed, that his unfortunate son, oppressed with the deepest melancholy, wandered about the forest to indulge it the whole day, and only returned at night to take some trifling refreshment, and go to bed.

As soon as Madeline was consigned to the care of Joseph, a letter was presented to the Marquis, which exactly imitated the writing of his son, and was signed with his name. This letter contained a full confession of the murder of his brother, and went on as follows:—'It was a murder to which I was stimulated by revenge at the usurpation of my rights, and a hope, that if he was once out of the way, you would not be averse to doing me justice. That hope has been realized, but without yielding me happiness. Since my arrival at the castle, remorse has been awakened by means not more awful than mysterious, in my breast; and, in consequence of that remorse, I have determined to resign all claim to the fortunes of Montmorenci, and seclude myself for ever from the world. Nor shall my daughter enjoy them; they would entail misery instead of happiness upon her: a convent is her doom; to her God I shall devote her; the offering I trust will be acceptable, and cause him to look with an eye of compassion and forgiveness upon my miseries and crimes.'

The feelings of the Marquis on perusing this letter were too dreadful to be described; he accused himself as the cause of death to one son, and guilt to the other; and all idea of vengeance for the murder of Philippe was lost in the reflection of his having occasioned that murder himself. His life, in all probability, would have been terminated in a few days by the anguish he suffered, had not that

Being, who accepts our penitence as an atonement for our errors, unexpectedly relieved him from the horrors of despair.

D'Alembert dispatched two emissaries after Claude for the purpose of destroying him. Fatigued by his exertions, he had stepped aside to rest himself in a little grotesque hollow at some distance from the road they took, and thus escaped falling into their merciless hands. From his concealment he had a perfect view of them, and the moment he beheld them, he conjectured their horrible designs. All hope of succouring Madame D'Alembert now died away; all hope of escaping the vengeance of her husband and his father; for whether he advanced or retreated, he was confident equal danger awaited him. Overwhelmed with fear and anguish, he flung himself despairingly on the ground, determined rather to die there, than by stirring from the spot, expose himself to the hand of an assassin. In this situation he heard a party of travellers approaching; he was in that desperate state which tempts a man to adventure every thing. He accordingly started up, and resolved on applying to them for protection for himself, and assistance for Madame D'Alembert. The instant they drew near, he threw himself before them, and in a supplicating voice, besought them to stop and listen to a story calculated to awaken all the feelings of compassion, and to interest every generous heart. His words and manner claimed immediate attention, and he began his strange narrative. Scarcely had he concluded it, when a sudden exclamation of mingled grief and indignation burst from some of the party, which convinced him he had applied to the friends of Madame D'Alembert in her behalf. To her most tender, most affectionate friends he had indeed applied—to Madame Chatteneuf and her daughter, who were returning from Italy to France, accompanied by an Italian Nobleman, (to whom a few days before the commencement of her journey, Olivia had given her hand), his friend, and a numerous retinue of servants. To the dreary castle they immediately bent their course, and rescued the unhappy Viola from worse than death—from lingering misery!

Her safety ensured, Claude mentioned the imprisonment of Philippe. His reason for not declaring it to Madeline was owing to his doubts of the existence of the unhappy captive at the time he set out for the Alps, having heard a few days before that he was in so weak a state, his life was despaired of: he therefore feared raising expectations in the breast of Madeline which might be disappointed, being well convinced, that if Philippe died ere he reached the castle, the assertion of his having lived to that period, would be considered as the mere fabrication of his brain. To the gloomy tower in which he was confined, he led the way, and found him, as he had been taught to expect, on the very brink of the grave—that grave to which he had long wished himself consigned; for, torn as he was

from all that could render life desirable, life was a burthen which he ardently wished to resign! But with the change in his prospects, an immediate change took place in his sentiments, and the soothing attentions of compassion—attentions to which he had been long a stranger; the joy of unexpected deliverance, and rapturous idea of beholding his son, soon effected such an alteration in his appearance, as not more delighted than astonished his friends, gave them every hope of his speedy recovery, and enabled them, even sooner than they had expected, to proceed to the castle of Montmorenci. Within a little way of it, all the carriages but Madame Chatteneuf's, stopped and, accompanied by her son-in-law, she proceeded to it, and demanded a private interview with the Marquis. After the first ceremonies of meeting were over, she told him she had something to relate to him not more affecting than interesting; but declared she could not commence her relation till he had given orders for Monsieur D'Alembert and Lafroy being secured.

Strange as was this desire, the impressive manner in which it was delivered, would not permit the Marquis to hesitate about obeying it. He accordingly summoned some of the domestics he most confided in, and gave them a strict charge to have an eye over D'Alembert and Lafroy, and inform him if they attempted to quit the castle.

Madame Chatteneuf then began her promised narrative;—nothing but the knowledge which the Marquis had of her character, could have prevented him from interrupting her in the midst of it, and declaring his doubts of its truth. When she had concluded the recital of the injustice which had been done to Madame D'Alembert, and her sufferings in consequence of it, she paused—paused from the emotions she experienced at the idea of those which the fond father would feel when informed the long-lamented darling of his heart was about being restored to his arms. She approached him with eyes swimming in tears, and taking his hand, pressed it between her's. 'A yet greater, a yet more affecting surprise than that received by hearing of Madame D'Alembert's existence, awaits you,' cried she; 'Oh! endeavour to bear it with composure—endeavour to hear with moderation—that he, whom long you have mourned, still lives—lives to demand a father's blessing, and recompense the bitter sorrow he has occasioned.'

Great joy and great sorrow are often alike in their effects. Madame Chatteneuf had scarcely uttered the last word, ere the Marquis fainted in her arms. She directly desired a servant to be dispatched for the rest of her party; and the first object the Marquis beheld on recovering, was his long-lost Philippe. The scene which followed can better be conceived than described; it was such as drew tears from every spectator. Yet amidst the Marquis's raptures, the keenest pangs of anguish seized his heart at beholding the

devastation which suffering had made upon his son, no more he beheld eyes darting fire, cheeks painted with the liveliest bloom of health, and a form graceful and elastic. 'But happiness,' he exclaimed, 'happiness never is perfect in this life!'

When Philippe grew a little more composed, he mentioned his son, and besought him to be sent for. This was a new surprise, a new source of delight to the Marquis; and an express was directly dispatched to the cottage of Josephe for him. Orders were also given for the confinement of D'Alembert and Lafroy.

Ignorant of the late transactions at the castle, de Sevignie, whilst he obeyed the summons to it, could not otherwise account for that summons, than by supposing his residence near Madeline had been discovered by her father, and awakened his apprehensions of their attachment being renewed in consequence of their vicinity to each other; to prevent which, he had sent for him to request he would go elsewhere. 'If he makes such a request, I will obey it,' cried de Sevignie, as in a melancholy manner he followed the messenger; 'go where I will, I shall still retain the idea of Madeline; and, though my situation cannot gain the approbation, my conduct shall merit the esteem, of her father.'

Oh! how impossible to describe the feelings of Philippe when he presented himself to his view? How equally impossible to do justice to those of the Marquis, when, in the youthful Henri, he beheld the exact resemblance of his beloved son—his resemblance, when all the graces, all the charms of elegance and youth were his. Surprised by the reception he met with, by the emotions with which he was alternately clasped to the bosom of Lord Philippe and the Marquis, de Sevignie looked the very picture of astonishment. He was not permitted to remain long in ignorance of his real situation; and with a delight not inferior to that experienced by his new-found relatives, he knelt to receive their blessing. But short was the duration of his joy when informed of Madeline and her father having been spirited away from the castle; informed of the too probable dangers which surrounded them, the most dreadful anguish pervaded his soul; and striking his hand distractedly against his forehead, he exclaimed, that happiness was lost for ever!

D'Alembert and Lafroy had been brought into the apartment, taxed with their guilt, and strictly interrogated concerning St Julian and his daughter; to which interrogations both had hitherto observed a profound silence—a silence the former determined to persevere in, from a fiend-like wish of rendering others as miserable as himself; but which the latter resolved on breaking if he could, by doing so, escape the punishment he merited. In reply, therefore, to what de Sevignie had said, he declared there was still a chance of happiness being restored to him.

'If,' cried he, 'the Marquis will promise to pardon me, and not

cast me without provision upon the world, I will, without delay, reveal the place to which the Count and his daughter have been taken.'

'Oh! promise him all he asks,' exclaimed de Sevignie, grasping the arm of the Marquis; 'promise him pardon—promise him wealth, protection, if he but declares the situation of Madeline and her father.'

'Solemnly I promise to grant him all he desires,' said the Marquis.

'May his information come too late!' cried D'Alembert, who, finding his baseness could not even be palliated, determined no longer to conceal the deformity of his soul; 'may his information come too late! ere this, I trust, the fate of the father and daughter is decided—the dreadful fate to which they both were doomed.'

'Infernal monster!' exclaimed de Sevignie, catching him by the breast, then suddenly flinging him from him; 'you are a defenceless man,' he exclaimed, 'that consideration alone saves you from my fury. Villain as you are, I will not strike where there can be no resistance. Oh! tell me,' he continued, turning to Lafroy, 'Oh! tell me whither I can fly to rescue Madeline and her father.'

Lafroy, having made his conditions, informed him without hesitation, and the Count Manfredonia, the husband of Olivia, and his friend Count Durasso, both declared their resolution of accompanying him directly to Paris.

Whilst the carriages were preparing, the Marquis wrote a hasty letter to a nobleman of high rank and power there, requesting him to give whatever authority was necessary to de Sevignie for searching the house of Madame Fleury. De Sevignie never stopped till he reached Paris, except when compelled to do so for the purpose of changing horses.

The moment the nobleman to whom the Marquis's letter was addressed, had perused it, he procured proper officers to accompany de Sevignie to Madame Fleury's. She and D'Alembert were immediately secured, and the house searched for Madeline and her father. But when de Sevignie found it searched in vain, no language could describe what he felt; he flew to the prisoners, and implored them to reveal the place to which they had conveyed the unfortunate St Julian and his daughter. They heard his supplications unmoved: what he asked they could not indeed have granted; yet, in order to torture him, they pretended that they could. Though unable to account for the escape of St Julian and Madeline, they yet believed they had effected it, and rejoiced at the idea, not only on the account of the anguish which they perceived the uncertainty of their fate gave to de Sevignie, but from a hope that they might be able to extricate themselves from his power, and regain the fugitives.

De Sevignie was sinking beneath the horrors of despair, when the

subterraneous chambers were mentioned by the officers; thither he directly fled, and there discovered the objects of his search; from thence he bore the senseless Madeline to the parlour, which was cleared for her reception. Oh! how utterly impossible to describe her feelings when, on recovering, she perceived de Sevignie—when, as he pressed her to his throbbing heart, from his lips she received an assurance of her safety and her father's: but great as was the rapture of those feelings, it was faint compared to that which she experienced on being informed of the existence of Philippe. At first she doubted the reality of what she heard, and accused de Sevignie of an intention of deceiving her; then besought him, if he wished to be credited, to give a solemn assurance of the truth of his assertion. This solemn assurance was instantly given, and received by Madeline with a wild scream of joy: then, flying to her father, who, on the first mention of his brother, had sunk motionless upon a chair, she flung herself into his arms; her caresses restored him to sensibility. He disengaged himself from her, and knelt down—'Oh! God,' he cried, his uplifted hands folded together, 'accept my thanks—accept my thanks for preventing me from being in reality a murderer, a fratricide. In adversity I besought thee to give me fortitude to bear it; in prosperity I now beseech thee to give me moderation to sustain it; Oh! teach, teach me to support with composure this sudden reverse of situation!'

'Oh! ecstacy,' cried Madeline, kneeling beside him, 'to know your guiltless brother lives; to know you have nothing more to fear, repay me amply for all my sufferings.'

When they grew a little composed, de Sevignie continued his narration.

'The web of deceit is at length unravelled,' said St Julian, as soon as he had concluded it, 'and the ways of Providence are justified to man. We now perceive, that however successful the schemes of wickedness may be at first, they are, in the end, completely defeated and overthrown. We now perceive, that God wounds but to heal, strikes but to save, punishes us in this life, but to correct our passions, and render us deserving of happiness in that which is to come.'

Blanche, who had followed them to the parlour, shared their transports, and now made herself known; for time and sorrow had so altered her, that St Julian had not the smallest recollection of her. He freely granted the pardon she asked for the part she had had in his sufferings, and he promised to send her to the place of her nativity, where she earnestly wished to end her days.

Anxious to terminate the anxiety of his friends, it was determined that the journey to the Castle of Montmorenci should be commenced at the dawn of day. Accordingly at the settled time they left the detested mansion of Madame Fleury, leaving her and

D'Alembert in it under the care of the officers of justice, till it should be known whether the charges against them would occasion their being confined elsewhere. They travelled with the utmost expedition, nor slackened their speed, till within a short distance of the castle, in order to send forward a servant to inform the Marquis of their approach, lest their appearance, if unexpected, should affect him too much; but, notwithstanding this precaution, the emotions he felt on beholding them—on beholding the long separated brothers folded in the arms of each other, were such as nearly overcame him, and 'shook his frame almost to dissolution'.

In the most affecting language St Julian implored Lord Philippe's pardon, which he, in terms not less affecting, granted.

'My sons,' said a reverend Monk from a neighbouring convent, the same to whom the Marquis had given such particular directions about his eldest son before he was discovered, 'take my advice, and let a veil be drawn over past transactions, never to be raised except it is for the purpose of instructing youth, by displaying to them the fearful scenes which uncontrolled passions may occasion—uncontrolled passions I repeat, for to such were all your miseries owing. The Marquis, by gratifying his love at the expence of honour and humanity, entailed remorse upon himself, and all the horrors which must ever attend our conviction of being under the immediate displeasure of heaven: and you,' addressing St Julian, 'by madly following the bent of resentment, plunged yourself, to all appearance, into an abyss of guilt, from whence you scarcely dared to raise your eyes to heaven to implore its protection against the designs of the cruel, and the punishment you thought you had merited; whilst your brother, by gratifying the impulse of inclination, without obtaining, or trying to obtain, the sanction of a parent, left himself exposed to the most base designs, and, by practising deceit himself, taught others to practise it upon him. In the course of your sufferings, I dare say you have often accused fate of being the occasion of them; when, in reality, had you properly reflected, you would have found they entirely originated with yourselves: that they are terminated can scarcely excite more pleasure in your hearts than in mine: may your happiness never again know diminution, and your past sorrows, if mentioned, only be mentioned for the purpose of keeping alive a fervent gratitude to that Being who so wonderfully dispersed them!

'From your strange and eventful story, the virtuous may be convinced that they should never despair—the guilty, that they should never exult, as the hour of deliverance to one, and retribution to the other, often arrives when least expected: both should also learn by it, that a merciful God makes allowances for human frailty, and accepts sincere repentance as an atonement for error.' In the words of the poet the holy man might have concluded,

*Heaven has but  
Our sorrows for our sins, and then delights  
To pardon erring man. Sweet mercy seems  
Its darling attribute, which limits justice,  
As if there were degrees in Infinite,  
And Infinite would rather want perfection,  
Than punish to extent.*

‘The affection subsisting between my sons,’ said the Marquis, ‘prevents my feeling that uneasiness I should otherwise experience at the idea of leaving one almost wholly depending upon the other.’

‘We will know no difference of fortune,’ exclaimed St Julian; ‘all that I could do for my brother, all that I could bestow upon him, could never be a sufficient recompence for the sufferings I occasioned him.’

‘Most amply can you recompense them,’ said Philippe.

‘In what manner?’ cried St Julian with eagerness.

‘Need I explain my meaning?’ said Philippe, and he glanced alternately at Madeline and de Sevignie, whose attachment he had been previously informed of; ‘need I say that it is by giving your daughter to my son, you can make me amends for all my sorrows.’

‘That I shall readily make such amends, you will believe,’ cried St Julian, ‘when I tell you, that by so doing, I shall ensure my own happiness; in seeing the precious offspring of Elenora and Geraldine united, the most ardent wishes of my heart will be accomplished: in giving her to de Sevignie, I give her to a man, in whose favour I felt a predilection from the first moment I beheld him—a predilection, excited not only by his manner, but his strong resemblance to you. Take her,’ he continued, presenting her hand to de Sevignie, ‘take her with the fond blessing of her father; and may the felicity you both deserve, be ever your’s!’

The feelings of de Sevignie and Madeline were such as language could not have done justice to; but their eyes, more eloquently than any words could have done, expressed them.

Sorrow now seemed removed from every heart but that of Madame D’Alembert’s; with the deepest melancholy she ruminated over her sad prospects, and resolved to retire from the castle of Montmorenci to a convent, as soon as some settlement had taken place relative to her husband and his iniquitous father. On her account (well knowing, notwithstanding her abhorrence to them she would sensibly feel their exposure to public disgrace), the Marquis determined not to give them up to the punishment they merited, provided they solemnly promised, ere he liberated them, never more to molest her, or attempt injuring the property she inherited in right of her mother. He had already spoken on the subject to D’Alembert, but could not extort a reply from him; he therefore

resolved on sending an express to the son, to inform him of the conditions on which he would restore him to liberty.

On the evening of this happy day which restored them to the Castle of Montmorenci, de Sevignie and Madeline wandered into the forest, and there he informed her of all he had suffered on her account. 'In a manner very different from the family to which I was supposed to belong,' said he, 'I was brought up, by the desire, it was said, of Monsieur D'Alembert, my godfather. Not qualified from my education to partake of the amusements, or join in the pursuits of my family, I found home unpleasant, and early conceived a passion for wandering about; which passion the presents I received from D'Alembert, and the indulgence of my father, permitted me to gratify. In the course of my wanderings, I beheld and became acquainted with you: the feelings you inspired, what followed that acquaintance must have already explained. Though formed to adorn the highest station, I yet flattered myself the unambitious disposition of your father would incline him to bestow you on me, provided I could prove myself possessed of a competency, and worthy, from my past conduct, of his approbation. To do the latter would, I knew, be easy; and to do the former, would, I trusted, be scarcely more difficult, for D'Alembert had always promised to secure me a handsome establishment, and I now hoped he might be prevailed on to fulfil his promises. I wrote to my father, opened my whole heart to him, and besought him to apply to D'Alembert in my behalf. I received an immediate answer to this letter, in which my father charged me, except I wished to incur his severest malediction, never to think more about you, declaring that my sole prosperity in life depended on my union with D'Alembert's daughter, who, in my visits to the chateau, he said, had conceived a partiality for me, which her father, rather than destroy her peace, had determined to gratify. My resolution, on perusing this letter, was instantly formed: I resolved never to marry a woman I disliked, nor unite myself to one I loved, except assured I could add to, instead of injure, her happiness. Notwithstanding my determination, I lingered in your house till the altered looks of your father plainly convinced me he wished for my departure: the pangs which rend soul and body, could not, I am sure, have been greater than those I endured on tearing myself from you.

'I returned to my father's house; he treated me ill, and I resumed my wanderings, with a hope that change of scene might alleviate my anguish; but this hope was disappointed; no change of scene could change the feelings of my soul; no company could amuse, no prospect delight; upon the loveliest productions of Nature I often gazed with a vacant eye—prospects which, in the early days of youth, when expectation sat smiling at my heart, I had often contemplated with a degree of rapturous enthusiasm which seemed to

raise me from earth to heaven, and inspiring me with a sublime devotion, made me look up through Nature's works to Nature's God.

'Not all the attention, the hospitality I received at V—, to which chance alone conducted me, could dissipate the thoughts that corroded my peace; but, as if I had a presentiment of your coming to it, I could not bring myself to leave it. Strange and inconsistent you found me: that strangeness, that inconsistency, was owing to a passion which I wished to conquer, yet could not forbear nourishing—which I wished, yet dreaded, to have returned, conscious as I was that that return would plunge the object of my love in sorrow.

'But how weak is the mind of man, how frail his best resolves! When I found I had an interest in that tender heart, every idea but of felicity fled from me; and I was tempted to ask you to unite your destiny to mine: a sudden interruption to our conversation alone prevented my doing so. Scarcely however, had I left your presence, ere Reason resumed her empire, and represented the baseness of what I had intended. "Shall I then persevere in such an intention?" I cried; "shall I take advantage of her tenderness?—shall I requite it by plunging her into difficulties—by transplanting her from the genial soil in which she has flourished, to one of penury?—shall I sink, instead of exalting, my love?—shall I requite the humanity of the father, by blasting the hopes he entertains about his child?—Oh! no," I exclaimed, maddening at the idea, "I will not be such a villain; I will not, Madeline, merit your after-reproaches and my own by such conduct; every hope relative to you—hopes which but now raised my soul to heaven, I will relinquish." How I acted in consequence of this determination you know; but you know not, nor can I give you any adequate idea of the anguish which I endured in consequence of it—the anguish which I felt at observing the resentment that glowed upon your cheek, and sparkled in your eye at the idea of my being either deceitful or capricious; scarcely on witnessing it, could I withhold myself from kneeling at your feet, and fully explaining the motives of my conduct. You may wonder, perhaps, at my not revealing myself on hearing of the Countess de Merville's kind intentions towards me; I was prevented doing so, by an idea of her being, notwithstanding all her worth, too proud, like the rest of the French Noblesse, to think of bestowing her Madeline—she, whose graces, whose loveliness fitted her for the most exalted station, upon the son of a peasant, when once she had discovered his origin: to disclose my situation I therefore deemed unnecessary. After our parting I lingered some time longer at V—, and might not perhaps have left it so soon as I did, had I not received a positive command from my father to return home:—on doing so, he renewed his importunities for a marriage with D'Alembert's daughter; I told him my positive determination relative to her, and he behaved with outrage. I should immediately have quit-

ted home, had he not assured me, if I did so, his curses would pursue me. Though I considered his conduct unjustifiable, I shrunk from his malediction, and accordingly obeyed him. Chance first produced the discovery of my vicinity to her who engrossed all my thoughts. Ah! little did I think, when I first heard of the newly-acknowledged son of the Marquis of Montmorenci, that Clermont was that son: Ah! little did I think, when I heard of the beauty, the goodness of his daughter, that it was to the praises of Madeline I was listening.

'I saw you one day in the forest; surprise rivetted me to the spot, nor had I power to move till you disappeared. A domestic belonging to the castle was passing me at the moment; I enquired from him about you, and heard your real situation. From that period I haunted the forest in hopes of catching a glimpse of you; and you may recollect seeing me one evening near the monumental pillar.

'Great have been my sufferings, but amply are they recompensed; my present felicity is such as, in the most sanguine moments of expectation, I never could have thought of experiencing. To find myself allied to beings congenial to my heart—to find myself on the point of being united to the woman I adore, is a happiness which requires the utmost efforts of reason to bear with any moderation.'

As he spoke, they heard an approaching step, and the next instant St Julian appeared before them:—he looked agitated; and Madeline, in a voice of alarm, enquired the cause of that agitation;—he briefly informed her.

An express, he said, had just arrived from Paris to announce the death of young D'Alembert. Maddened at finding his schemes discovered, and his hopes defeated, in a paroxysm of fury he had stabbed himself; but scarcely had he committed the rash act ere he repented it, and implored immediate assistance; this assistance was procured but to confirm his apprehensions of the wound being mortal. After suffering excruciating pangs of body and mind, he endeavoured to ease the latter by a full avowal of all his enormities. He accordingly confessed his having occasioned the death of a young girl, called Adelaide St Pierre; his having assassinated the Countess de Merville, and poisoned her house-keeper, Agatha, for fear of her betraying him; after which confession he shortly expired.

Madeline was so shocked by hearing of his crimes, that it was many minutes ere she had power to move. At length the fond caresses of her father and attentions of de Sevignie, restored her in some degree to herself.

Her father then informed her he had sought her for the purpose of bringing her to the castle, in order to assist him in breaking the affair to Madame D'Alembert. 'Though all affection for her husband must long since,' cried he, 'have been destroyed by his

unworthy conduct, I am yet convinced, from her feelings, she will be shocked to hear of his dying by his own hand. His confession I mean carefully to conceal from her; for to know her mother was murdered—murdered by her husband, would, I am confident, entail horror and wretchedness upon her days.'

Madeline now hastened to the castle, and D'Alembert's death was communicated with the utmost caution to Madame D'Alembert;—it filled her with horror; but, as St Julian had said, all affection for him having long before ceased, every hope was entertained of the melancholy impression which it made upon her mind being soon erased. On his father it had the most dreadful effect, the moment he heard it; the proud disdainful silence which he had observed from the first discovery of his baseness, vanished, and he vented his misery in groans and exclamations, accusing himself of being the cause of his son's destruction. Every attention which humanity could dictate was paid him, but paid in vain. Attentions from those he had injured, rather aggravated than soothed his feelings; and in about two days after his son's death, he declared his resolution of renouncing the world. He accordingly withdrew from the castle of Montmorenci to La Trappe, the most rigid of all the religious houses in France, where he soon ended a miserable existence. Immediately after his departure Lafroy was dismissed, having first, according to the promise that was made him, received a handsome provision, which, by giving him the power of gratifying his inordinate passions, soon occasioned his death. Josephé, his iniquitous brother, was compelled to retire from the vicinity of the castle; but though he deserved punishment and misery, the Marquis was too generous to permit him to feel any inconvenience in consequence of this measure. Claude and Blanche, alike penitent, were, by their own desire, sent to the places from whence they originally came, amply secured from the ills of poverty. Thus did the Marquis and his sons fulfil every promise they had made, and by the mercy they extended to others, proved their gratitude to heaven for that which they had themselves experienced.

As soon as tranquillity was restored to the inhabitants of the castle, the nuptials of de Sevignie and Madeline were solemnized; after which they accompanied Madame D'Alembert, (who with her friend Madame Chatteneuf and her party, had only waited to see them united,) to the Chateau de Valdore. Without mingled emotions of pain and pleasure Madeline could not re-enter it, nor could de Sevignie, without experiencing similar ones, behold the walks where he had often wandered to watch for Madeline, and despairingly sigh forth her name. A constant intercourse was kept up between the families of Madame D'Alembert and Madame Chatteneuf, in the course of which Count Durasso, who from the first interview had been captivated by her graces, made the impression he wished

upon the heart of Viola. To the softness of the Italian he united the vivacity of the French, and was in every respect worthy of her. Till the happy period which united them, de Sevignie and Madeline divided their time alternately between the Castle of Montmorenci and the Chateau de Valdore.

With Durasso, Viola enjoyed a long course of uninterrupted happiness—happiness which could only be equalled by that which her beloved friends de Sevignie and Madeline experienced.

Having now, to use the words of Adam, brought 'my story to the sum of earthly bliss', I shall conclude with an humble hope, that however unworthy of public favour it may be deemed, its not aspiring to fame will guard it from severity.

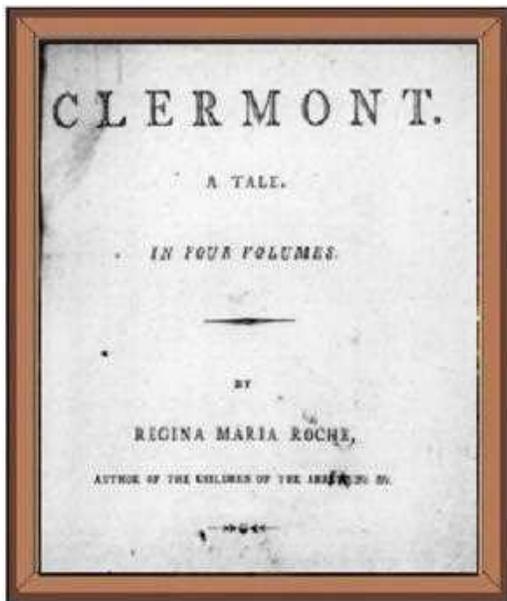
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