

M E L M O T H

THE

W A N D E R E R :

A

T A L E.

BY THE AUTHOR OF “BERTRAM,” &c.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND COMPANY,
AND HURST, ROBINSON, AND CO. CHEAPSIDE,
LONDON.

1820.

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Some corrections of spelling and punctuation have been made. A [list of amendments](#) is at the end of the text.

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MELMOTH.

CHAPTER XXIII.

If he to thee no answer give,
I'll give to thee a sign;
A secret known to nought that live,
Save but to me and mine.

* * * * *

Gone to be married.——

SHAKESPEARE.

“THE whole of the next day was occupied by Donna Clara, to whom letter-writing was a rare, troublesome, and momentous task, in reading over and correcting her answer to her husband’s letter; in which examination she found so much to correct, interline, alter, modify, expunge, and new-model, that finally Donna Clara’s epistle very much resembled the work she was now employed in, namely, that of *overcasting* a piece of tapestry wrought by her grandmother, representing the meeting of king Solomon and the queen of Sheba. The new work, instead of repairing, made fearful havock among the old; but Donna Clara went on, like her countryman at Mr Peter’s puppet-show, playing away (with her needle) in a perfect shower of back-strokes, fore-strokes, side-thrusts, and counter-thrusts, till not a figure in the tapestry could know himself again. The faded face of Solomon was garnished with a florid beard of scarlet silk (which Fra Jose at first told her she must rip out, as it made Solomon very little better than Judas) that made him resemble a boiled scallop. The fardingale of the queen of Sheba was expanded to an enormous hoop, of whose shrunk and pallid wearer it might be truly said, “*Minima est pars sui.*” The dog that, in the original tapestry,

stood by the spurred and booted heel of the oriental monarch, (who was clad in Spanish costume), by dint of a few tufts of black and yellow satin, was converted into a tiger,—a transformation which his grinning fangs rendered as authentic as heart could wish. And the parrot perched on the queen's shoulder, with the help of a train of green and gold, which the ignorant mistook for her majesty's mantle, proved a very passable peacock."

"As little trace of her original epistle did Donna Clara's present one bear, as did her elaborate overcasting to the original and painful labours of her grandmother. In both, however, Donna Clara (who scorned to flinch) went over the same ground with dim eye, and patient touch, and inextinguishable and remorseless assiduity. The letter, such as it was, was still sufficiently characteristic of the writer. Some passages of it the reader shall be indulged with,—and we reckon on his gratitude for not insisting on his perusal of the whole. The authentic copy, from which we are favoured with the extracts, runs thus. * * * * *

"Your daughter takes to her religion like mother's milk; and well may she do so, considering that the trunk of our family was planted in the genuine soil of the Catholic church, and that every branch of it must flourish there or perish. For a Neophyte, (as Fra Jose wills me to word it), she is as promising a sprout as one should wish to see flourishing within the pale of the holy church;—and for a heathen, she is so amenable, submissive, and of such maidenly suavity, that for the comportment of her person, and the discreet and virtuous ordering of her mind, I have no Christian mother to envy. Nay, I sometimes take pity on them, when I see the lightness, the exceeding vain carriage, and the unadvised eagerness to be wedded, of the best trained maidens of our country. This our daughter hath nothing of, either in her outward demeanour, or inward mind. She talks little, *therefore she cannot think much*; and she dreams not of the light devices of love, and is therefore well qualified for the marriage proposed unto her. * * * * *

"One thing, dear spouse of my soul, I would have thee to take notice of, and guard like the apple of thine eye,—our daughter is deranged, but never, on thy discretion, mention this to Don Montilla, even though he were the descendant in the right line of the Campeador, or of Gonsalvo di Cordova.

Her derangement will in no wise impede or contravene her marriage,—for be it known to thee, it breaks out but at times, and at such times, that the most jealous eye of man could not spy it, unless he had a foretaught intimation of it. She hath strange fantasies swimming in her brain, such as, that heretics and heathens shall not be everlastingly damned—(God and the saints protect us!)—which must clearly proceed from madness,—but which her Catholic husband, if ever he comes to the knowledge of them, shall know how to expel, by aid of the church, and conjugal authority. That thou may'st better know the truth of what I hereby painfully certify, the saints and Fra Jose (who will not let me tell a lie, because he in a manner holds my pen) can witness, that about four days before we left Madrid, as we went to church, and I was about, while ascending the steps, to dole alms to a mendicant woman wrapt in a mantle, who held up a naked child for the receiving of charity, your daughter twitched my sleeve, while she whispered, ‘Madam, she cannot be mother to that child, for she is covered, and her child is naked. If she were its mother, she would cover her child, and not be comfortably wrapt herself.’ True it was, I found afterwards the wretched woman had hired the child from its more wretched mother, and my alms had paid the price of its hire for the day; but still that not a whit disproved our daughter insane, inasmuch as it showed her ignorant of the fashion and usages of the beggars of the country, and did in some degree shew a doubt of the merit of alms-deeds, which thou know'st none but heretics or madmen could deny. Other and grievous proofs of her insanity doth she give daily; but not willing to incumber you with ink, (which Fra Jose willeth me to call *atramentum*), I will add but a few particulars to arouse your dormant faculties, which may be wrapt in lethargic obliviousness by the anodyne of my somniferous epistolation.”

“Reverend Father,” said Donna Clara, looking up to Fra Jose, who had dictated the last line, “Don Francisco will know the last line not to be mine—he heard it in one of your sermons. Let me add the extraordinary proof of my daughter’s insanity at the ball.”—“Add or diminish, compose or confound, what you will, in God’s name!” said Fra Jose, vexed at the frequent erasures and lituras which disfigured the lines of his dictation; “for though in style I may somewhat boast of my superiority, in scratches no hen on the best dunghill in Spain can contend with you! On, then, in the name

of all the saints!—and when it pleases heaven to send an interpreter to your husband, we may hope to hear from him by the next post-angel, for surely such a letter was never written on earth.”

“With this encouragement and applause, Donna Clara proceeded to relate sundry other errors and wanderings of her daughter, which, to a mind so swathed, crippled, and dwarfed, by the ligatures which the hand of custom had twined round it since its first hour of consciousness, might well have appeared like the aberrations of insanity. Among other proofs, she mentioned that Isidora’s first introduction to a Christian and Catholic church, was on that night of penitence in passion-week, when, the lights being extinguished, the *miserere* is chaunted in profound darkness, the penitents macerate themselves, and groans are heard on every side instead of prayers, as if the worship of Moloch was renewed without its fires;—struck with horror at the sounds she heard, and the darkness which surrounded her, Isidora demanded what they were doing.—“Worshipping God,” was the answer.

“At the expiration of Lent, she was introduced to a brilliant assembly, where the gay fandango was succeeded by the soft notes of the seguedilla, —and the crackling of the castanets, and the tinkling of the guitars, marked alternate time to the light and ecstatic step of youth, and the silvery and love-tuned voice of beauty. Touched with delight at all she saw and heard, —the smiles that dimpled and sparkled over her beautiful features reflecting every shade of pleasure they encountered, like the ripples of a brook kissed by the moon-beams,—she eagerly asked, “And are not these worshipping God?”—“Out on it, daughter!” interposed Donna Clara, who happened to overhear the question; “This is a vain and sinful pastime,—the invention of the devil to delude the children of folly,—hateful in the eyes of heaven and its saints,—and abhorred and renounced by the faithful.”—“Then there are two Gods,” said Isidora sighing, “the God of smiles and happiness, and the God of groans and blood. Would I could serve the former!”—“I will take order you shall serve the latter, heathenish and profane that you are!” answered Donna Clara, as she hurried her from the assembly, shocked at the scandal which her words might have given. These and many similar anecdotes were painfully indited in Donna Clara’s long epistle, which, after being folded and sealed by Fra Jose, (who swore

by the habit he wore, he had rather study twenty pages of the Polyglot fasting, than read it over once more), was duly forwarded to Don Francisco.

“The habits and movements of Don Francisco were, like those of his nation, so deliberate and dilatory, and his aversion to writing letters, except on mercantile subjects, so well known, that Donna Clara was actually alarmed at receiving, in the evening of the day in which her epistle was dispatched, another letter from her husband.

“Its contents must be guessed to be sufficiently singular, when the result was, that Donna Clara and Fra Jose sat up over them nearly the whole of the night, in consultation, anxiety, and fear. So intense was their conference, that it is recorded it was never interrupted even by the lady telling her beads, or the monk thinking of his supper. All the artificial habits, the customary indulgences, the factitious existence of both, were merged in the real genuine fear which pervaded their minds, and which asserted its power over both in painful and exacting proportion to their long and hardy rejection of its influence. Their minds succumbed together, and sought and gave in vain, feeble counsel, and fruitless consolation. They read over and over again this extraordinary letter, and at every reading their minds grew darker,—and their counsels more perplexed,—and their looks more dismal. Ever and anon they turned their eyes on it, as it lay open before them on Donna Clara’s ebony writing-desk, and then starting, asked each other by looks, and sometimes in words, “Did either hear some strange noise in the house?” The letter, among other matter not important to the reader, contained the singular passage following. * * * * *

“In my travel from the place where I landed, to that whence I now write, I fortunèd to be in company with strangers, from whom I heard things touching me (not as they meant, but as my fear interpreted them) in a point the most exquisite that can prick and wound the soul of a Christian father. These I shall discuss unto thee at thy more leisure. They are full of fearful matter, and such as may perchance require the aid of some churchman rightly to understand, and fully to fathom. Nevertheless this I can commend to thy discretion, that after I had parted from this strange conference, the reports of which I cannot by letter communicate to thee, I retired to my chamber full of sad and heavy thoughts, and being seated in my chair, pored over a tome containing legends of departed spirits, in nowise contradictive

to the doctrine of the holy Catholic church, otherwise I would have crushed it with the sole of my foot into the fire that burned before me on the hearth, and spit on its cinders with the spittle of my mouth. Now, whether it was the company I fortunèd to be into, (whose conversation must never be known but to thee only), or the book I had been reading, which contained certain extracts from Pliny, Artemidore, and others, full-filled with tales which I may not now recount, but which did relate altogether to the revivification of the departed, appearing in due accordance with our Catholic conceptions of Christian ghosts in purgatory, with their suitable accoutrements of chains and flames,—as thus Pliny writeth, “*Apparebat eidolon senex, macie et senio confectus*,”—or finally, the weariness of my lonely journey, or other things I know not,—but feeling my mind ill-disposed for deeper converse with books or my own thoughts, and though oppressed by sleep, unwilling to retire to rest,—a mood which I and others have often experienced,—I took out thy letters from the desk in which I duly reposit them, and read over the description which thou didst send me of our daughter, upon the first intelligence of her being discovered in that accursed isle of heathenism,—and I do assure thee, the description of our daughter hath been written in such characters on the bosom to which she hath never been clasped, that it would defy the art of all the limners in Spain to paint it more effectually. So, thinking on those dark-blue eyes,—and those natural ringlets which will not obey their new mistress, art,—and that slender undulating shape,—and thinking it would soon be folded in my arms, and ask the blessing of a Christian father in Christian tones, I dozed as I sat in my chair; and my dreams taking part with my waking thoughts, I was a-dreamt that such a creature, so fair, so fond, so cherubic, sat beside me, and asked me blessing. As I bowed to give it, I nodded in my chair and awoke. Awoke I say, for what followed was as palpable to human sight as the furniture of my apartment, or any other tangible object. There was a female seated opposite me, clad in a Spanish dress, but her veil flowed down to her feet. She sat, and seemed to expect that I should bespeak her first. “Damsel,” I said, “what seekest thou?—or why art thou here?” The figure never raised its veil, nor motioned with hand or lip. Mine head was full of what I had heard and read of; and after making the sign of the cross, and uttering certain prayers, I approached that figure, and said, “Damsel, what wantest thou?”—“A father,” said the form, raising its veil, and disclosing the

identical features of my daughter Isidora, as described in thy numerous letters. Thou mayest well guess my consternation, which I might almost term fear, at the sight and words of this beautiful but strange and solemn figure. Nor was my perplexity and trouble diminished but increased, when the figure, rising and pointing to the door, through which she forthwith passed with a mysterious grace and incredible alacrity, uttered, *in transitu*, words like these:—"Save me!—save me!—lose not a moment, or I am lost!" And I swear to thee, wife, that while that figure sat or departed, I heard not the rustling of her garments, or the tread of her foot, or the sound of her respiration—only as she went out, there was a rushing sound as of a wind passing through the chamber,—and a mist seemed to hang on every object around me, which dispersed—and I was conscious of heaving a deep sigh, as if a load had been removed from my breast. I sat thereafter for an hour pondering on what I had seen, and not knowing whether to term it a waking dream, or a dreamlike waking. I am a mortal man, sensible of fear, and liable to error,—but I am also a Catholic Christian, and have ever been a hearty contemner of your tales of spectres and visions, excepting always when sanctioned by the authority of the holy church, and recorded in the lives of her saints and martyrs. Finding no end or fruit of these my heavy cogitations, I withdrew myself to bed, where I long lay tossing and sleepless, till at the approach of morning, just as I was falling into a deep sleep, I was awoke by a noise like that of a breeze waving my curtains. I started up, and drawing them, looked around me. There was a glimpse of day-light appearing through the window-shutters, but not sufficient to enable me to distinguish the objects in the room, were it not for the lamp that burned on the hearth, and whose light, though somewhat dim, was perfectly distinct. By it I discovered, near the door, a figure which my sight, rendered more acute by my terror, verified as the identical figure I had before beheld, who, waving its arm with a melancholy gesture, and uttering in a piteous voice these words, "It is too late," disappeared. As, I will own to thee, overcome with horror at this second visitation, I fell back on my pillow almost bereft of the use of my faculties, I remember the clock struck three."

"As Donna Clara and the priest (on their tenth perusal of the letter) arrived at these words, the clock in the hall below struck three. "That is a

singular coincidence,” said Fra Jose. “Do you think it nothing more, Father?” said Donna Clara, turning very pale. “I know not,” said the priest; “many have told credible stories of warnings permitted by our guardian saints, to be given even by the ministry of inanimate things. But to what purpose are we warned, when we know not the evil we are to shun?”—“Hush!—hark!” said Donna Clara, “did you hear no noise?”—“None,” said Fra Jose listening, not without some appearance of perturbation—“None,” he added, in a more tranquil and assured voice, after a pause; “and the noise which I *did* hear about two hours ago, was of short continuance, and has not been renewed.”—“What a flickering light these tapers give!” said Donna Clara, viewing them with eyes glassy and fixed with fear. “The casements are open,” answered the priest. “So they have been since we sat here,” returned Donna Clara; “yet now see what a stream of air comes rushing against them! Holy God! they flare as if they would go out!”

“The priest, looking up at the tapers, observed the truth of what she said,—and at the same time perceived the tapestry near the door to be considerably agitated. “There is a door open in some other direction,” said he, rising. “You are not going to leave me, Father?” said Donna Clara, who sat in her chair paralyzed with terror, and unable to follow him but with her eyes.

“The Father Jose made no answer. He was now in the passage, where a circumstance which he observed had arrested all his attention,—the door of Isidora’s apartment was open, and lights were burning in it. He entered it slowly at first, and gazed around, but its inmate was not there. He glanced his eye on the bed, but no human form had pressed it that night—it lay untouched and undisturbed. The casement next caught his eye, now glancing with the quickness of fear on every object. He approached it—it was wide open,—the casement that looked towards the garden. In his horror at this discovery, the good Father could not avoid uttering a cry that pierced the ears of Donna Clara, who, trembling and scarce able to make her way to the room, attempted to follow him in vain, and fell down in the passage. The priest raised and tried to assist her back to her own apartment. The wretched mother, when at last placed in her chair, neither fainted or wept; but with white and speechless lips, and a paralytic motion of her hand, tried

to point towards her daughter's apartment, as if she wished to be conveyed there. "It is too late," said the priest, unconsciously using the ominous words quoted in the letter of Don Francisco.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Responde meum argumentum—nomen est nomen—*ergo*, quod tibi est nomen—responde argumentum.

BEAUMONT *and* FLETCHER'S *Wit at several Weapons*.

“**T**HAT night was the one fixed on for the union of Isidora and Melmoth. She had retired early to her chamber, and sat at the casement watching for his approach for hours before she could probably expect it. It might be supposed that at this terrible crisis of her fate, she felt agitated by a thousand emotions,—that a soul susceptible like hers felt itself almost torn in pieces by the struggle,—but it was not so. When a mind strong by nature, but weakened by fettering circumstances, is driven to make one strong spring to free itself, it has no leisure to calculate the weight of its hindrances, or the width of its leap,—it sits with its chains heaped about it, thinking only of the bound that is to be its liberation—or——

“During the many hours that Isidora awaited the approach of this mysterious bridegroom, she felt nothing but the awful sense of that approach, and of the event that was to follow. So she sat at her casement, pale but resolute, and trusting in the extraordinary promise of Melmoth, that by whatever means he was enabled to visit her, by those she would be enabled to effect her escape, in spite of her well-guarded mansion, and vigilant household.

“It was near one (the hour at which Fra Jose, who was sitting in consultation with her mother over that melancholy letter, heard the noise alluded to in the preceding chapter) when Melmoth appeared in the garden, and, without uttering a word, threw up a ladder of ropes, which, in short and

sullen whispers, he instructed her to fasten, and assisted her to descend. They hurried through the garden,—and Isidora, amid all the novelty of her feelings and situation, could not avoid testifying her surprise at the facility with which they passed through the well-secured garden gate.

“They were now in the open country,—a region far wilder to Isidora than the flowery paths of that untrodden isle, where she had no enemy. Now in every breeze she heard a menacing voice,—in the echoes of her own light steps she heard the sound of steps pursuing her.

“The night was very dark,—unlike the midsummer nights in that delicious climate. A blast sometimes cold, sometimes stifling from heat, indicated some extraordinary vicissitude in the atmosphere. There is something very fearful in this kind of wintry feeling in a summer night. The cold, the darkness, followed by intense heat, and a pale, meteoric lightning, seemed to unite the mingled evils of the various seasons, and to trace their sad analogy to life,—whose stormy summer allows youth little to enjoy, and whose chilling winter leaves age nothing to hope.

“To Isidora, whose sensibilities were still so acutely physical, that she could feel the state of the elements as if they were the oracles of nature, which she could interpret at sight,—this dark and troubled appearance seemed like a fearful omen. More than once she paused, trembled, and turned on Melmoth a glance of doubt and terror,—which the darkness of the night, of course, prevented him from observing. Perhaps there was another cause,—but as they hurried on, Isidora’s strength and courage began to fail together. She perceived that she was borne on with a kind of supernatural velocity,—her breath failed,—her feet faltered,—and she felt like one in a dream.

“Stay!” she exclaimed, gasping from weakness, “stay!—whither am I going?—where do you bear me?”—“To your nuptials,” answered Melmoth, in low and almost inarticulate tones;—but whether rendered so by emotion, or by the speed with which they seemed to fly along, Isidora could not discover.

“In a few moments, she was forced to declare herself unable to proceed, and leaned on his arm, gasping and exhausted. “Let me pause,” said she ominously, “in the name of God!” Melmoth returned no answer. He paused,

however, and supported her with an appearance of anxiety, if not of tenderness.

“During this interval, she gazed around her, and tried to distinguish the objects near; but the intense darkness of the night rendered this almost impossible,—and what she *could* discover, was not calculated to dispel her alarm. They seemed to be walking on a narrow and precipitous path close by a shallow stream, as she could guess, by the hoarse and rugged sound of its waters, as they fought with every pebble to win their way. This path was edged on the other side by a few trees, whose stunted growth, and branches tossing wild and wide to the blast that now began to whisper mournfully among them, seemed to banish every image of a summer night from the senses, and almost from the memory. Every thing around was alike dreary and strange to Isidora, who had never, since her arrival at the villa, wandered beyond the precincts of the garden,—and who, even if she had, would probably have found no clue to direct her where she now was. “This is a fearful night,” said she, half internally. She then repeated the same words more audibly, perhaps in hope of some answering and consolatory sounds. Melmoth was silent—and her spirits subdued by fatigue and emotion, she wept. “Do you already repent the step you have taken?” said he, laying a strange emphasis on the word—already. “No, love, no!” replied Isidora, gently wiping away her tears; “it is impossible for me ever to repent it. But this loneliness,—this darkness,—this speed,—this silence,—have in them something almost awful. I feel as if I were traversing some unknown region. Are these indeed the winds of heaven that sigh around me? Are these trees of nature’s growth, that nod at me like spectres? How hollow and dismal is the sound of the blast!—it chills me though the night is sultry!—and those trees, they cast their shadows over my soul! Oh, is this like a bridal night?” she exclaimed, as Melmoth, apparently disturbed at these words, attempted to hurry her on—“Is this like a bridal? No father, no brother, to support me!—no mother near me!—no kiss of kindred to greet me!—no congratulating friends!”—and her fears increasing, she wildly exclaimed, “Where is the priest to bless our union?—where is the church under whose roof we are to be united?”

“As she spoke, Melmoth, drawing her arm under his, attempted to lead her gently forward. “There is,” said he, “a ruined monastery near—you may

have observed it from your window.”—“No! I never saw it. Why is it in ruins?”—“I know not—there were wild stories told. It was said the Superior, or Prior, or—I know not what—had looked into certain books, the perusal of which was not altogether sanctioned by the rules of his order—books of magic they called them. There was much noise about it, I remember, and some talk of the Inquisition,—but the end of the business was, the Prior disappeared, some said into the prisons of the Inquisition, some said into safer custody—(though how that could be, I cannot well conceive)—and the brethren were drafted into other communities, and the building became deserted. There were some offers made for it by the communities of other religious houses, but the evil, though vague and wild reports, that had gone forth about it, deterred them, on inquiry, from inhabiting it,—and gradually the building fell to ruin. It still retains all that can sanctify it in the eyes of the faithful. There are crucifixes and tombstones, and here and there a cross set up where there has been murder,—for, by a singular congeniality of taste, a banditti has fixed their seat there now,—and the traffic of gold for souls, once carried on so profitably by the former inmates, is exchanged for that of souls for gold, by the present.”

“At these words, Melmoth felt the slender arm that hung on his withdrawn,—and he perceived that his victim, between shuddering and struggling, had *shrunk from his hold*. “But there,” he added, “even amid those ruins, there dwells a holy hermit,—one who has taken up his residence near the spot,—he will unite us in his oratory, according to the rites of your church. He will speak the blessing over us,—and one of us, at least, shall be blessed.”—“Hold!” said Isidora, repelling, and standing at what distance from him she could,—her slight figure expanding to that queen-like dignity with which nature had once invested her as the fair and sole sovereign of her own island-paradise. “Hold!” she repeated—“approach me not by another step,—address me not by another word,—till you tell me when and where I am to be united to you,—to become your wedded wife! I have borne much of doubt and terror,—of suspicion and persecution,—but”—— “Hear me, Isidora,” said Melmoth, terrified at this sudden burst of resolution. “Hear *me*,” answered the timid but heroic girl, springing, with the elasticity of her early movements, upon a crag that hung over their stony path, and clinging to an ash-tree that had burst through its

fissures—"Hear me! Sooner will you rend this tree from its bed of stone, than me from its trunk! Sooner will I dash this body on the stony bed of the stream that groans below my feet, than descend into your arms, till you swear to me they will bear me to honour and safety! For you I have given up all that my newly-taught duties have told me was holy!—all that my heart long ago whispered I ought to love! Judge by what I *have* sacrificed, of what I *can* sacrifice—and doubt not that I would be my own victim ten thousand times sooner than yours!"—"By all that you deem holy!" cried Melmoth, humbling himself even to kneel before her as she stood,—“my intentions are as pure as your own soul!—the hermitage is not an hundred paces off. Come, and do not, by a fantastic and causeless apprehension, frustrate all the magnanimity and tenderness you have hitherto shewed, and which have raised you in my eyes not only above your sex, but above your whole species. Had you not been what you are, and what no other but you could be, you had never been the bride of Melmoth. With whom but you did he ever seek to unite his dark and inscrutable destiny? Isidora,” he added, in tones more potent and emphatic, perceiving she still hesitated, and clung to the tree—"Isidora, how weak, how unworthy of you is this! You are in my power,—absolutely, hopelessly in my power. No human eye can see *me*—no human arm can aid *you*. You are as helpless as infancy in my grasp. This dark stream would tell no tales of deeds that stained its waters,—and the blast that howls round you would never waft your groans to mortal ear! You are in my power, yet I seek not to abuse it. I offer you my hand to conduct you to a consecrated building, where we shall be united according to the fashion of your country—and will you still persevere in this fanciful and profitless waywardness?"

"As he spoke, Isidora looked round her helplessly—every object was a confirmation of his arguments—she shuddered and submitted. But as they walked on in silence, she could not help interrupting it to give utterance to the thousand anxieties that oppressed her heart.

"But you speak," said she, in a suppressed and pleading tone,—“you speak of religion in words that make me tremble—you speak of it as the fashion of a country,—as a thing of form, of accident, of habit. What faith do you profess?—what church do you frequent?—what holy rites do you perform?"—"I venerate all faiths—alike, I hold all religious rites—pretty

much in the same respect,” said Melmoth, while his former wild and scoffing levity seemed to struggle vainly with a feeling of involuntary horror. “And do you then, indeed, believe in holy things?” asked Isidora. “Do you indeed?” she repeated anxiously. “*I believe in a God,*” answered Melmoth, in a voice that froze her blood; “you have heard of those who believe and tremble,—such is he who speaks to you!”

“Isidora’s acquaintance with the book from which he quoted, was too limited to permit her to understand the allusion. She knew, according to the religious education she had received, more of her breviary than her Bible; and though she pursued her inquiry in a timid and anxious tone, she felt no additional terror from words she did not understand.

“But,” she continued, “Christianity is something more than a belief in a God. Do you also believe in all that the Catholic church declares to be essential to salvation? Do you believe that”—— And here she added a name too sacred, and accompanied with terms too awful, to be expressed in pages so light as these⁽¹⁾. “I believe it all—I know it all,” answered Melmoth, in a voice of stern and reluctant confession. “Infidel and scoffer as I may appear to you, there is no martyr of the Christian church, who in other times blazed for his God, that has borne or exhibited a more resplendent illustration of his faith, than I shall bear one day—and for ever. There is a slight difference only between our testimonies in point of duration. They burned for the truths they loved for a few moments—not so many perchance. Some were suffocated before the flames could reach them,—but I am doomed to bear my attestation to the truth of the gospel, amid fires that shall burn for ever and ever. See with what a glorious destiny yours, my bride, is united! You, as a Christian, would doubtless exult to see your husband at the stake,—and amid the faggots to prove his devotion. How it must ennoble the sacrifice to think that it is to last to eternity!”

“Melmoth uttered these words in ears that heard no longer. Isidora had fainted; and hanging with one cold hand on his arm still, fell a helpless, senseless weight on the earth. Melmoth, at this sight, shewed more feeling than he could have been suspected of. He disentangled her from the folds of her mantle, sprinkled water from the stream on her cold cheek, and supported her frame in every direction where a breath of air was to be caught. Isidora recovered; for her swoon was that of fatigue more than fear;

and, with her recovery, her lover's short-lived tenderness seemed to cease. The moment she was able to speak he urged her to proceed,—and while she feebly attempted to obey him, he assured her, her strength was perfectly recovered, and that the place they had to reach was but a few paces distant. Isidora struggled on. Their path now lay up the ascent of a steep hill,—they left the murmur of the stream, and the sighing of trees, behind them,—the wind, too, had sunk, but the night continued intensely dark,—and the absence of all sound seemed to Isidora to increase the desolateness of the scene. She wished for something to listen to beside her impeded and painful respiration, and the audible beatings of her heart. As they descended the hill on the other side, the murmuring of the waters became once more faintly audible; and this sound she had longed to hear again, had now, amid the stillness of the night, a cadence so melancholy, that she almost wished it hushed again.

“Thus always, to the unhappy, the very fulfilment of their morbid wishings becomes a source of disappointment, and the change they hoped for is desirable only as it gives them cause to long for another change. In the morning they say, Would to God it were evening!—Evening comes,—and in the evening they say, Would to God it were morning! But Isidora had no time to analyse her feelings,—a new apprehension struck her,—and, as she could well guess from the increasing speed of Melmoth, and head thrown backward impatiently, and often, it had probably reached him too. A sound they had been for some time watching, (without communicating their feelings to each other), became every moment more distinct. It was the sound of a human foot, evidently pursuing them, from the increasing quickness of its speed, and a certain sharpness of tread, that irresistibly gave the idea of hot and anxious pursuit. Melmoth suddenly paused, and Isidora hung trembling on his arm. Neither of them uttered a word; but Isidora's eyes, instinctively following the slight but fearful waving of his arm, saw it directed towards a figure so obscure, that it at first appeared like a spray moving in the misty night,—then was lost in darkness as it descended the hill,—and then appeared in a human form, as far as the darkness of the night would permit its shape to be distinguishable. It came on—its steps were more and more audible, and its shape almost distinct.—Then Melmoth suddenly quitted Isidora, who, shivering with terror, but unable to utter a

word that might implore him to stay, stood alone, her whole frame trembling almost to dissolution, and her feet feeling as if she were nailed to the spot where she stood. What passed she knew not. There was a short and darkened struggle between two figures,—and, in this fearful interval, she imagined she heard the voice of an ancient domestic, much attached to her, call on her, first in accents of expostulation and appeal, then in choaked and breathless cries for help—help—help!—Then she heard a sound as if a heavy body fell into the water that murmured below.—It fell heavily—the wave groaned—the dark hill groaned in answer, like murderers exchanging their stilled and midnight whispers over their work of blood—and all was silent. Isidora clasped her cold and convulsed fingers over her eyes, till a whispering voice, the voice of Melmoth, uttered, “Let us hasten on, my love.”—“Where?” said Isidora, not knowing the meaning of the words she uttered.—“To the ruined monastery, my love,—to the hermitage, where the holy man, the man of your faith, shall unite us.”—“Where are the steps that pursued us?” said Isidora, suddenly recovering her recollection.—“They will pursue you no more.”—“But I saw a figure.”—“But you will see it no more.”—“I heard something fall into that stream—heavily—like a corse.”—“There was a stone that fell from the precipice of the hill—the waters splashed, and curled, and whitened round it for a moment, but they have swallowed it now, and appear to have such a relish for the morsel, that they will not be apt to resign it.”

“In silent horror she proceeded, till Melmoth, pointing to a dusky and indefinite mass of what, in the gloom of night, bore, according to the eye or the fancy, the shape of a rock, a tuft of trees, or a massive and unlighted building, whispered, “There is the ruin, and near it stands the hermitage,—one moment more of effort,—of renewed strength and courage, and we are there.” Urged by these words, and still more by an undefinable wish to put an end to this shadowy journey,—these mysterious fears,—even at the risk of finding them worse than verified at its termination, Isidora exerted all her remaining strength, and, supported by Melmoth, began to ascend the sloping ground on which the monastery had once stood. There had been a path, but it was now all obstructed by stones, and rugged with the knotted and interlaced roots of the neglected trees that had once formed its shelter and its grace.

“As they approached, in spite of the darkness of the night, the ruin began to assume a distinct and characteristic appearance, and Isidora’s heart beat less fearfully, when she could ascertain, from the remains of the tower and spire, the vast Eastern window, and the crosses still visible on every ruined pinnacle and pediment, like religion triumphant amid grief and decay, that this had been a building destined for sacred purposes. A narrow path, that seemed to wind round the edifice, conducted them to a front which overlooked an extensive cemetery, at the extremity of which Melmoth pointed out to her an indistinct object, which he said was the hermitage, and to which he would hasten to intreat the hermit, who was also a priest, to unite them. “May I not accompany you?” said Isidora, glancing round on the graves that were to be her companions in solitude.—“It is against his vow,” said Melmoth, “to admit a female into his presence, except when obliged by the course of his duties.” So saying he hasted away, and Isidora, sinking on a grave for rest, wrapt her veil around her, as if its folds could exclude even thought. In a few moments, gasping for air, she withdrew it; but as her eye encountered only tomb-stones and crosses, and that dark and sepulchral vegetation that loves to shoot its roots, and trail its unlovely verdure amid the joints of grave-stones, she closed it again, and sat shuddering and alone. Suddenly a faint sound, like the murmur of a breeze, reached her,—she looked up, but the wind had sunk, and the night was perfectly calm. The same sound recurring, as of a breeze sweeping past, made her turn her eyes in the direction from which it came, and, at some distance from her, she thought she beheld a human figure moving slowly along on the verge of the inclosure of the burial-ground. Though it did not seem approaching her, (but rather moving in a slow circuit on the verge of her view), conceiving it must be Melmoth, she rose in expectation of his advancing to her, and, at this moment, the figure, turning and half-pausing, seemed to extend its arm toward her, and wave it once or twice, but whether with a motion or purpose of warning or repelling her, it was impossible to discover,—it then renewed its dim and silent progress, and the next moment the ruins hid it from her view. She had no time to muse on this singular appearance, for Melmoth was now at her side urging her to proceed. There was a chapel, he told her, attached to the ruins, but not like them in decay, where sacred ceremonies were still performed, and where the priest had promised to join them in a few moments. “He is there before

us,” said Isidora, adverting to the figure she had seen; “I think I saw him.”—“Saw whom?” said Melmoth, starting, and standing immoveable till his question was answered.—“I saw a figure,” said Isidora, trembling—“I thought I saw a figure moving towards the ruin.”—“You are mistaken,” said Melmoth; but a moment after he added, “We ought to have been there before him.” And he hurried on with Isidora. Suddenly slackening his speed, he demanded, in a choaked and indistinct voice, if she had ever heard any music precede his visits to her,—any sounds in the air. “Never,” was the answer.—“You are sure?”—“Perfectly sure.”

“At this moment they were ascending the fractured and rugged steps that led to the entrance of the chapel,—now they passed under the dark and ivied porch,—now they entered the chapel, which, even in darkness, appeared to the eyes of Isidora ruinous and deserted. “He has not yet arrived,” said Melmoth, in a disturbed voice; “Wait there a moment.” And Isidora, enfeebled by terror beyond the power of resistance, or even intreaty, saw him depart without an effort to detain him. She felt as if the effort would be hopeless. Left thus alone, she glanced her eyes around, and a faint and watery moon-beam breaking at that moment through the heavy clouds, threw its light on the objects around her. There was a window, but the stained glass of its compartments, broken and discoloured, held rare and precarious place between the fluted shafts of stone. Ivy and moss darkened the fragments of glass, and clung round the clustered pillars. Beneath were the remains of an altar and crucifix, but they seemed like the rude work of the first hands that had ever been employed on such subjects. There was also a marble vessel, that seemed designed to contain holy water, but it was empty,—and there was a stone bench, on which Isidora sunk down in weariness, but without hope of rest. Once or twice she looked up to the window, through which the moon-beams fell, with that instinctive feeling of her former existence, that made companions of the elements, and of the beautiful and glorious family of heaven, under whose burning light she had once imagined the moon was her parent, and the stars her kindred. She gazed on the window still, like one who loved the light of nature, and drank health and truth from its beams, till a figure passing slowly but visibly before the pillared shafts, disclosed to her view the face of that ancient servant, whose features she remembered well. He seemed to regard her with

a look, first of intent contemplation,—then of compassion,—the figure then passed from before the ruined window, and a faint and wailing cry rung in the ears of Isidora as it disappeared.

“At that moment the moon, that had so faintly lit the chapel, sunk behind a cloud, and every thing was enveloped in darkness so profound, that Isidora did not recognize the figure of Melmoth till her hand was clasped in his, and his voice whispered, “He is here—ready to unite us.” The long-protracted terrors of this bridal left her not a breath to utter a word withal, and she leaned on the arm that she felt, not in confidence, but for support. The place, the hour, the objects, all were hid in darkness. She heard a faint rustling as of the approach of another person,—she tried to catch certain words, but she knew not what they were,—she attempted also to speak, but she knew not what she said. All was mist and darkness with her,—she knew not what was muttered,—she felt not that the hand of Melmoth grasped hers,—but she felt that the hand that united them, and clasped their palms within his own, was as *cold as that of death*.

CHAPTER XXV.

Τηλε μ' ειργουσι ψυχαι, ειδωλα καμοντων.

HOMER.

“**W**E have now to retrace a short period of our narrative to the night on which Don Francisco di Aliaga, the father of Isidora, “fortuned,” as he termed it, to be among the company whose conversation had produced so extraordinary an effect on him.

“He was journeying homewards, full of the contemplation of his wealth,—the certainty of having attained complete security against the evils that harass life,—and being able to set at defiance all external causes of infelicity. He felt like a man “at ease in his possessions,”—and he felt also a grave and placid satisfaction at the thought of meeting a family who looked up to him with profound respect as the author of their fortunes,—of walking in his own house, amid bowing domestics and obsequious relatives, with the same slow authoritative step with which he paced the mart among wealthy merchants, and saw the wealthiest bow as he approached,—and when he had passed, point out the man of whose grave salute they were proud, and whisper, That is Aliaga the rich.—So thinking and feeling, as most prosperous men do, with an honest pride in their worldly success,—an exaggerated expectation of the homage of society,—(which they often find frustrated by its contempt),—and an ultimate reliance on the respect and devotion of their family whom they have enriched, making them ample amends for the slights they may be exposed to where their wealth is unknown, and their newly assumed consequence unappreciated,—or if

appreciated, not valued:—So thinking and feeling, Don Francisco journeyed homeward.

“At a wretched inn where he was compelled to halt, he found the accommodation so bad, and the heat of the weather so intolerable in the low, narrow, and unwindowed rooms, that he preferred taking his supper in the open air, on a stone bench at the door of the inn. We cannot say that he there imagined himself to be feasted with trout and white bread, like Don Quixote,—and still less that he fancied he was ministered unto by damsels of rank;—on the contrary, Don Francisco was digesting a sorry meal with wretched wine, with a perfect internal consciousness of the mediocrity of both, when he beheld a person ride by, who paused, and looked as if he was inclined to stop at the inn. (The interval of this pause was not long enough to permit Don Francisco to observe particularly the figure or face of the horseman, or indeed to recognize him on any future occasion of meeting; nor was there any thing remarkable in his appearance to invite or arrest observation.) He made a sign to the host, who approached him with a slow and unwilling pace,—appeared to answer all his inquiries with sturdy negatives,—and finally, as the stranger rode on, returned to his station, crossing himself with every mark of terror and deprecation.

“There was something more in this than the ordinary surliness of a Spanish innkeeper. Don Francisco’s curiosity was excited, and he asked the innkeeper, whether the stranger had proposed to pass the night at the inn, as the weather seemed to threaten a storm? “I know not what he proposes,” answered the man, “but this I know, that I would not suffer him to pass an hour under my roof for the revenues of Toledo. If there be a storm coming on, I care not—those who can raise them are the fittest to meet them!”

“Don Francisco inquired the cause of these extraordinary expressions of aversion and terror, but the innkeeper shook his head and remained silent, with, as it were, the circumspective fear of one who is inclosed within a sorcerer’s circle, and dreads to pass its verge, lest he become the prey of the spirits who are waiting beyond it to take advantage of his transgression.

“At last, at Don Francisco’s repeated instances, he said, “Your worship must needs be a stranger in this part of Spain not to have heard of Melmoth the wanderer.”—“I have never heard of the name before,” said Don Francisco; “and I conjure you, brother, to tell me what you know of this

person, whose character, if I may judge by the manner in which you speak of him, must have in it something extraordinary.”—“Senhor,” answered the man, “were I to relate what is told of that person, I should not be able to close an eye to-night; or if I did, it would be to dream of things so horrible, that I had rather lie awake for ever. But, if I am not mistaken, there is in the house one who can gratify your curiosity—it is a gentleman who is preparing for the press a collection of facts relative to that person, and who has been, for some time, in vain soliciting for a license to print them, they being such as the government, in its wisdom, thinks not fit to be perused by the eyes of Catholics, or circulated among a Christian community.”

“As the innkeeper spoke, and spoke with an earnestness that at least made the hearer believe he felt the conviction he tried to impress, the person of whom he spoke was standing beside Don Francisco. He had apparently overheard their conversation, and seemed not indisposed to continue it. He was a man of a grave and composed aspect, and altogether so remote from any appearance of imposition, or theatrical and conjuror-like display, that Don Francisco, grave, suspicious, and deliberate as a Spaniard, and moreover a Spanish merchant, may be, could not avoid giving him his confidence at sight, though he forbore any external expression of it.

“Senhor,” said the stranger, “mine host has told you but the truth. The person whom you saw ride by, is one of those beings after whom human curiosity pants in vain,—whose life is doomed to be recorded in incredible legends that moulder in the libraries of the curious, and to be disbelieved and scorned even by those who exhaust sums on their collection, and ungratefully depreciate the contents of the volumes on whose aggregate its value depends. There has been, however, I believe, no other instance of a person still alive, and apparently exercising all the functions of a human agent, who has become already the subject of written memoirs, and the theme of traditional history. Several circumstances relating to this extraordinary being are even now in the hands of curious and eager collectors; and I have myself attained to the knowledge of one or two that are not among the least extraordinary. The marvellous period of life said to be assigned him, and the facility with which he has been observed to pass from region to region, (knowing all, and known to none), have been the

principal causes why the adventures in which he is engaged, should be at once so numerous and so similar.”

“As the stranger ceased to speak, the evening grew dark, and a few large and heavy drops of rain fell. “This night threatens a storm,” said the stranger, looking abroad with some degree of anxiety—“we had better retire within doors; and if you, Senhor, are not otherwise occupied, I am willing to pass away some hours of this unpleasant night in relating to you some circumstances relating to the wanderer, which have come within my certain knowledge.”

“Don Francisco assented to this proposal as much from curiosity, as from the impatience of solitude, which is never more insupportable than in an inn, and during stormy weather. Don Montilla, too, had left him on a visit to his father, who was in a declining state, and was not to join him again till his arrival in the neighbourhood of Madrid. He therefore bid his servants shew the way to his apartment, whither he courteously invited his new acquaintance.

“Imagine them now seated in the wretched upper apartment of a Spanish inn, whose appearance, though dreary and comfortless, had in it, nevertheless, something picturesque, and not inappropriate, as the scene where a wild and wondrous tale was to be related and listened to. There was no luxury of inventive art to flatter the senses, or enervate the attention,—to enable the hearer to break the spell that binds him to the world of horrors, and recover to all the soothing realities and comforts of ordinary life, like one who starts from a dream of the rack, and finds himself waking on a bed of down. The walls were bare, and the roofs were rafted, and the only furniture was a table, beside which Don Francisco and his companion sat, the one on a huge high-backed chair, the other on a stool so low, that he seemed seated at the listener’s foot. A lamp stood on the table, whose light flickering in the wind, that sighed through many apertures of the jarring door, fell alternately on lips that quivered as they read, and cheeks that grew paler as the listener bent to catch the sounds to which fear gave a more broken and hollow tone, at the close of every page. The rising voice of the stormy night seemed to make wild and dreary harmony with the tones of the listener’s feelings. The storm came on, not with sudden violence, but with sullen and long-suspended wrath—often receding, as it were, to the verge of

the horizon, and then returning and rolling its deepening and awful peals over the very roof. And as the stranger proceeded in his narrative, every pause, which emotion or weariness might cause, was meetly filled by the deep rushing of the rain that fell in torrents,—the sighs of the wind,—and now and then a faint, distant, but long-continued peal of thunder. “It sounds,” said the stranger, raising his eyes from the manuscript, “like the chidings of the spirits, that their secrets are disclosed!”

CHAPTER XXVI.

* * * *

——And the twain were playing dice.

* * * *

The game is done, I've won, I've won,
Quoth she, and whistled thrice.

COLERIDGE—*Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner.*

The Tale of Guzman's Family.

“**O**F what I am about to read to you,” said the stranger, “I have witnessed part myself, and the remainder is established on a basis as strong as human evidence can make it.

“In the city of Seville, where I lived many years, I knew a wealthy merchant, far advanced in years, who was known by the name of Guzman the rich. He was of obscure birth,—and those who honoured his wealth sufficiently to borrow from him frequently, never honoured his name so far as to prefix Don to it, or to add his surname, of which, indeed, most were ignorant, and among the number, it is said, the wealthy merchant himself. He was well respected, however; and when Guzman was seen, as regularly as the bell tolled for vespers, to issue from the narrow door of his house,—lock it carefully,—view it twice or thrice with a wistful eye,—then deposit the key in his bosom, and move slowly to church, feeling for the key in his vest the whole way,—the proudest heads in Seville were uncovered as he

passed,—and the children who were playing in the streets, desisted from their sports till he had halted by them.

“Guzman had neither wife or child,—relative or friend. An old female domestic constituted his whole household, and his personal expences were calculated on a scale of the most pinching frugality; it was therefore matter of anxious conjecture to many, how his enormous wealth would be bestowed after his death. This anxiety gave rise to inquiries about the possibility of Guzman having relatives, though in remoteness and obscurity; and the diligence of inquiry, when stimulated at once by avarice and curiosity, is indefatigable. Thus it was at length discovered that Guzman had formerly a sister, many years younger than himself, who, at a very early age, had married a German musician, a Protestant, and had shortly after quitted Spain. It was remembered, or reported, that she had made many efforts to soften the heart and open the hand of her brother, who was even then very wealthy, and to induce him to be reconciled to their union, and to enable her and her husband to remain in Spain. Guzman was inflexible. Wealthy, and proud of his wealth as he was, he might have digested the unpalatable morsel of her union with a poor man, whom he could have made rich; but he could not even swallow the intelligence that she had married a Protestant. Ines, for that was her name, and her husband, went to Germany, partly in dependence on his musical talents, which were highly appreciated in that country,—partly in the vague hope of emigrants, that change of place will be attended with change of circumstances,—and partly, also, from the feeling, that misfortune is better tolerated any where than in the presence of those who inflict it. Such was the tale told by the old, who affected to remember the facts,—and believed by the young, whose imagination supplied all the defects of memory, and pictured to them an interesting beauty, with her children hanging about her, embarking, with a heretic husband, for a distant country, and sadly bidding farewell to the land and the religion of her fathers.

“Now, while these things were talked of at Seville, Guzman fell sick, and was given over by the physicians, whom with considerable reluctance he had suffered to be called in.

“In the progress of his illness, whether nature revisited a heart she long appeared to have deserted,—or whether he conceived that the hand of a

relative might be a more grateful support to his dying head than that of a rapacious and mercenary menial,—or whether his resentful feelings burnt faintly at the expected approach of death, as artificial fires wax dim at the appearance of morning;—so it was, that Guzman in his illness bethought himself of his sister and her family,—sent off, at a considerable expence, an express to that part of Germany where she resided, to invite her to return and be reconciled to him,—and prayed devoutly that he might be permitted to survive till he could breathe his last amid the arms of her and her children. Moreover, there was a report at this time, in which the hearers probably took more interest than in any thing that related merely to the life or death of Guzman,—and this was, that he had rescinded his former will, and sent for a notary, with whom, in spite of his apparent debility, he remained locked up for some hours, dictating in a tone which, however clear to the notary, did not leave one distinct impression of sound on the ears that were strained, even to an agony of listening, at the double-locked door of his chamber.

“All Guzman’s friends had endeavoured to dissuade him from making this exertion, which, they assured him, would only hasten his dissolution. But to their surprise, and doubtless their delight, from the moment his will was made, Guzman’s health began to amend,—and in less than a week he began to walk about his chamber, and calculate what time it might take an express to reach Germany, and how soon he might expect intelligence from his family.

“Some months had passed away, and the priests took advantage of the interval to get about Guzman. But after exhausting every effort of ingenuity,—after plying him powerfully but unavailingly on the side of conscience, of duty, of fear, and of religion,—they began to understand their interest, and change their battery. And finding that the settled purpose of Guzman’s soul was not to be changed, and that he was determined on recalling his sister and her family to Spain, they contented themselves with requiring that he should have no communication with the heretic family, except through them,—and never see his sister or her children unless they were witnesses to the interview.

“This condition was easily complied with, for Guzman felt no decided inclination for seeing his sister, whose presence might have reminded him

of feelings alienated, and duties forgot. Besides, he was a man of fixed habits; and the presence of the most interesting being on earth, that threatened the slightest interruption or suspension of those habits, would have been to him insupportable.

“Thus we are all indurated by age and habit,—and feel ultimately, that the dearest connexions of nature or passion may be sacrificed to those petty indulgences which the presence or influence of a stranger may disturb. So Guzman compromised between his conscience and his feelings. He determined, in spite of all the priests in Seville, to invite his sister and her family to Spain, and to leave the mass of his immense fortune to them; (and to that effect he wrote, and wrote repeatedly and explicitly). But, on the other hand, he promised and swore to his spiritual counsellors, that he never would see one individual of the family; and that, though his sister might inherit his fortune, she never—never should see his face. The priests were satisfied, or appeared to be so, with this declaration; and Guzman, having propitiated them with ample offerings to the shrines of various saints, to each of whom his recovery was exclusively attributed, sat down to calculate the probable expence of his sister’s return to Spain, and the necessity of providing for her family, whom he had, as it were, rooted from their native bed; and therefore felt bound, in all honesty, to make them flourish in the soil into which he had transplanted them.

“Within the year, his sister, her husband, and four children, returned to Spain. Her name was Ines, her husband’s was Walberg. He was an industrious man, and an excellent musician. His talents had obtained for him the place of *Maestro di Capella* to the Duke of Saxony; and his children were educated (according to his means) to supply his place when vacated by death or accident, or to employ themselves as musical teachers in the courts of German princes. He and his wife had lived with the utmost frugality, and looked to their children for the means of increasing, by the exercise of their talents, that subsistence which it was their daily labour to provide.

“The eldest son, who was called Everhard, inherited his father’s musical talents. The daughters, Julia and Ines, were musical also, and very skilful in embroidery. The youngest child, Maurice, was by turns the delight and the torment of the family.

“They had struggled on for many years in difficulties too petty to be made the subject of detail, yet too severe not to be painfully felt by those whose lot is to encounter them every day, and every hour of the day,—when the sudden intelligence, brought by an express from Spain, of their wealthy relative Guzman inviting them to return thither, and proclaiming them heirs to all his vast riches, burst on them like the first dawn of his half-year’s summer on the crouching and squalid inmate of a Lapland hut. All trouble was forgot,—all cares postponed,—their few debts paid off,—and their preparations made for an instant departure to Spain.

“So to Spain they went, and journeyed on to the city of Seville, where, on their arrival, they were waited on by a grave ecclesiastic, who acquainted them with Guzman’s resolution of never seeing his offending sister or her family, while at the same time he assured them of his intention of supporting and supplying them with every comfort, till his decease put them in possession of his wealth. The family were somewhat disturbed at this intelligence, and the mother wept at being denied the sight of her brother, for whom she still cherished the affection of memory; while the priest, by way of softening the discharge of his commission, dropt some words of a change of their heretical opinions being most likely to open a channel of communication between them and their relative. The silence with which this hint was received spoke more than many words, and the priest departed.

“This was the first cloud that had intercepted their view of felicity since the express arrived in Germany, and they sat gloomily enough under its shadow for the remainder of the evening. Walberg, in the confidence of expected wealth, had not only brought over his children to Spain, but had written to his father and mother, who were very old, and wretchedly poor, to join him in Seville; and by the sale of his house and furniture, had been enabled to remit them money for the heavy expences of so long a journey. They were now hourly expected, and the children, who had a faint but grateful recollection of the blessing bestowed on their infant heads by quivering lips and withered hands, looked out with joy for the arrival of the ancient pair. Ines had often said to her husband, “Would it not be better to let your father and mother remain in Germany, and remit them money for their support, than put them to the fatigue of so long a journey at their far

advanced age?”—And he had always answered, “Let them rather die under my roof, than live under that of strangers.”

“This night he perhaps began to feel the prudence of his wife’s advice;—she saw it, and with cautious gentleness forbore, for that very reason, to remind him of it.

“The weather was gloomy and cold that evening,—it was unlike a night in Spain. Its chill appeared to extend to the party. Ines sat and worked in silence—the children, collected at the window, communicated in whispers their hopes and conjectures about the arrival of the aged travellers, and Walberg, who was restlessly traversing the room, sometimes sighed as he overheard them.

“The next day was sunny and cloudless. The priest again called on them, and, after regretting that Guzman’s resolution was inflexible, informed them, that he was directed to pay them an annual sum for their support, which he named, and which appeared to them enormous; and to appropriate another for the education of the children, which seemed to be calculated on a scale of princely munificence. He put deeds, properly drawn and attested for this purpose, into their hands, and then withdrew, after repeating the assurance, that they would be the undoubted heirs of Guzman’s wealth at his decease, and that, as the interval would be passed in affluence, it might well be passed without repining. The priest had scarcely retired, when the aged parents of Walberg arrived, feeble from joy and fatigue, but not exhausted, and the whole family sat down to a meal that appeared to them luxurious, in that placid contemplation of future felicity, which is often more exquisite than its actual enjoyment.

“I saw them,” said the stranger, interrupting himself,—“I saw them on the evening of that day of union, and a painter, who wished to embody the image of domestic felicity in a group of living figures, need have gone no further than the mansion of Walberg. He and his wife were seated at the head of the table, smiling on their children, and seeing them smile in return, without the intervention of one anxious thought,—one present harassing of petty difficulty, or heavy presage of future mischance,—*one fear of the morrow*, or aching remembrance of the past. Their children formed indeed a groupe on which the eye of painter or of parent, the gaze of taste or of affection, might have hung with equal delight. Everhard their eldest son,

now sixteen, possessed too much beauty for his sex, and his delicate and brilliant complexion, his slender and exquisitely moulded form, and the modulation of his tender and tremulous voice, inspired that mingled interest, with which we watch, in youth, over the strife of present debility with the promise of future strength, and infused into his parent's hearts that fond anxiety with which we mark the progress of a mild but cloudy morning in spring, rejoicing in the mild and balmy glories of its dawn, but fearing lest clouds may overshadow them before noon. The daughters, Ines and Julia, had all the loveliness of their colder climate—the luxuriant ringlets of golden hair, the large bright blue eyes, the snow-like whiteness of their bosoms, and slender arms, and the rose-leaf tint and peachiness of their delicate cheeks, made them, as they attended their parents with graceful and fond officiousness, resemble two young Hebes ministering cups, which their touch alone was enough to turn into nectar.

“The spirits of these young persons had been early depressed by the difficulties in which their parents were involved; and even in childhood they had acquired the timid tread, the whispered tone, the anxious and inquiring look, that the constant sense of domestic distress painfully teaches even to children, and which it is the most exquisite pain to a parent to witness. But now there was nothing to restrain their young hearts,—that stranger, a *smile*, fled back rejoicing to the lovely home of their lips,—and the timidity of their former habits only lent a grateful shade to the brilliant exuberance of youthful happiness. Just opposite this picture, whose hues were so bright, and whose shades were so tender, were seated the figures of the aged grandfather and grandmother. The contrast was very strong; there was no connecting link, no graduated medium,—you passed at once from the first and fairest flowers of spring, to the withered and rootless barrenness of winter.

“These very aged persons, however, had something in their looks to soothe the eye, and Teniers or Wouverman would perhaps have valued their figures and costume far beyond those of their young and lovely grandchildren. They were stiffly and quaintly habited in their German garb—the old man in his doublet and cap, and the old woman in her ruff, stomacher, and head-gear resembling a skull-cap, with long depending pinners, through which a few white, but very long hairs, appeared on her

wrinkled cheeks; but on the countenances of both there was a gleam of joy, like the cold smile of a setting sun on a wintry landscape. They did not distinctly hear the kind importunities of their son and daughter, to partake more amply of the most plentiful meal they had ever witnessed in their frugal lives,—but they bowed and smiled with that thankfulness which is at once wounding and grateful to the hearts of affectionate children. They smiled also at the beauty of Everhard and their elder grandchildren,—at the wild pranks of Maurice, who was as wild in the hour of trouble as in the hour of prosperity;—and finally, they smiled at all that was said, though they did not hear half of it, and at all they saw, though they could enjoy very little—and that *smile of age*, that placid submission to the pleasures of the young, mingled with undoubted anticipations of a more pure and perfect felicity, gave an almost heavenly expression to features, that would otherwise have borne only the withering look of debility and decay.

“Some circumstances occurred during this family feast, which were sufficiently characteristic of the partakers. Walberg (himself a very temperate man) pressed his father repeatedly to take more wine than he was accustomed to,—the old man gently declined it. The son still pressed it heartfully, and the old man complied with a wish to gratify his son, not himself.

“The younger children, too, caressed their grandmother with the boisterous fondness of children. Their mother reproached them.—“Nay, let be,” said the gentle old woman. “They trouble you, mother,” said the wife of Walberg.—“They cannot trouble me long,” said the grandmother, with an emphatic smile. “Father,” said Walberg, “is not Everhard grown very tall?”—“The last time I saw him,” said the grandfather, “I stooped to kiss him; now I think he must stoop to kiss me.” And, at the word, Everhard darted like an arrow into the trembling arms that were opened to receive him, and his red and hairless lips were pressed to the snowy beard of his grandfather. “Cling there, my child,” said the exulting father.—“God grant your kiss may never be applied to lips less pure.”—“They never shall, my father!” said the susceptible boy, blushing at his own emotions—“I never wish to press any lips but those that will bless me like those of my grandfather.”—— “And do you wish,” said the old man jocularly, “that the blessing should *always* issue from lips as rough and hoary as mine?”

Everhard stood blushing behind the old man's chair at this question, and Walberg, who heard the clock strike the hour at which he had been always accustomed, in prosperity or adversity, to summon his family to prayer, made a signal which his children well understood, and which was communicated in whispers to their aged relatives.—“Thank God,” said the aged grandmother to the young whisperer, and as she spoke, she sunk on her knees. Her grandchildren assisted her. “Thank God,” echoed the old man, bending his stiffened knees, and doffing his cap—“Thank God for this ‘shadow of a great rock in a weary land!’”—and he knelt, while Walberg, after reading a chapter or two from a German Bible which he held in his hands, pronounced an extempore prayer, imploring God to fill their hearts with gratitude for the temporal blessings they enjoyed, and to enable them “so to pass through things temporal, that they might not finally lose the things eternal.” At the close of the prayer, the family rose and saluted each other with that affection which has not its root in earth, and whose blossoms, however diminutive and colourless to the eye of man in this wretched soil, shall yet bear glorious fruit in the garden of God. It was a lovely sight to behold the young people assisting their aged relatives to arise from their knees,—and it was a lovelier hearing, to listen to the happy good-nights exchanged among the parting family. The wife of Walberg was most assiduous in preparing the comforts of her husband's parents, and Walberg yielded to her with that proud gratitude, that feels more exaltation in a benefit conferred by those we love, than if we conferred it ourselves. He loved his parents, but he was proud of his wife loving them because they were his. To the repeated offers of his children to assist or attend their ancient relatives, he answered, “No, dear children, your mother will do better,—your mother always does best.” As he spoke, his children, according to a custom now forgot, kneeled before him to ask his blessing. His hand, tremulous with affection, rested first on the curling locks of the darling Everhard, whose head towered proudly above those of his kneeling sisters, and of Maurice, who, with the irrepressible and venial levity of joyous childhood, laughed as he knelt. “God bless you!” said Walberg—“God bless you all,—and may he make you as good as your mother, and as happy as—your father is this night;” and as he spoke, the happy father turned aside and wept.

CHAPTER XXVII.

———Quæque ipsa miserrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui.

VIRGIL.

“THE wife of Walberg, who was naturally of a cool sedate temper, and to whom misfortune had taught an anxious and jealous prevoyance, was not so intoxicated with the present prosperity of the family, as its young, or even its aged members. Her mind was full of thoughts which she would not communicate to her husband, and sometimes did not wish to acknowledge to herself; but to the priest, who visited them frequently with renewed marks of Guzman’s bounty, she spoke explicitly. She said, that however grateful for her brother’s kindness, for the enjoyment of present competence, and the hope of future wealth, she wished that her children might be permitted to acquire the means of independent subsistence for themselves, and that the money destined by Guzman’s liberality for their ornamental education, might be applied to the purpose of ensuring them the power of supporting themselves, and assisting their parents. She alluded slightly to the possible future change in her brother’s favourable feelings towards her, and dwelt much on the circumstance of her children being strangers in the country, wholly unacquainted with its language, and averse from its religion; and she mildly but strongly stated the difficulties to which a heretic family of strangers might be exposed in a Catholic country, and implored the priest to employ his mediation and influence with her brother, that her children might be enabled, through his bounty, to acquire the means of independent subsistence, as if——and she paused. The good and friendly priest (for he was truly both) listened to her with attention; and after

satisfying his conscience, by adjuring her to renounce her heretical opinions, as the only means of obtaining a reconciliation with God and her brother, and receiving a calm, but firm negative, proceeded to give her his best LAY advice, which was to comply with her brother's wishes in every thing, to educate her children in the manner which he prescribed, and to the full extent of the means which he so amply furnished. He added, *en confiance*, that Guzman, though, during his long life, he had never been suspected of any passion but that of accumulating money, was now possessed with a spirit much harder to expel, and was resolved that the heirs of his wealth should be, in point of all that might embellish polished society, on a level with the descendants of the first nobility of Spain. Finally, he counselled submission to her brother's wishes in all things,—and the wife of Walberg complied with tears, which she tried to conceal from the priest, and had completely effaced the traces of before she again met her husband.

“In the mean time, the plan of Guzman was rapidly realized. A handsome house was taken for Walberg,—his sons and daughters were splendidly arrayed, and sumptuously lodged; and, though education was, and still is, on a very low level in Spain, they were taught all that was then supposed to qualify them as companions for the descendants of *Hidalgoes*. Any attempt, or even allusion to their being prepared for the ordinary occupations of life, was strictly forbidden by the orders of Guzman. The father triumphed in this,—the mother regretted it, but she kept her regret to herself, and consoled herself with thinking, that the ornamental education her children were receiving might ultimately be turned to account; for the wife of Walberg was a woman whom the experience of misfortune had taught to look to the future with an anxious eye, and that eye, with ominous accuracy, had seldom failed to detect a speck of evil in the brightest beam of sun-shine that had ever trembled on her chequered existence.

“The injunctions of Guzman were obeyed,—the family lived in luxury. The young people plunged into their new life of enjoyment with an avidity proportioned to their youthful sensibility of pleasure, and to a taste for refinement and elegant pursuits, which their former obscurity had repressed, but never extinguished. The proud and happy father exulted in the personal beauty, and improving talents of his children. The anxious mother sighed

sometimes, but took care the sigh should never reach her husband's ear. The aged grandfather and grandmother, whose infirmities had been much increased by their journey to Spain, and possibly still more by that strong emotion which is a habit to youth, but a convulsion to age, sat in their ample chairs comfortably idle, dozing away life in intervals of unuttered though conscious satisfaction, and calm but venerable apathy;—they slept much, but when they awoke, they smiled at their grandchildren, and at each other.

“The wife of Walberg, during this interval, which seemed one of undisturbed felicity to all but her, sometimes suggested a gentle caution,—a doubtful and anxious hint,—a possibility of future disappointment, but this was soon smiled away by the rosy, and laughing, and kissful lips of her children, till the mother at last began to smile at her apprehensions herself. At times, however, she led them anxiously in the direction of their uncle's house. She walked up and down the street before his door with her children, and sometimes lifted up her veil, as if to try whether her eye could pierce through walls as hard as the miser's heart, or windows barred like his coffers,—then glancing on her children's costly dress, while her eye darted far into futurity, she sighed and returned slowly home. This state of suspense was soon to be terminated.

“The priest, Guzman's confessor, visited them often; first in quality of almoner or agent of his bounty, which was amply and punctually bestowed through his hands; and secondly, in quality of a professed chess-player, at which game he had met, even in Spain, no antagonist like Walberg. He also felt an interest in the family and their fortunes, which, though his orthodoxy disowned, his heart could not forbear to acknowledge,—so the good priest compromised matters by playing chess with the father, and praying for the conversion of his family on his return to Guzman's house. It was while engaged in the former exercise, that a message arrived to summon him on the instant home,—the priest left his queen *en prise*, and hurried into the passage to speak with the messenger. The family of Walberg, with agitation unspeakable, half rose to follow him. They paused at the door, and then retreated with a mixed feeling of anxiety for the intelligence, and shame at the attitude in which they might be discovered. As they retreated, however, they could not help hearing the words of the messenger,—“He is at his last

gasp,—he has sent for you,—you must not lose a moment.” As the messenger spoke, the priest and he departed.

“The family returned to their apartment, and for some hours sat in profound silence, interrupted only by the ticking of the clock, which was distinctly and solely heard, and which seemed too loud to their quickened ears, amid that deep stillness on which it broke incessantly,—or by the echoes of Walberg’s hurried step, as he started from his chair and traversed the apartment. At this sound they turned, as if expecting a messenger, then, glancing at the silent figure of Walberg, sunk on their seats again. The family sat up all that long night of unuttered, and indeed unutterable emotion. The lights burnt low, and were at length extinguished, but no one noticed them;—the pale light of the dawn broke feebly into the room, but no one observed it was morning. “God!—how long he lingers!” exclaimed Walberg involuntarily; and these words, though uttered under his breath, made all the listeners start, as at the first sounds of a human voice, which they had not heard for many hours.

“At this moment a knock was heard at the door,—a step trod slowly along the passage that led to the room,—the door opened, and the priest appeared. He advanced into the room without speaking, or being spoken to. And the contrast of strong emotion and unbroken silence,—this conflict of speech that strangled thought in the utterance, and of thought that in vain asked aid of speech,—the agony and the muteness,—formed a terrible momentary association. It was but momentary,—the priest, as he stood, uttered the words—“All is over!” Walberg clasped his hands over his forehead, and in ecstatic agony exclaimed,—“Thank God!” and wildly catching at the object nearest him, as if imagining it one of his children, he clasped and hugged it to his breast. His wife wept for a moment at the thought of her brother’s death, but roused herself for her children’s sake to hear all that was to be told. The Priest could tell no more but that Guzman was dead,—seals had been put on every chest, drawer, and coffer in the house,—not a cabinet had escaped the diligence of the persons employed,—and the will was to be read the following day.

“For the following day the family remained in that intensity of expectation that precluded all thought. The servants prepared the usual meal, but it remained untasted. The family pressed each other to partake of

it; but as the importunity was not enforced by the inviter setting any example of the lesson he tried to teach, the meal remained untasted. About noon a grave person, in the habit of a notary, was announced, and summoned Walberg to be present at the opening of Guzman's will. As Walberg prepared to obey the summons, one of his children officiously offered him his hat, another his cloke, both of which he had forgot in the trepidation of his anxiety; and these instances of reminiscence and attention in his children, contrasted with his own abstraction, completely overcame him, and he sunk down on a seat to recover himself. "You had better not go, my love," said his wife mildly. "I believe I shall—I *must* take your advice," said Walberg, relapsing on the seat from which he had half risen. The notary, with a formal bow, was retiring. "I *will* go!" said Walberg, swearing a German oath, whose guttural sound made the notary start,—"*I will* go!" and as he spoke he fell on the floor, exhausted by fatigue and want of refreshment, and emotion indescribable but to a father. The notary retired, and a few hours more were exhausted in torturing conjecture, expressed on the mother's part only by clasped hands and smothered sighs,—on the father's by profound silence, averted countenance, and hands that seemed to feel for those of his children, and then shrink from the touch,—and on the children's by rapidly varying auguries of hope and of disappointment. The aged pair sat motionless among their family;—they knew not what was going on, but they knew if it was good they must partake of it,—and in the perception or expectation of the approach of evil, their faculties had latterly become very obtuse.

"The day was far advanced,—it was noon. The servants, with whom the munificence of the deceased had amply supplied their establishment, announced that dinner was prepared; and Ines, who retained more presence of mind than the rest, gently suggested to her husband the necessity of not betraying their emotions to their servants. He obeyed her hint mechanically, and walked into the dining-hall, forgetting for the first time to offer his arm to his infirm father. His family followed, but, when seated at the table, they seemed not to know for what purpose they were collected there. Walberg, consumed by that *thirst of anxiety* which nothing seems sufficient to quench, called repeatedly for wine; and his wife, who found even the attempt to eat impossible in the presence of the gazing and unmoved

attendants, dismissed them by a signal, but did not feel the desire of food restored by their absence. The old couple eat as usual, and sometimes looked up with an expression of vague and vacant wonder, and a kind of sluggish reluctance to admit the fear or belief of approaching calamity. Towards the end of their cheerless meal, Walberg was called out; he returned in a few minutes, and there was no appearance of change in his countenance. He seated himself, and only his wife perceived the traces of a wild smile stealing over the trembling lines of his face, as he filled a large glass of wine, and raised it to his lips, pronouncing—"A health to the heirs of Guzman." But instead of drinking the wine, he dashed the glass to the floor, and burying his head in the drapery of the table on which he flung himself, he exclaimed, "Not a ducat,—not a ducat,—all left to the church! —Not a ducat!" * * * * *

"In the evening the priest called, and found the family much more composed. The certainty of evil had given them a kind of courage. Suspense is the only evil against which it is impossible to set up a defence,—and, like young mariners in an untried sea, they almost felt ready to welcome the storm, as a relief from the deadly and loathsome sickness of anxiety. The honest resentment, and encouraging manner of the priest, were a cordial to their ears and hearts. He declared his belief, that nothing but the foulest means that might be resorted to by interested and bigotted monks, could have extorted such a will from the dying man,—his readiness to attest, in every court in Spain, the intentions of the testator (till within a few hours of his death) to have bequeathed his whole fortune to his family,—intentions which he had repeatedly expressed to him and others, and to whose effect he had seen a former will of no long date,—and, finally, gave his strenuous advice to Walberg to bring the matter to legal arbitration, in aid of which he promised his personal exertions, his influence with the ablest advocates in Seville, and every thing—but money.

"The family that night went to bed with spirits exalted by hope, and slept in peace. One circumstance alone marked a change in their feelings and habits. As they were retiring, the old man laid his tremulous hand on the shoulder of Walberg, and said mildly, "My son, shall we pray before we retire?"—"Not to-night, father," said Walberg, who perhaps feared the mention of their heretical worship might alienate the friendly priest, or who

felt the agitation of his heart too great for the solemn exercise; “Not to-night, I am—too happy!”

“The priest was as good as his word,—the ablest advocates in Seville undertook the cause of Walberg. Proofs of undue influence, of imposition, and of terror being exercised on the mind of the testator, were ingeniously made out by the diligence and spiritual authority of the priest, and skilfully arranged and ably pleaded by the advocates. Walberg’s spirits rose with every hour. The family, at the time of Guzman’s death, were in possession of a considerable sum of money, but this was soon expended, together with another sum which the frugality of Ines had enabled her to save, and which she now cheerfully produced in aid of her husband’s exigencies, and in confidence of eventual success. When all was gone, other resources still remained,—the spacious house was disposed of, the servants dismissed, the furniture sold (as usual) for about a fourth of its value, and, in their new and humble abode in the suburbs of Seville, Ines and her daughters contentedly resumed those domestic duties which they had been in the habit of performing in their quiet home in Germany. Amid these changes, the grandfather and grandmother experienced none but mere change of place, of which they hardly appeared conscious. The assiduous attention of Ines to their comforts was increased, not diminished, by the necessity of being herself the sole ministrant to them; and smiling she pleaded want of appetite, or trifling indisposition, as an excuse for her own and her children’s meal, while theirs was composed of every thing that could tempt the tasteless palate of age, or that she remembered was acceptable to theirs.

“The cause had now come to a hearing, and for the two first days the advocates of Walberg carried all before them. On the third the ecclesiastical advocates made a firm and vigorous stand. Walberg returned much dispirited;—his wife saw it, and therefore assumed no airs of cheerfulness, which only increase the irritation of misfortune, but she was equable, and steadily and tranquilly occupied in domestic business the whole evening in his sight. As they were separating for the night, by a singular contingency, the old man again reminded his son of the forgotten hour of family prayer. “Not to-night, father,” said Walberg impatiently; “not to-night; I am—too unhappy!”—“Thus,” said the old man, lifting up his withered hands, and speaking with an energy he had not showed for years,—“thus, O my God!

prosperity and adversity alike furnish us with excuses for neglecting thee!” As he tottered from the room, Walberg declined his head on the bosom of his wife, who sat beside him, and shed a few bitter tears. And Ines whispered to herself, “The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit,—a broken heart he will not despise.” * * * * *

“The cause had been carried on with a spirit and expedition that had no precedent in the courts of Spain, and the fourth day was fixed on for a final hearing and termination of the cause. The day dawned, and at the dawn of day Walberg arose, and walked for some hours before the gates of the hall of justice; and when they were opened, he entered, and sat down mechanically on a seat in the vacant hall, with the same look of profound attention, and anxious interest, that he would have assumed had the court been seated, and the cause about to be decided. After a few moment’s pause, he sighed, started, and appearing to awake from a dream, quitted his seat, and walked up and down the empty passages till the court was prepared to sit.

“The court met early that day, and the cause was powerfully advocated. Walberg sat on one seat, without ever changing his place, till all was over; and it was then late in the evening, and he had taken no refreshment the entire day, and he had never changed his place, and he had never changed the close and corrupted atmosphere of the crowded court for a moment. Quid multis morer? The chance of a heretic stranger, against the interests of churchmen in Spain, may be calculated by the most shallow capacity.

“The family had all that day sat in the innermost room of their humble dwelling. Everhard had wished to accompany his father to the court,—his mother withheld him. The sisters involuntarily dropt their work from time to time, and their mother gently reminded them of the necessity of renewing it. They did resume it, but their hands, at variance with their feelings, made such blunders, that their mother, δακρυοεν γελασασα, removed their work, and suggested to them some active employment in household affairs. While they were thus engaged, evening came on,—the family from time to time suspended their ordinary occupations, and crowded to the window to watch the return of their father. Their mother no longer interfered,—she sat in silence, and this silence formed a strong contrast to the restless impatience of her children. “That is my father,” exclaimed the voices of the four at

once, as a figure crossed the street. "That is not my father," they repeated, as the figure slowly retired. A knock was heard at the door,—Ines herself rushed forward to open it. A figure retreated, advanced again, and again retreated. Then it seemed to rush past her, and enter the house like a shadow. In terror she followed it, and with terror unutterable saw her husband kneeling among his children, who in vain attempted to raise him, while he continued to repeat, "No, let me kneel,—let me kneel, I have undone you all! The cause is lost, and I have made beggars of you all!"—"Rise,—rise, dearest father," cried the children, gathering round him, "nothing is lost, if you are saved!"—"Rise, my love, from that horrible and unnatural humiliation," cried Ines, grasping the arms of her husband; "help me, my children,—father,—mother, will you not help me?"—and as she spoke, the tottering, helpless, and almost lifeless figures of the aged grandfather and grandmother arose from their chairs, and staggering forwards, added their feeble strength,—their *vis impotentiae*, to sustain or succour the weight that dragged heavily on the arms of the children and their mother. By this sight, more than by any effort, Walberg was raised from the posture that agonized his family, and placed in a chair, around which hung the wife and children, while the aged father and mother, retreating torpidly to their seats, seemed to lose in a few moments the keen consciousness of evil that had inspired them for an instant with a force almost miraculous. Ines and her children hung round Walberg, and uttered all of consolation that helpless affection could suggest; but perhaps there is not a more barbed arrow can be sent through the heart, than by the thought that the hands that clasp ours so fondly cannot earn for us or themselves the means of another meal,—that the lips that are pressed to ours so warmly, may the next ask us for bread, and—ask in vain!

"It was perhaps fortunate for this unhappy family, that the very extremity of their grief rendered its long indulgence impossible,—the voice of necessity made itself be heard distinctly and loudly amid all the cry and clamour of that hour of agony. Something must be done for the morrow,—and it was to be done immediately. "What money have you?" was the first articulate sentence Walberg uttered to his wife; and when she whispered the small sum that the expences of their lost cause had left them, he shivered with a brief emphatic spasm of horror,—then bursting from their arms, and

rising, he crossed the room, as if he wished to be alone for a moment. As he did so, he saw his youngest child playing with the long strings of his grandfather's band,—a mode of sportive teasing in which the urchin delighted, and which was at once chid and smiled at. Walberg struck the poor child vehemently, and then catching him in his arms, bid him—"Smile as long as he could!" * * * * *

"They had means of subsistence at least for the following week; and that was such a source of comfort to them, as it is to men who are quitting a wreck, and drifting on a bare raft with a slender provision towards some coast, which they hope to reach before it is exhausted. They sat up all that night together in earnest counsel, after Ines had taken care to see the father and mother of her husband comfortably placed in their apartment. Amid their long and melancholy conference, hope sprung up insensibly in the hearts of the speakers, and a plan was gradually formed for obtaining the means of subsistence. Walberg was to offer his talents as a musical teacher,—Ines and her daughters were to undertake embroidery,—and Everhard, who possessed exquisite taste both in music and drawing, was to make an effort in both departments, and the friendly priest was to be applied to for his needful interest and recommendation for all. The morning broke on their long-protracted consultation, and found them unwearied in discussing its subject. "We shall not starve," said the children hopefully.—"I trust not," said Walberg sighingly.—His wife, who knew Spain, said not a word.—"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

———This to me
In dreadful secrecy they did impart,
And I with them the third night kept the watch.

SHAKESPEARE.

“As they spoke, a soft knock was heard, such as kindness gives at the door of misfortune, and Everhard started up to answer it. “Stay,” said Walberg, absently, “Where are the servants?” Then recollecting himself, he smiled agonizingly, and waved his hand to his son to go. It was the good priest. He entered, and sat down in silence,—no one spoke to him. It might be truly said, as it is sublimely said in the original, “There was neither speech nor language, but voices were heard among them—*and felt too.*” The worthy priest piqued himself on his orthodoxy of all matters of belief and form enjoined by the Catholic church; and, moreover, had acquired a kind of monastic apathy, of sanctified stoicism, which priests sometimes imagine is the conquest of grace over the rebellion of nature, when it is merely the result of a profession that denies nature its objects and its ties. Yet so it was, that as he sat among this afflicted family, after complaining of the keenness of the morning air, and wiping away in vain the moisture, which he said it had brought into his eyes, he at last yielded to his feelings, and “lifted up his voice and wept.” But tears were not all he had to offer. On hearing the plans of Walberg and his family, he promised, with a faltering voice, his ready assistance in promoting them; and, as he rose to depart, observing that he had been entrusted by the faithful with a small sum for the relief of the unfortunate, and knew not where it could be better bestowed,

he dropped from the sleeve of his habit a well filled purse on the floor, and hurried away.

“The family retired to rest as the day approached, but rose in a few hours afterwards without having slept; and the remainder of that day, and the whole of the three following, were devoted to applications at every door where encouragement might be expected, or employment obtained, the priest in person aiding every application. But there were many circumstances unfavourable to the ill-starred family of Walberg. They were strangers, and, with the exception of their mother, who acted as interpreter, ignorant of the language of the country. This was “a sore evil,” extending almost to the total preclusion of their exertions as teachers. They were also heretics,—and this alone was a sufficient bar to their success in Seville. In some families the beauty of the daughters, in others that of the son, was gravely debated as an important objection. In others the recollection of their former splendour, suggested a mean and rancorous motive to jealous inferiority to insult them by a rejection, for which no other cause could be assigned. Unwearied and undismayed, they renewed their applications every day, at every house where admission could be obtained, and at many where it was denied; and each day they returned to examine the diminished stock, to divide the scantier meal, calculate how far it was possible to reduce the claims of nature to the level of their ebbing means, and smile when they talked of the morrow to each other, but weep when they thought of it alone. There is a withering monotony in the diary of misery,—“one day telleth another.” But there came at length a day, when the last coin was expended, the last meal devoured, the last resource exhausted, the last hope annihilated, and the friendly priest himself told them weeping, he had nothing to give them but his prayers.

“That evening the family sat in profound and stupified silence together for some hours, till the aged mother of Walberg, who had not for some months uttered any thing but indistinct monosyllables, or appeared conscious of any thing that was going on, suddenly, with that ominous energy that announces its effort to be the last,—that bright flash of parting life that precedes its total extinction, exclaimed aloud, apparently addressing her husband, “There is something wrong here,—why did they bring us from Germany? They might have suffered us to die there,—they

have brought us here to mock us, I think. Yesterday,—(her memory evidently confounding the dates of her son's prosperous and adverse fortune), yesterday they clothed me in silk, and I drank wine, and to-day they give me this sorry crust,—(flinging away the piece of bread which had been her share of the miserable meal),—there is something wrong here. I will go back to Germany,—I will!" and she rose from her seat in the sight of the astonished family, who, horror-struck, as they would have been at the sudden resuscitation of a corpse, ventured not to oppose her by word or movement. "I will go back to Germany," she repeated; and, rising, she actually took three or four firm and equal steps on the floor, while no one attempted to approach her. Then her force, both physical and mental, seemed to fail,—she tottered,—her voice sunk into hollow mutterings, as she repeated, "I know the way,—I know the way,—if it was not so dark.—I have not far to go,—I am very near—*home!*" As she spoke, she fell across the feet of Walberg. The family collected round her, and raised—a corpse. "Thank God!" exclaimed her son, as he gazed on his mother's corpse.—And this reversion of the strongest feeling of nature,—this wish for the death of those for whom, in other circumstances, we would ourselves have died, makes those who have experienced it feel as if there was no evil in life but want, and no object of rational pursuit but the means of avoiding it. Alas! if it be so, for what purpose were hearts that beat, and minds that burn, bestowed on us? Is all the energy of intellect, and all the enthusiasm of feeling, to be expended in contrivances how to meet or shift off the petty but torturing pangs of hourly necessity? Is the fire caught from heaven to be employed in lighting a faggot to keep the cold from the numbed and wasted fingers of poverty. Pardon this digression, Senhor," said the stranger, "*but I had a painful feeling, that forced me to make it.*" He then proceeded.

"The family collected around the dead body,—and it might have been a subject worthy the pencil of the first of painters, to witness its interment, as it took place the following night. As the deceased was a heretic, the corpse was not allowed to be laid in consecrated ground; and the family, solicitous to avoid giving offence, or attracting notice on the subject of their religion, were the only attendants on the funeral. In a small inclosure, at the rear of their wretched abode, her son dug his mother's grave, and Ines and her daughters placed the body in it. Everhard was absent in search of

employment,—as they hoped,—and a light was held by the youngest child, who smiled as he watched the scene, as if it had been a pageant got up for his amusement. That light, feeble as it was, showed the strong and varying expression of the countenances on which it fell;—in Walberg's there was a stern and fearful joy, that she whom they were laying to rest had been "taken from the evil to come,"—in that of Ines there was grief, mingled with something of horror, at this mute and unhallowed ceremony.—Her daughters, pale with grief and fear, wept silently; but their tears were checked, and the whole course of their feelings changed, when the light fell on another figure who appeared suddenly standing among them on the edge of the grave,—it was that of Walberg's father. Impatient of being left alone, and wholly unconscious of the cause, he had groped and tottered his way till he reached the spot; and now, as he saw his son heap up the earth over the grave, he exclaimed, with a brief and feeble effort of reminiscence, sinking on the ground, "Me, too,—lay me there, the same spot will serve for both!" His children raised and supported him into the house, where the sight of Everhard, with an unexpected supply of provisions, made them forget the horrors of the late scene, and postpone once more the fears of want till to-morrow. No inquiry how this supply was obtained, could extort more from Everhard than that it was the gift of charity. He looked exhausted and dreadfully pale,—and, forbearing to press him with further questions, they partook of this manna-meal,—this food that seemed to have dropped from heaven, and separated for the night. * * * *

"Ines had, during this period of calamity, unremittingly enforced the application of her daughters to those accomplishments from which she still derived the hopes of their subsistence. Whatever were the privations and disappointments of the day, their musical and other exercises were strictly attended to; and hands enfeebled by want and grief, plied their task with as much assiduity as when occupation was only a variation of luxury. This attention to the ornaments of life, when its actual necessities are wanted,—this sound of music in a house where the murmurs of domestic anxiety are heard every moment,—this subservience of talent to necessity, all its generous enthusiasm lost, and only its possible utility remembered or valued,—is perhaps the bitterest strife that ever was fought between the opposing claims of our artificial and our natural existence. But things had

now occurred that shook not only the resolution of Ines, but even affected her feelings beyond the power of repression. She had been accustomed to hear, with delight, the eager application of her daughters to their musical studies;—now—when she heard them, the morning after the interment of their grandmother, renewing that application—she felt as if the sounds struck through her heart. She entered the room where they were, and they turned towards her with their usual smiling demand for her approbation.

“The mother, with the forced smile of a sickening heart, said she believed there was no occasion for their practising any further that day. The daughters, who understood her too well, relinquished their instruments, and, accustomed to see every article of furniture converted into the means of casual subsistence, they thought no worse than that their ghitarras might be disposed of this day, and the next they hoped they would have to teach on those of their pupils. They were mistaken. Other symptoms of failing resolution,—of utter and hopeless abandonment, appeared that day. Walberg had always felt and expressed the strongest feelings of tender respect towards his parents—his father particularly, whose age far exceeded that of his mother. At the division of their meal that day, he shewed a kind of wolfish and greedy jealousy that made Ines tremble. He whispered to her—“How much my father eats—how heartily he feeds while we have scarce a morsel!”—“And let us want that morsel, before your father wants one!” said Ines in a whisper—“I have scarce tasted any thing myself.”—“Father—father,” cried Walberg, shouting in the ear of the doting old man, “you are eating heartily, while Ines and her children are starving!” And he snatched the food from his father’s hand, who gazed at him vacantly, and resigned the contested morsel without a struggle. A moment afterwards the old man rose from his seat, and with horrid unnatural force, tore the untasted meat from his grandchildren’s lips, and swallowed it himself, while his rivelled and toothless mouth grinned at them in mockery at once infantine and malicious.

“Squabbling about your supper?” cried Everhard, bursting among them with a wild and feeble laugh,—“Why, here’s enough for to-morrow—and to-morrow.” And he flung indeed ample means for two day’s subsistence on the table, but he looked *paler and paler*. The hungry family devoured the

hoard, and forgot to ask the cause of his increasing paleness, and obviously diminished strength. * * * * *

“They had long been without any domestics, and as Everhard disappeared mysteriously every day, the daughters were sometimes employed on the humble errands of the family. The beauty of the elder daughter, Julia, was so conspicuous, that her mother had often undertaken the most menial errands herself, rather than send her daughter into the streets unprotected. The following evening, however, being intently employed in some domestic occupation, she allowed Julia to go out to purchase their food for to-morrow, and lent her veil for the purpose, directing her daughter to arrange it in the Spanish fashion, with which she was well acquainted, so as to hide her face.

“Julia, who went with trembling steps on her brief errand, had somehow deranged her veil, and a glimpse of her beauty was caught by a cavalier who was passing. The meanness of her dress and occupation suggested hopes to him which he ventured to express. Julia burst from him with the mingled terror and indignation of insulted purity, but her eyes rested with unconscious avidity on the handful of gold which glittered in his hand.—She thought of her famishing parents,—of her own declining strength, and neglected useless talents. The gold still sparkled before her,—she felt—she knew not what, and to escape from some feelings is perhaps the best victory we can obtain over them. But when she arrived at home, she eagerly thrust the small purchase she had made into her mother’s hand, and, though hitherto gentle, submissive, and tractable, announced, in a tone of decision that seemed to her startled mother (whose thoughts were always limited to the exigencies of the hour) like that of sudden insanity, that she would rather starve than ever again tread the streets of Seville alone.

“As Ines retired to her bed, she thought she heard a feeble moan from the room where Everhard lay, and where, from their being compelled to sell the necessary furniture of the bed, he had entreated his parents to allow Maurice to sleep with him, alleging that the warmth of his body would be a substitute for artificial covering to his little brother. Twice those moans were heard, but Ines did not dare to awake Walberg, who had sunk into that profound sleep which is as often the refuge of intolerable misery, as that of saturated enjoyment. A few moments after, when the moans had ceased, and

she had half persuaded herself it was only the echo of that wave that seems for ever beating in the ears of the unfortunate,—the curtains of her bed were thrown open, and the figure of a child covered with blood, stained in breast, arms, and legs, appeared before her, and cried,—“It is Everhard’s blood—he is bleeding to death,—I am covered with his blood!—Mother—mother—rise and save Everhard’s life!” The object, the voice, the words, seemed to Ines like the imagery of some terrible dream, such as had lately often visited her sleep, till the tones of Maurice, her youngest, and (in her heart) her favourite child, made her spring from the bed, and hurry after the little blood-spotted figure that paddled before her on its naked feet, till she reached the adjoining room where Everhard lay. Amid all her anguish and fear, she trod as lightly as Maurice, lest she should awake Walberg.

“The moon-light fell strongly through the unshuttered windows on the wretched closet that just contained the bed. Its furniture was sufficiently scanty, and in his spasms Everhard had thrown off the sheet. So he lay, as Ines approached his bed, in a kind of corse-like beauty, to which the light of the moon gave an effect that would have rendered the figure worthy the pencil of a Murillo, a Rosa, or any of those painters, who, inspired by the genius of suffering, delight in representing the most exquisite of human forms in the extremity of human agony. A St Bartholomew flayed, with his skin hanging about him in graceful drapery—a St Laurence, broiled on a gridiron, and exhibiting his finely-formed anatomy on its bars, while naked slaves are blowing the coals beneath it,—even these were inferior to the form half-veiled,—half-disclosed by the moon-light as it lay. The snow-white limbs of Everhard were extended as if for the inspection of a sculptor, and moveless, as if they were indeed what they resembled, in hue and symmetry, those of a marble statue. His arms were tossed above his head, and the blood was trickling fast from the opened veins of both,—his bright and curled hair was clotted with the red stream that flowed from his arms,—his lips were blue, and a faint and fainter moan issued from them as his mother hung over him. This sight banished in a moment all other fears and feelings, and Ines shrieked aloud to her husband for assistance. Walberg, staggering from his sleep, entered the room,—the object before him was enough. Ines had only strength left to point to it. The wretched father rushed out in quest of medical aid, which he was obliged to solicit gratuitously, and

in bad Spanish, while his accents betrayed him at every door he knocked at, —and closed them against him as a foreigner and a heretic. At length a barber-surgeon (for the professions were united in Seville) consented, with many a yawn, to attend him, and came duly armed with lint and styptics. The distance was short, and he was soon by the bed of the young sufferer. The parents observed, with consternation unspeakable, the languid looks of recognition, the ghastly smile of consciousness, that Everhard viewed him with, as he approached the bed; and when he had succeeded in stopping the hæmorrhage, and bound up the arms, a whisper passed between him and the patient, and the latter raised his bloodless hand to his lips, and uttered, “Remember our bargain.” As the man retired, Walberg followed, and demanded to know the meaning of the words he had heard. Walberg was a German, and choleric—the surgeon was a Spaniard, and cool. “I shall tell you to-morrow, Senhor,” said he, putting up his instruments,—“in the mean time be assured of my gratuitous attendance on your son, and of his certain recovery. We deem you heretics in Seville, but that youth is enough to canonize the whole family, and cover a multitude of sins.” And with these words he departed. The next day he attended Everhard, and so for several, till he was completely recovered, always refusing the slightest remuneration, till the father, whom misery had made suspicious of every thing and nothing, watched at the door, and heard the horrible secret. He did not disclose it to his wife,—but from that hour, it was observed that his gloom became more intense, and the communications he used to hold with his family, on the subject of their distress, and the modes of evading it by hourly expedients, utterly and finally ceased.

“Everhard, now recovered, but still pale as the widow of Seneca, was at last able to join the family consultation, and give advice, and suggest resources, with a mental energy that his physical weakness could not overcome. The next day, when they were assembled to debate on the means of procuring subsistence for the following one, they for the first time missed their father. At every word that was uttered, they turned to ask for his sanction—but he was not there. At last he entered the room, but without taking a part in their consultation. He leaned gloomily against the wall, and while Everhard and Julia, at every sentence, turned their appealing looks towards him, he sullenly averted his head. Ines, appearing to pursue some

work, while her trembling fingers could scarce direct the needle, made a sign to her children not to observe him. Their voices were instantly depressed, and their heads bent closely towards each other. Mendicity appeared the only resource of this unfortunate family,—and they agreed, that the evening was the best time for trying its effect. The unhappy father remained rocking against the shattered wainscot till the arrival of evening. Ines repaired the clothes of the children, which were now so decayed, that every attempt at repair made a fresh rent, and the very thread she worked with seemed less attenuated than the worn-out materials it wrought on.

“The grandfather, still seated in his ample chair by the care of Ines, (for his son had grown very indifferent about him), watched her moving fingers, and exclaimed, with the petulance of dotage, “Aye,—you are arraying them in embroidery, while I am in rags.—In rags!” he repeated, holding out the slender garments which the beggared family could with difficulty spare him. Ines tried to pacify him, and showed her work, to prove that it was the remnants of her children’s former dress she was repairing; but, with horror unutterable, she perceived her husband incensed at these expressions of dotage, and venting his frantic and fearful indignation in language that she tried to bury the sound of, by pressing closer to the old man, and attempting to fix his bewildered attention on herself and her work. This was easily accomplished, and all was well, till they were about to separate on their wretched precarious errands. Then a new and untold feeling trembled at the heart of one of the young wanderers. Julia remembered the occurrence of a preceding evening,—she thought of the tempting gold, the flattering language, and the tender tone of the young cavalier. She saw her family perishing around her for want,—she felt it consuming her own vitals,—and as she cast her eye round the squalid room, the gold glittered brighter and brighter in her eye. A faint hope, aided perhaps by a still more faint suggestion of venial pride, swelled in her heart. “Perhaps he might love me,” she whispered to herself, “and think me not unworthy of his hand.” Then despair returned to the charge. “I must die of famine,” she thought, “if I return unaided,—and why may I not by my death benefit my family! I will never survive shame, but they may,—for they will not know it!”—She went out, and took a direction different from that of the family.

“Night came on,—the wanderers returned slowly one by one,—*Julia was the last*. Her brothers and sister had each obtained a trifling alms, for they had learned Spanish enough to beg in,—and the old man’s face wore a vacant smile, as he saw the store produced, which was, after all, scarce sufficient to afford a meal for the youngest. “And have you brought us nothing, Julia?” said her parents. She stood apart, and in silence. Her father repeated the question in a raised and angry voice. She started at the sound, and, rushing forward, buried her head in her mother’s bosom. “Nothing,—nothing,” she cried, in a broken and suffocated voice; “I tried,—my weak and wicked heart submitted to the thought for a moment,—but no,—no, not even to save you from perishing, could I!—I came home to perish first myself!” Her shuddering parents comprehended her,—and amid their agony they blessed her and wept,—but not from grief. The meal was divided, of which Julia at first steadily refused to partake, as she had not contributed to it, till her reluctance was overcome by the affectionate importunity of the rest, and she complied.

“It was during this division of what all believed to be their last meal, that Walberg gave one of those proofs of sudden and fearful violence of temper, bordering on insanity, which he had betrayed latterly. He seemed to notice, with sullen displeasure, that his wife had (as she always did) reserved the largest portion for his father. He eyed it askance at first, muttering angrily to himself. Then he spoke more aloud, though not so as to be heard by the deaf old man, who was sluggishly devouring his sordid meal. Then the sufferings of his children seemed to inspire him with a kind of wild resentment, and he started up, exclaiming, “My son sells his blood to a surgeon, to save us from perishing(2)! My daughter trembles on the verge of prostitution, to procure us a meal!” Then fiercely addressing his father, “And what dost thou do, old dotard? Rise up,—rise up, and beg for us thyself, or thou must starve!”—and, as he spoke, he raised his arm against the helpless old man. At this horrid sight, Ines shrieked aloud, and the children, rushing forward, interposed. The wretched father, incensed to madness, dealt blows among them, which were borne without a murmur; and then, the storm being exhausted, he sat down and wept.

“At this moment, to the astonishment and terror of all except Walberg, the old man, who, since the night of his wife’s interment, had never moved

but from his chair to his bed, and that not without assistance, rose suddenly from his seat, and, apparently in obedience to his son, walked with a firm and steady pace towards the door. When he had reached it, he paused, looked back on them with a fruitless effort at recollection, and went out slowly;—and such was the terror felt by all at this last ghastly look, which seemed like that of a corse moving on to the place of its interment, that no one attempted to oppose his passage, and several moments elapsed before Everhard had the recollection to pursue him.

“In the mean time, Ines had dismissed her children, and sitting as near as she dared to the wretched father, attempted to address some soothing expressions to him. Her voice, which was exquisitely sweet and soft, seemed to produce a mechanical effect on him. He turned towards her at first,—then leaning his head on his arm, he shed a few silent tears,—then flinging it on his wife’s bosom, he wept aloud. Ines seized this moment to impress on his heart the horror she felt from the outrage he had committed, and adjured him to supplicate the mercy of God for a crime, which, in her eyes, appeared scarce short of parricide. Walberg wildly asked what she alluded to; and when, shuddering, she uttered the words,—“Your father,—your poor old father!”—he smiled with an expression of mysterious and supernatural confidence that froze her blood, and, approaching her ear, softly whispered, “I have no father! He is dead,—long dead! I buried him the night I dug my mother’s grave! Poor old man,” he added with a sigh, “it was the better for him,—he would have lived only to weep, and perish perhaps with hunger. But I will tell you, Ines,—and let it be a secret, I wondered what made our provisions decrease so, till what was yesterday sufficient for four, is not to-day sufficient for one. I watched, and at last I discovered—it must be a secret—an old goblin, who daily visited this house. It came in the likeness of an old man in rags, and with a long white beard, and it devoured every thing on the table, while the children stood hungry by! But I struck at—I cursed it,—I chased it in the name of the All-powerful, and it is gone. Oh it was a fell devouring goblin!—but it will haunt us no more, and we shall have enough. Enough,” said the wretched man, involuntarily returning to his habitual associations,—“enough for to-morrow!”

“Ines, overcome with horror at this obvious proof of insanity, neither interrupted or opposed him; she attempted only to soothe him, internally praying against the too probable disturbance of her own intellects. Walberg saw her look of distrust, and, with the quick jealousy of partial insanity, said, “If you do not credit me in that, still less, I suppose, will you in the account of that fearful visitation with which I have latterly been familiar.”—“Oh, my beloved!” said Ines, who recognized in these words the source of a fear that had latterly, from some extraordinary circumstances in her husband’s conduct, taken possession of her soul, and made the fear even of famine trifling in comparison,—“I dread lest I understand you too well. The anguish of want and of famine I could have borne,—aye, and seen you bear, but the horrid words you have lately uttered, the horrid thoughts that escape you in your sleep,—when I think on these, and guess at”——“You need not guess,” said Walberg, interrupting her, “I will tell you all.” And, as he spoke, his countenance changed from its expression of wildness to one of perfect sanity and calm confidence,—his features relaxed, his eye became steady, and his tone firm.—“Every night since our late distresses, I have wandered out in search of some relief, and supplicated every passing stranger;—latterly, I have met every night the enemy of man, who”——“Oh cease, my love, to indulge these horrible thoughts,—they are the results of your disturbed unhappy state of mind.”—“Ines, listen to me. I see that figure as plainly as I see yours,—I hear his voice as distinctly as you hear mine this moment. Want and misery are not naturally fertile in the production of imagination,—they grasp at realities too closely. No man, who wants a meal, conceives that a banquet is spread before him, and that the tempter invites him to sit down and eat at his ease. No,—no, Ines, the evil one, or some devoted agent of his in human form, besets me every night,—and how I shall longer resist the snare, I know not.”—“And in what form does he appear?” said Ines, hoping to turn the channel of his gloomy thoughts, while she appeared to follow their direction. “In that of a middle-aged man, of a serious and staid demeanour, and with nothing remarkable in his aspect except the light of two burning eyes, whose lustre is almost intolerable. He fixes them on me sometimes, and I feel as if there was fascination in their glare. Every night he besets me, and few like me could have resisted his seductions. He has offered, and proved to me, that it is in his power to bestow all that human cupidity could thirst for, on the

condition that—I cannot utter! It is one so full of horror and impiety, that, even to listen to it, is scarce less a crime than to comply with it!”

“Ines, still incredulous, yet imagining that to soothe his delirium was perhaps the best way to overcome it, demanded what that condition was. Though they were alone, Walberg would communicate it only in a whisper; and Ines, fortified as she was by reason hitherto undisturbed, and a cool and steady temper, could not but recollect some vague reports she had heard in her early youth, before she quitted Spain, of a being permitted to wander through it, with power to tempt men under the pressure of extreme calamity with similar offers, which had been invariably rejected, even in the last extremities of despair and dissolution. She was not superstitious,—but, her memory now taking part with her husband’s representation of what had befallen him, she shuddered at the possibility of his being exposed to similar temptation; and she endeavoured to fortify his mind and conscience, by arguments equally appropriate whether he was the victim of a disturbed imagination, or the real object of this fearful persecution. She reminded him, that if, even in Spain, where the abominations of Antichrist prevailed, and the triumph of the mother of witchcrafts and spiritual seduction was complete, the fearful offer he alluded to had been made and rejected with such unmitigated abhorrence, the renunciation of one who had embraced the pure doctrines of the gospel should be expressed with a tenfold energy of feeling and holy defiance. “You,” said the heroic woman, “you first taught me that the doctrines of salvation are to be found alone in the holy scriptures,—I believed you, and wedded you in that belief. We are united less in the body than in the soul, for in the body neither of us may probably sojourn much longer. You pointed out to me, not the legends of fabulous saints, but the lives of the primitive apostles and martyrs of the true church. There I read no tales of “voluntary humility,” of self-inflicted—fruitless sufferings, but I read that the people of God were “destitute, afflicted, tormented.” And shall we dare to murmur at following the examples of those you have pointed out to me as ensamples of suffering? They bore the spoiling of their goods,—they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins,—they resisted unto blood, striving against sin.—And shall we lament the lot that has fallen to us, when our hearts have so often burned within us, as we read the holy records together? Alas! what avails feeling till it is

brought to the test of fact? How we deceived ourselves, in believing that we indeed participated in the feelings of those holy men, while we were so far removed from the test by which they were proved! We read of imprisonments, of tortures, and of flames!—We closed the book, and partook of a comfortable meal, and retired to a peaceful bed, triumphing in the thought, while saturated with all the world's good, that if their trials had been ours, we could have sustained those trials as they did. Now, *our* hour has come,—it is an hour sharp and terrible!”—“It is!” murmured the shuddering husband. “But shall we therefore shrink?” replied his wife. “Your ancestors, who were the first in Germany that embraced the reformed religion, have bled and blazed for it, as you have often told me,—can there be a stronger attestation to it?”—“I believe there can,” said Walberg, whose eyes rolled fearfully,—“that of starving for it!—Oh Ines,” he exclaimed, as he grasped her hands convulsively, “I have felt,—I still feel, that a death at the stake would be mercy compared to the lingering tortures of protracted famine,—to the death that we die daily—and yet do not die! What is this I hold?” he exclaimed, grasping unconsciously the hand he held in his. “It is my hand, my love,” answered the trembling wife.—“Yours!—no—impossible!—Your fingers were soft and cool, but these are dry,—is this a human hand?”—“It is mine,” said the weeping wife. “Then you must have been famishing,” said Walberg, awakening as if from a dream. “We have all been so latterly,” answered Ines, satisfied to restore her husband's sanity, even at the expense of this horrible confession,—“We have all been so—but I have suffered the least. When a family is famishing, the children think of their meals—but the mother thinks only of her children. I have lived on as little as—I could,—I had indeed no appetite.”—“Hush,” said Walberg, interrupting her—“what sound was that?—was it not like a dying groan?”—“No—it is the children who moan in their sleep.”—“What do they moan for?” “Hunger I believe,” said Ines, involuntarily yielding to the dreadful conviction of habitual misery.—“And I sit and hear this,” said Walberg, starting up,—“I sit to hear their young sleep broken by dreams of hunger, while for a word's speaking I could pile this floor with mountains of gold, and all for the risk of”—— “Of what?”—said Ines, clinging to him,—“of what?—Oh! think of that!—what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—Oh! let us starve, die, rot before your eyes, rather than you should seal your perdition by that horrible”—— “Hear me, woman!” said

Walberg, turning on her eyes almost as fierce and lustrous as those of Melmoth, and whose light, indeed, seemed borrowed from his; "Hear me!—My soul is lost! They who die in the agonies of famine know no God, and want none—if I remain here to famish among my children, I shall as surely blaspheme the Author of my being, as I shall renounce him under the fearful conditions proposed to me!—Listen to me, Ines, and tremble not. To see my children die of famine will be to me instant suicide and impenitent despair! But if I close with this fearful offer, I may yet repent,—I may yet escape!—There is hope on one side—on the other there is none—none—none! Your hands cling round me, but their touch is cold!—You are wasted to a shadow with want! Shew me the means of procuring another meal, and I will spit at the tempter, and spurn him!—But where is that to be found?—Let me go, then, to meet him!—You will pray for me, Ines,—will you not?—and the children?—No, let them not pray for me!—in my despair I forgot to pray myself, and their prayers would now be a reproach to me.—Ines!—Ines—What? am I talking to a corse?" He was indeed, for the wretched wife had sunk at his feet senseless. "Thank God!" he again emphatically exclaimed, as he beheld her lie to all appearance lifeless before him. "Thank God a word then has killed her,—it was a gentler death than famine! It would have been kind to have strangled her with these hands! Now for the children!" he exclaimed, while horrid thoughts chased each other over his reeling and unseated mind, and he imagined he heard the roar of a sea in its full strength thundering in his ears, and saw ten thousand waves dashing at his feet, and every wave of blood. "Now for the children!"—and he felt about as if for some implement of destruction. In doing so, his left hand crossed his right, and grasping it, he exclaimed as if he felt a sword in his hand,—“This will do—they will struggle—they will supplicate,—but I will tell them their mother lies dead at my feet, and then what can they say? Hold now,” said the miserable man, sitting calmly down, “If they cry to me, what shall I answer? Julia, and Ines her mother’s namesake,—and poor little Maurice, who smiles even amid hunger, and whose smiles are worse than curses!—I will tell them their mother is dead!” he cried, staggering towards the door of his childrens’ apartment—“Dead without a blow!—that shall be their answer and their doom.”

“As he spoke, he stumbled over the senseless body of his wife; and the tone of his mind once more strung up to the highest pitch of conscious agony, he cried, “Men!—men!—what are your pursuits and your passions?—your hopes and fears?—your struggles and your triumphs?—Look on me!—learn from a human being like yourselves, who preaches his last and fearful sermon over the corse of his wife, and approaching the bodies of his sleeping children, whom he soon hopes to see corpses also—corpses made so by his own hand!—Let all the world listen to me!—let them resign factitious wants and wishes, and furnish those who hang on them for subsistence with the means of bare subsistence!—There is no care, no thought beyond this! Let our children call on me for instruction, for promotion, for distinction, and call in vain—I hold myself innocent. They may find those for themselves, or want them if they list—but let them never in vain call on me for bread, as they have done,—as they do now! I hear the moans of their hungry sleep!—World—world, be wise, and let your children curse you to your face for any thing but want of bread! Oh that is the bitterest of curses,—and it is felt most when it is least uttered! I have felt it often, but I shall feel it no longer!”—And the wretch tottered towards the beds of his children.

“Father!—father!” cried Julia, “are these your hands? Oh let me live, and I will do any thing—any thing but”—— “Father!—dear father!” cried Ines, “spare us!—to-morrow may bring another meal!” Maurice, the young child, sprung from his bed, and cried, clinging round his father, “Oh, dear father, forgive me!—but I dreamed a wolf was in the room, and was tearing out our throats; and, father, I cried so long, that I thought you never would come. And now—Oh God! oh God!”—as he felt the hands of the frantic wretch grasping his throat,—“are you the wolf?”

“Fortunately those hands were powerless from the very convulsion of the agony that prompted their desperate effort. The daughters had swooned from horror,—and their swoon appeared like death. The child had the cunning to counterfeit death also, and lay extended and stopping his breath under the fierce but faltering gripe that seized his young throat—then relinquished—then grasped it again—and then relaxed its hold as at the expiration of a spasm.

“When all was over, as the wretched father thought, he retreated from the chamber. In doing so, he stumbled over the corse-like form of his wife. —A groan announced that the sufferer was not dead. “What does this mean?” said Walberg, staggering in his delirium,—“does the corse reproach me for murder?—or does one surviving breath curse me for the unfinished work?”

“As he spoke, he placed his foot on his wife’s body. At this moment, a loud knock was heard at the door. “They are come!” said Walberg, whose frenzy hurried him rapidly through the scenes of an imaginary murder, and the consequence of a judicial process. “Well!—come in—knock again, or lift the latch—or enter as ye list—here I sit amid the bodies of my wife and children—I have murdered them—I confess it—ye come to drag me to torture, I know—but never—never can your tortures inflict on me more than the agony of seeing them perish by hunger before my eyes. Come in—come in—the deed is done!—The corse of my wife is at my foot, and the blood of my children is on my hands—what have I further to fear?” But while the wretched man spoke thus, he sunk sullenly on his chair, appearing to be employed in wiping from his fingers the traces of blood with which he imagined they were stained. At length the knocking at the door became louder,—the latch was lifted,—and three figures entered the apartment in which Walberg sat. They advanced slowly,—two from age and exhaustion,—and the third from strong emotion. Walberg heeded them not,—his eyes were fixed,—his hands locked in each other;—nor did he move a limb as they approached.

“Do you not know us?” said the foremost, holding up a lantern which he held in his hand. Its light fell on a groupe worthy the pencil of a Rembrandt. The room lay in complete darkness, except where that strong and unbroken light fell. It glared on the rigid and moveless obduracy of Walberg’s despair, who appeared stiffening into stone as he sat. It showed the figure of the friendly priest who had been Guzman’s director, and whose features, pale and haggard with age and austerities, seemed to struggle with the smile that trembled over their wrinkled lines. Behind him stood the aged father of Walberg, with an aspect of perfect apathy, except when, with a momentary effort at recollection, he shook his white head, seeming to ask himself why he was there—and wherefore he could not speak. Supporting

him stood the young form of Everhard, over whose cheek and eye wandered a glow and a lustre too bright to last, and instantly succeeded by paleness and dejection. He trembled, advanced,—then shrinking back, clung to his infirm grandfather, as if needing the support he appeared to give. Walberg was the first to break the silence. “I know ye who ye are,” he said hollowly —“ye are come to seize me—ye have heard my confession—why do you delay? Drag me away—I would rise and follow you if I could, but I feel as if I had grown to this seat—you must drag me from it yourselves.”

“As he spoke, his wife, who had remained stretched at his feet, rose slowly but firmly; and, of all that she saw or heard, appearing to comprehend only the meaning of her husband’s words, she clasped her arms round him, as if to oppose his being torn from her, and gazed on the groupe with a look of impotent and ghastly defiance. “Another witness,” cried Walberg, “risen from the dead against me? Nay, then, it is time to be gone,”—and he attempted to rise. “Stay, father,” said Everhard, rushing forward and detaining him in his seat; “stay,—there is good news, and this good priest has come to tell it,—listen to him, father, I cannot speak.”—“You! oh you! Everhard,” answered the father, with a look of mournful reproach, “you a witness against me too,—I never raised my hand against you!—Those whom I murdered are silent, and will you be my accuser?”

“They all now gathered round him, partly in terror and partly in consolation,—all anxious to disclose to him the tidings with which their hearts were burdened, yet fearful lest the freight might be too much for the frail vessel that rocked and reeled before them, as if the next breeze would be like a tempest to it. At last it burst forth from the priest, who, by the necessities of his profession, was ignorant of domestic feelings, and of the felicities and agonies which are inseparably twined with the fibres of conjugal and parental hearts. He knew nothing of what Walberg might feel as a husband or father,—for he could never be either; but he felt that good news must be good news, into whatever ears they were poured, or by whatever lips they might be uttered. “We have the will,” he cried abruptly, “the true will of Guzman. The other was—asking pardon of God and the saints for saying so—no better than a forgery. The will is found, and you and your family are heirs to all his wealth. I was coming to acquaint you,

late as it was, having with difficulty obtained the Superior's permission to do so, and in my way I met this old man, whom your son was conducting,—how came he out so late?" At these words Walberg was observed to shudder with a brief but strong spasm. "The will is found!" repeated the priest, perceiving how little effect the words seemed to have on Walberg,—and he raised his voice to its utmost pitch. "The will of my uncle is found," repeated Everhard. "Found,—found,—found!" echoed the aged grandfather, not knowing what he said, but vaguely repeating the last words he heard, and then looking round as if asking for an explanation of them. "The will is found, love," cried Ines, who appeared restored to sudden and perfect consciousness by the sound; "Do you not hear, love? We are wealthy,—we are happy! Speak to us, love, and do not stare so vacantly,—speak to us!" A long pause followed. At length,—“Who are those?” said Walberg in a hollow voice, pointing to the figures before him, whom he viewed with a fixed and ghastly look, as if he was gazing on a band of spectres. “Your son, love,—and your father,—and the good friendly priest. Why do you look so doubtfully on us?”—“And what do they come for?” said Walberg. Again and again the import of their communication was told him, in tones that, trembling with varied emotion, scarce could express their meaning. At length he seemed faintly conscious of what was said, and, looking round on them, uttered a long and heavy sigh. They ceased to speak, and watched him in silence.—“Wealth!—wealth!—it comes too late. Look there,—look there!” and he pointed to the room where his children lay.

“Ines, with a dreadful presentiment at her heart, rushed into it, and beheld her daughters lying apparently lifeless. The shriek she uttered, as she fell on the bodies, brought the priest and her son to her assistance, and Walberg and the old man were left together alone, viewing each other with looks of complete insensibility; and this apathy of age, and stupefaction of despair, made a singular contrast with the fierce and wild agony of those who still retained their feelings. It was long before the daughters were recovered from their death-like swoon, and still longer before their father could be persuaded that the arms that clasped him, and the tears that fell on his cold cheek, were those of his living children.

“All that night his wife and family struggled with his despair. At last recollection seemed to burst on him at once. He shed some tears;—then,

with a minuteness of reminiscence that was equally singular and affecting, he flung himself before the old man, who, speechless and exhausted, sat passively in his chair, and exclaiming, “Father, forgive me!” buried his head between his father’s knees. * * * * *

“Happiness is a powerful restorative,—in a few days the spirits of all appeared to have subsided into a calm. They wept sometimes, but their tears were no longer painful;—they resembled those showers in a fine spring morning, which announce the increasing warmth and beauty of the day. The infirmities of Walberg’s father made the son resolve not to leave Spain till his dissolution, which took place in a few months. He died in peace, blessing and blessed. His son was his only spiritual attendant, and a brief and partial interval of recollection enabled him to understand and express his joy and confidence in the holy texts which were read to him from the scriptures. The wealth of the family had now given them importance; and, by the interest of the friendly priest, the body was permitted to be interred in consecrated ground. The family then set out for Germany, where they reside in prosperous felicity;—but to this hour Walberg shudders with horror when he recals the fearful temptations of the stranger, whom he met in his nightly wanderings in the hour of his adversity, and the horrors of this visitation appear to oppress his recollection more than even the images of his family perishing with want.

“There are other narratives,” continued the stranger, “relating to this mysterious being, which I am in possession of, and which I have collected with much difficulty; for the unhappy, who are exposed to his temptations, consider their misfortunes as a crime, and conceal, with the most anxious secrecy, every circumstance of this horrible visitation. Should we again meet, Senhor, I may communicate them to you, and you will find them no less extraordinary than that I have just related. But it is now late, and you need repose after the fatigue of your journey.”—So saying, the stranger departed.

“Don Francisco remained seated in his chair, musing on the singular tale he had listened to, till the lateness of the hour, combining with his fatigue,

and the profound attention he had paid to the narrative of the stranger, plunged him insensibly into a deep slumber. He was awoke in a few minutes by a slight noise in the room, and looking up perceived seated opposite to him another person, whom he never recollected to have seen before, but who was indeed the same who had been refused admittance under the roof of that house the preceding day. He appeared seated perfectly at his ease, however; and to Don Francisco's look of surprise and inquiry, replied that he was a traveller, who had been by mistake shown into that apartment,—that finding its occupant asleep and undisturbed by his entrance, he had taken the liberty of remaining there, but was willing to retire if his presence was considered intrusive.

“As he spoke, Don Francisco had leisure to observe him. There was something remarkable in his expression, though the observer did not find it easy to define what it was; and his manner, though not courtly or conciliating, had an ease which appeared more the result of independence of thought, than of the acquired habitudes of society.

“Don Francisco welcomed him gravely and slowly, not without a sensation of awe for which he could scarcely account;—and the stranger returned the salutation in a manner that was not likely to diminish that impression. A long silence followed. The stranger (who did not announce his name) was the first to break it, by apologizing for having, while seated in an adjacent apartment, involuntarily overheard an extraordinary tale or narrative related to Don Francisco, in which he confessed he took a profound interest, such as (he added, bowing with an air of grim and reluctant civility) would, he trusted, palliate his impropriety in listening to a communication not addressed to him.

“To all this Don Francisco could only reply by bows equally rigid, (his body scarce forming an acute angle with his limbs as he sat), and by looks of uneasy and doubtful curiosity directed towards his strange visitor, who, however, kept his seat immoveably, and seemed, after all his apologies, resolved to sit out Don Francisco.

“Another long pause was broken by the visitor. “You were listening, I think,” he said, “to a wild and terrible story of a being who was commissioned on an unutterable errand,—even to tempt spirits in woe, at their last mortal extremity, to barter their hopes of future happiness for a

short remission of their temporary sufferings.”—“I heard nothing of that,” said Don Francisco, whose recollection, none of the clearest naturally, was not much improved by the length of the narrative he had just listened to, and by the sleep into which he had fallen since he heard it. “Nothing?” said the visitor, with something of abruptness and asperity in his tone that made the hearer start—“nothing?—I thought there was mention too of that unhappy being to whom Walberg confessed his severest trials were owing,—in comparison with whose fearful visitations those of even famine were as dust in the balance.”—“Yes, yes,” answered Don Francisco, startled into sudden recollection, “I remember there was a mention of the devil,—or his agent,—or something”—— “Senhor,” said the stranger interrupting him, with an expression of wild and fierce derision, which was lost on Aliaga—“Senhor, I beg you will not confound personages who have the honour to be so nearly allied, and yet so perfectly distinct as the devil and his agent, or agents. You yourself, Senhor, who, of course, as an orthodox and inveterate Catholic, must abhor the enemy of mankind, have often acted as his agent, and yet would be somewhat offended at being mistaken for him.” Don Francisco crossed himself repeatedly, and devoutly disavowed his ever having been an agent of the enemy of man. “Will you dare to say so?” said his singular visitor, not raising his voice as the insolence of the question seemed to require, but depressing it to the lowest whisper as he drew his seat nearer his astonished companion—“Will you dare to say so?—Have you never erred?—Have you never felt one impure sensation?—Have you never indulged a transient feeling of hatred, or malice, or revenge?—Have you never forgot to do the good you ought to do,—or remembered to do the evil you ought not to have done?—Have you never in trade overreached a dealer, or banquetted on the spoils of your starving debtor?—Have you never, as you went to your daily devotions, cursed from your heart the wanderings of your heretical brethren,—and while you dipped your fingers in the holy water, hoped that every drop that touched your pores, would be visited on them in drops of brimstone and sulphur?—Have you never, as you beheld the famished, illiterate, degraded populace of your country, exulted in the wretched and temporary superiority your wealth has given you,—and felt that the wheels of your carriage would not roll less smoothly if the way was paved with the heads of your countrymen? Orthodox Catholic—old Christian—as you boast yourself to be,—is not this true?—

and dare you say you have not been an agent of Satan? I tell you, whenever you indulged one brutal passion, one sordid desire, one impure imagination—whenever you uttered one word that wrung the heart, or embittered the spirit of your fellow-creature—whenever you made that hour pass in pain to whose flight you might have lent wings of down—whenever you have seen the tear, which your hand might have wiped away, fall uncaught, or forced it from an eye which would have smiled on you in light had you permitted it—whenever you have done this, you have been ten times more an agent of the enemy of man than all the wretches whom terror, enfeebled nerves, or visionary credulity, has forced into the confession of an incredible compact with the author of evil, and whose confession has consigned them to flames much more substantial than those the imagination of their persecutors pictured them doomed to for an eternity of suffering! Enemy of mankind!” the speaker continued,—“Alas! how absurdly is that title bestowed on the great angelic chief,—the morning star fallen from its sphere! What enemy has man so deadly as himself? If he would ask on whom he should bestow that title aright, let him smite his bosom, and his heart will answer,—Bestow it here!”

“The emotion with which the stranger spoke, roused and affected even the sluggish and incrusted spirit of the listener. His conscience, like a state coach-horse, had hitherto only been brought on solemn and pompous occasions, and then paced heavily along a smooth and well-prepared course, under the gorgeous trappings of ceremony;—now it resembled the same animal suddenly bestrid by a fierce and vigorous rider, and urged by lash and spur along a new and rugged road. And slow and reluctant as he was to own it, he felt the power of the weight that pressed, and the bit that galled him. He answered by a hasty and trembling renunciation of all engagements, direct or indirect, with the evil power; but he added, that he must acknowledge he had been too often the victim of his seductions, and trusted for the forgiveness of his wanderings to the power of the holy church, and the intercession of the saints.

“The stranger (though he smiled somewhat grimly at this declaration) seemed to accept the concession, and apologized, in his turn, for the warmth with which he had spoken; and which he begged Don Francisco would interpret as a mark of interest in his spiritual concerns. This explanation,

though it seemed to commence favourably, was not followed, however, by any attempt at renewed conversation. The parties appeared to stand aloof from each other, till the stranger again alluded to his having overheard the singular conversation and subsequent narrative in Aliaga's apartment. "Senhor," he added, in a voice whose solemnity deeply impressed the hearer, wearied as he was,—“I am acquainted with circumstances relating to the extraordinary person who was the daily watcher of Walberg's miseries, and the nightly tempter of his thoughts,—known but to him and me. Indeed I may add, without the imputation of vanity or presumption, that I am as well acquainted as himself with every event of his extraordinary existence; and that your curiosity, if excited at all about him, could be gratified by none so amply and faithfully as by myself.”—“I thank you, Senhor,” answered Don Francisco, whose blood seemed congealing in his veins at the voice and expression of the stranger, he knew not why—“I thank you, but my curiosity has been completely satisfied by the narrative I have already listened to. The night is far spent, and I have to pursue my journey to-morrow; I will therefore defer hearing the particulars you offer to gratify me with till our next meeting.”

“As he spoke, he rose from his seat, hoping that this action would intimate to the intruder, that his presence was no longer desirable. The latter continued, in spite of the intimation, fixed in his seat. At length, starting as if from a trance, he exclaimed, “When shall our next meeting be?”

“Don Francisco, who did not feel particularly anxious to renew the intimacy, slightly mentioned, that he was on his journey to the neighbourhood of Madrid, where his family, whom he had not seen for many years, resided—that the stages of his journey were uncertain, as he would be obliged to wait for communications from a friend and future relative,—(he alluded to Montilla his intended son-in-law, and as he spoke, the stranger gave a peculiar smile),—and also from certain mercantile correspondents, whose letters were of the utmost importance. Finally, he added, in a disturbed tone, (for the awe of the stranger's presence hung round him like a chilling atmosphere, and seemed to freeze even his words as they issued from his mouth), he could not—easily—tell when he might again have the honour of meeting the stranger. “You cannot,” said the stranger, rising and drawing his mantle over one shoulder, while his

reverted eyes glanced fearfully on the pale auditor—"You cannot,—but I can. Don Francisco di Aliaga, we shall meet to-morrow night!"

"As he spoke, he still continued to stand near the door, fixing on Aliaga eyes whose light seemed to burn more intensely amid the dimness of the wretched apartment. Aliaga had risen also, and was gazing on his strange visitor with dim and troubled vision,—when the latter, suddenly retreating from the door, approached him and said, in a stifled and mysterious whisper, "Would you wish to witness the fate of those whose curiosity or presumption breaks on the secrets of that mysterious being, and dares to touch the folds of the veil in which his destiny has been enshrouded by eternity? If you do, look here!" And as he spoke, he pointed to a door which Don Francisco well remembered to be that which the person whom he had met at the inn the preceding evening, and who had related to him the tale of Guzman's family, (or rather relatives), had retired by. Obeying mechanically the waving of the arm, and the beckoning of the stranger's awful eye, rather than the impulse of his own will, Aliaga followed him. They entered the apartment; it was narrow, and dark, and empty. The stranger held a candle aloft, whose dim light fell on a wretched bed, where lay what had been the form of a living man within a few hours. "Look there!" said the stranger; and Aliaga with horror beheld the figure of the being who had been conversing with him the preceding part of that very evening,—extended a corse!

"Advance—look—observe!" said the stranger, tearing off the sheet which had been the only covering of the sleeper who had now sunk into the long and last slumber—"There is no mark of violence, no distortion of feature, or convulsion of limb—no hand of man was on him. He sought the possession of a desperate secret—he obtained it, but he paid for it the dreadful price that can be paid but once by mortals. So perish those whose presumption exceeds their power!"

"Aliaga, as he beheld the body, and heard the words of the stranger, felt himself disposed to summon the inmates of the house, and accuse the stranger of murder; but the natural cowardice of a mercantile spirit, mingled with other feelings which he could not analyse, and dared not own, withheld him,—and he continued to gaze alternately on the corse and the corse-like stranger. The latter, after pointing emphatically to the body, as if

intimating the danger of imprudent curiosity, or unavailing disclosure, repeated the words, "We meet again to-morrow night!" and departed.

"Aliaga, overcome by fatigue and emotion, sunk down by the corse, and remained in that trance-like state till the servants of the inn entered the room. They were shocked to find a dead body in the bed, and scarce less shocked at the death-like state in which they found Aliaga. His known wealth and distinction procured for him those attentions which otherwise their terrors or their suspicions might have withheld. A sheet was cast over the body, and Aliaga was conveyed to another apartment, and attended sedulously by the domestics.

"In the mean time, the Alcaide arrived; and having learned that the person who had died suddenly in the inn was one totally unknown, as being only a writer, and a man of no importance in public or private life, and that the person found near his bed in a passive stupor was a wealthy merchant,—snatched, with some trepidation, the pen from the ink-horn which hung at his button-hole, and sketched the record of this sapient inquest:—"That a guest had died in the house, none could deny; but no one could suspect Don Francisco di Aliaga of murder."

"As Don Francisco mounted his mule the following day, on the strength of this just verdict, a person, who did not apparently belong to the house, was particularly solicitous in adjusting his stirrups, &c.; and while the obsequious Alcaide bowed oft and profoundly to the wealthy merchant, (whose liberality he had amply experienced for the favourable colour he had given to the strong circumstantial evidence against him), this person whispered, in a voice that reached only the ears of Don Francisco, "We meet to-night!"

"Don Francisco checked his mule as he heard the words. He looked round him—the speaker was gone. Don Francisco rode on with a feeling known to few, and which those who have felt are perhaps the least willing to communicate.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Χαλεπον δε το φιλησαι·
χαλεπον το μη φιλησαι·
χαλεπωτερον δε παντων
αποτυγχανειν φιλουντα.

“DON FRANCISCO rode on most of that day. The weather was mild, and his servants holding occasionally large umbrellas over him as he rode, rendered travelling supportable. In consequence of his long absence from Spain, he was wholly unacquainted with his route, and obliged to depend on a guide; and the fidelity of a Spanish guide being as proverbial and trustworthy as Punic faith, towards evening Don Francisco found himself just where the Princess Micomicona, in the romance of his countryman, is said to have discovered Don Quixote,—“amid a labyrinth of rocks.” He immediately dispatched his attendants in various directions, to discover the track they were to pursue. The guide galloped after as fast as his wearied mule could go, and Don Francisco, looking round, after a long delay on the part of his attendants, found himself completely alone. Neither the weather nor the prospect was calculated to raise his spirits. The evening was very misty, unlike the brief and brilliant twilight that precedes the nights of the favoured climates of the south. Heavy showers fell from time to time,—not incessant, but seeming like the discharge of passing clouds, that were instantly succeeded by others. Those clouds gathered blacker and deeper every moment, and hung in fantastic wreaths over the stony mountains that formed a gloomy perspective to the eye of the traveller. As the mists wandered over them, they seemed to rise and fade, and shift their shapes and their stations like the hills of Ubeda⁽³⁾, as indistinct in form and as dim

in hue, as the atmospheric illusions which in that dreary and deceptive light sometimes gave them the appearance of primeval mountains, and sometimes that of fleecy and baseless clouds.

“Don Francisco at first dropt the reins on his mule’s neck, and uttered sundry ejaculations to the Virgin. Finding this did no good,—that the hills still seemed to wander before his bewildered eyes, and the mule, on the other hand, remained immoveable, he bethought himself of calling on a variety of saints, whose names the echoes of the hills returned with the most perfect punctuality, but not one of whom happened just then to be at leisure to attend to his petitions. Finding the case thus desperate, Don Francisco struck spurs into his mule, and galloped up a rocky defile, where the hoofs of his beast struck fire at every step, and their echo from the rocks of granite made the rider tremble, lest he was pursued by banditti at every step he took. The mule, so provoked, galloped fiercely on, till the rider, weary as he was, and somewhat incommoded by its speed, drew up the reins more tightly, at hearing the steps of another rider close behind him. The mule paused instantly. Some say that animals have a kind of instinct in discovering and recognizing the approach of beings not of this world. However that may be, Don Francisco’s mule stood as if its feet had been nailed to the road, till the approach of the traveller set it once more into a gallop, on which, as it appeared, the gallop of the pursuer, whose course seemed fleeter than that of an earthly rider, gained fast, and in a few moments a singular figure rode close beside Don Francisco.

“He was not in a riding dress, but muffled from head to foot in a long cloke, whose folds were so ample as almost to hide the flanks of his beast. As soon as he was abreast with Aliaga, he removed that part of the cloke which covered his head and shoulders, and, turning towards him, disclosed the unwelcome countenance of his mysterious visitor the preceding night. “We meet again, Senhor,” said the stranger, with his peculiar smile, “and fortunately for you, I trust. Your guide has ridden off with the money you advanced him for his services, and your servants are ignorant of the roads, which, in this part of the country, are singularly perplexed. If you will accept of me as your guide, you will, I believe, have reason to congratulate yourself on our encounter.”

“Don Francisco, who felt that no choice was left, acquiesced in silence, and rode on, not without reluctance, by the side of his strange companion. The silence was at length broken, by the stranger’s pointing out the village at which Aliaga proposed to pass the night, at no very great distance, and at the same time noticing the approaching of his servants, who were returning to their master, after having made a similar discovery. These circumstances contributing to restore Aliaga’s courage, he proceeded with some degree of confidence, and even began to listen with interest to the conversation of the stranger; particularly as he observed, that though the village was near, the windings of the road were likely to retard their arrival for some hours. The interest which had thus been excited, the stranger seemed resolved to improve to the uttermost. He rapidly unfolded the stores of his rich and copiously furnished mind; and, by skilfully blending his displays of general knowledge with particular references to the oriental countries where Aliaga had resided, their commerce, their customs, and their manners, and with a perfect acquaintance with the most minute topics of mercantile discourse,—he so far conciliated his fellow-traveller, that the journey, begun in terror, ended in delight, and Aliaga heard with a kind of pleasure, (not however unmixed with awful reminiscences), the stranger announce his intention of passing the night at the same inn.

“During the supper, the stranger redoubled his efforts, and confirmed his success. He was indeed a man who could please when he pleased, and whom. His powerful intellects, extensive knowledge, and accurate memory, qualified him to render the hour of companionship delightful to all whom genius could interest, or information amuse. He possessed a fund of anecdotal history, and, from the fidelity of his paintings, always appeared himself to have been an agent in the scenes he described. This night, too, that the attractions of his conversation might want no charm, and have no shade, he watchfully forbore those bursts of passion,—those fierce explosions of misanthropy and malediction, and that bitter and burning irony with which, at other times, he seemed to delight to interrupt himself and confound his hearer.

“The evening thus passed pleasantly; and it was not till supper was removed, and the lamp placed on the table beside which the stranger and he were seated alone, that the ghastly scene of the preceding night rose like a

vision before the eyes of Aliaga. He thought he saw the corse lying in a corner of the room, and waving its dead hand, as if to beckon him away from the society of the stranger. The vision passed away,—he looked up,—they were alone. It was with the utmost effort of his mixed politeness and fear, that he prepared himself to listen to the tale which the stranger had frequently, amid their miscellaneous conversation, alluded to, and showed an evident anxiety to relate.

“These allusions were attended with unpleasant reminiscences to the hearer,—but he saw that it was to be, and armed himself as he might with courage to hear. “I would not intrude on you, Senhor,” said the stranger, with an air of grave interest which Aliaga had never seen him assume before—“I would not intrude on you with a narrative in which you can feel but little interest, were I not conscious that its relation may operate as a warning the most awful, salutary, and efficacious to yourself.”—“Me!” exclaimed Don Francisco, revolting with all the horror of an orthodox Catholic at the sound.—“Me!” he repeated, uttering a dozen ejaculations to the saints, and making the sign of the cross twice that number of times.—“Me!” he continued, discharging a whole volley of fulmination against all those who, being entangled in the snares of Satan, sought to draw others into them, whether in the shape of heresy, witchcraft, or otherwise. It might be observed, however, that he laid most stress on heresy, the latter evil, from the rigour of their mythology, or other causes, which it were not unworthy philosophical curiosity to inquire into, being almost unknown in Spain;—and he uttered this protestation (which was doubtless very sincere) with such a hostile and denunciatory tone, that Satan, if he was present, (as the speaker half imagined), would have been almost justified in making reprisals. Amid the assumed consequence which passion, whether natural or artificial, always gives to a man of mediocrity, he felt himself withering in the wild laugh of the stranger. “You,—you!” he exclaimed, after a burst of sound that seemed rather like the convulsion of a demoniac, than the mirth, however frantic, of a human being—“you!—oh, there’s metal more attractive! Satan himself, however depraved, has a better taste than to crunch such a withered scrap of orthodoxy as you between his iron teeth. No!—the interest I alluded to as possible for you to feel, refers to another one, for whom you ought to feel if possible more than for yourself. Now,

worthy Aliaga, your personal fears being removed, sit and listen to my tale. You are sufficiently acquainted, through the medium of commercial feelings, and the general information which your habits have forced on you, with the history and manners of those heretics who inhabit the country called England.”

“Don Francisco, as a merchant, avouched his knowledge of their being fair dealers, and wealthy liberal speculators in trade; but (crossing himself frequently) he pronounced his utter detestation of them as enemies to the holy church, and implored the stranger to believe that he would rather renounce the most advantageous contract he had ever made with them in the mercantile line, than be suspected of—— “I suspect nothing,” said the stranger, interrupting him, with that smile that spoke darker and bitterer things than the fiercest frown that ever wrinkled the features of man. —“Interrupt me no more,—listen, as you value the safety of a being of more value than all your race beside. You are acquainted tolerably with the English history, and manners, and habits; the latter events of their history are indeed in the mouths of all Europe.” Aliaga was silent, and the stranger proceeded.

The Lovers' Tale.

“IN a part of that heretic country lies a portion of land they call Shropshire, (“I have had dealings with Shrewsbury merchants,” said Aliaga to himself, “they furnished goods, and paid bills with distinguished punctuality,”)—there stood Mortimer Castle, the seat of a family who boasted of their descent from the age of the Norman Conqueror, and had never mortgaged an acre, or cut down a tree, or lowered a banner on their towers at the approach of a foe, for five hundred years. Mortimer castle had held out during the wars of Stephen and Matilda,—it had even defied the powers that summoned it to capitulation alternately, (about once a week), during the struggle between the houses of York and Lancaster,—it had also disdained the summons of Richard and Richmond, as their successive blasts shook its battlements, while the armies of the respective leaders advanced to the field of Bosworth. The Mortimer family, in fact, by their power, their extensive influence, their immense wealth, and the independency of their spirit, had rendered themselves formidable to every party, and superior to all.

“At the time of the Reformation, Sir Roger Mortimer, the descendant of this powerful family, vigorously espoused the cause of the Reformers; and when the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood sent their usual dole, at Christmas, of beef and ale to their tenants, Sir Roger, with his chaplain attending him, went about from cottage to cottage, distributing Bibles in English, of the edition printed by Tyndal in Holland. But his loyalism prevailed so far, that he circulated along with them the uncouth print, cut out of his own copy, of the King (Henry VIII.) dispensing copies of the Bible from both hands, which the people, as represented in the engraving, caught at with theirs, and seemed to devour as the word of life, almost before it could reach them.

“In the short reign of Edward, the family was protected and cherished; and the godly Sir Edmund, son and successor to Sir Roger, had the Bible laid open in his hall window, that while his domestics passed on their errands, as he expressed himself,—“he that runs may read.” In that of Mary, they were oppressed, confiscated, and menaced. Two of their servants were

burned at Shrewsbury; and it was said that nothing but a large sum, advanced to defray the expences of the entertainments made at Court on the arrival of Philip of Spain, saved the godly Sir Edmund from the same fate.

“Sir Edmund, to whatever cause he owed his safety, did not enjoy it long. He had seen his faithful and ancient servants brought to the stake, for the opinions he had taught them,—he had attended them in person to the awful spot, and seen the Bibles he had attempted to place in their hands flung into the flames, as they were kindled round them,—he had turned with tottering steps from the scene, but the crowd, in the triumph of their barbarity, gathered round, and kept him close, so that he not only involuntarily witnessed the whole spectacle, but felt the very heat of the flames that were consuming the bodies of the sufferers. Sir Edmund returned to Mortimer Castle, and died.

“His successor, during the reign of Elizabeth, stoutly defended the rights of the Reformers, and sometimes grumbled at those of prerogative. These grumblings were said to have cost him dear—the court of purveyors charged him £.3000, an enormous sum in those days, for an expected visit of the Queen and her court—a visit which was never paid. The money was, however, paid; and it was said that Sir Orlan de Mortimer raised part of the money by disposing of his falcons, the best in England, to the Earl of Leicester, the *then* favourite of the Queen. At all events, there was a tradition in the family, that when, on his last ride through his territorial demesne, Sir Orlando saw his favourite remaining bird fly from the falconer’s hand, and break her jesses, he exclaimed, “Let her fly; she knows the way to my lord of Leicester’s.”

“During the reign of James, the Mortimer family took a more decided part. The influence of the Puritans (whom James hated with a hatred passing that of even a controversialist, and remembered with pardonable filial resentment, as the inveterate enemies of his ill-fated mother) was now increasing every hour. Sir Arthur Mortimer was standing by King James at the first representation of “Bartholomew Fair,” written by Ben Jonson, when the prologue uttered these words⁽⁴⁾:

“Your Majesty is welcome to a Fair;
Such place, such men, such language, and such ware,

You must expect—with these the *zealous noise*
Of your land's faction, scandalized at toys."

"My lord," said the King, (for Sir Arthur was one of the lords of the privy council), "how deem you by that?"—"Please your Majesty," answered Sir Arthur, "those Puritans, as I rode to London, cut off mine horse's tail, as they said the ribbons with which it was tied savoured too much of the pride of the beast on which the scarlet whore sits. Pray God their shears may never extend from the tails of horses to the heads of kings!" And as he spoke with affectionate and ominous solicitude, he happened to place his hand on the head of Prince Charles, (afterwards Charles I.), who was sitting next his brother Henry, Prince of Wales, and to whom Sir Arthur Mortimer had had the high honour to be sponsor, as proxy for a sovereign prince.

"The awful and troubled times which Sir Arthur had predicted soon arrived, though he did not live to witness them. His son, Sir Roger Mortimer, a man lofty alike in pride and in principle, and immoveable in both,—an Arminian in creed, and an aristocrat in politics,—the zealous friend of the misguided Laud, and the bosom-companion of the unfortunate Strafford,—was among the first to urge King Charles to those high-handed and impolitic measures, the result of which was so fatal.

"When the war broke out between the King and the Parliament, Sir Roger espoused the royal cause with heart and hand,—raised a large sum in vain, to prevent the sale of the crown-jewels in Holland,—and led five hundred of his tenants, armed at his own expence, to the battles of Edge-hill and Marston-moor.

"His wife was dead, but his sister, Mrs Ann Mortimer, a woman of uncommon beauty, spirit, and dignity of character, and as firmly attached as her brother to the cause of the court, of which she had been once the most brilliant ornament, presided over his household, and by her talents, courage, and promptitude, had been of considerable service to the cause.

"The time came, however, when valour and rank, and loyalty and beauty, found all their efforts ineffectual; and of the five hundred brave men that Sir Roger had led into the field to his sovereign's aid, he brought back thirty maimed and mutilated veterans to Mortimer Castle, on the disastrous

day that King Charles was persuaded to put himself into the hands of the disaffected and mercenary Scots, who sold him for their arrears of pay due by the Parliament.

“The reign of rebellion soon commenced,—and Sir Roger, as a distinguished loyalist, felt the severest scourge of its power. Sequestrations and compositions,—fines for malignancy, and forced loans for the support of a cause he detested,—drained the well-filled coffers, and depressed the high spirit, of the aged loyalist. Domestic inquietude was added to his other calamities. He had three children.—His eldest son had fallen fighting in the King’s cause at the battle of Newbury, leaving an infant daughter, then supposed the heiress of immense wealth. His second son had embraced the Puritanic cause, and, lapsing from error to error, married the daughter of an Independent, whose creed he had adopted; and, according to the custom of those days, fought all day at the head of his regiment, and preached and prayed to them all night, in strict conformity with that verse in the psalms, which served him alternately for his text and his battle-word—“Let the praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hands.” This double exercise of the sword and the word, however, proved too much for the strength of the saint-militant; and after having, during Cromwell’s Irish campaign, vigorously headed the attack on Cloghan Castle⁽⁵⁾, the ancient seat of the O’Moore, princes of Leix,—and being scalded through his buff-coat by a discharge of hot water from the bartizan,—and then imprudently given the word of exhortation for an hour and forty minutes to his soldiers, on the bare heath that surrounded the castle, and under a drenching rain,—he died of a pleurisy in three days, and left, like his brother, an infant daughter who had remained in England, and had been educated by her mother. It was said in the family, that this man had written the first lines of Milton’s poem “on the new forcers of conscience under the Long Parliament.” It is certain, at least, that when the fanatics who surrounded his dying bed were lifting up their voices to sing a hymn, he thundered with his last breath,

“Because ye have thrown off your prelate lord,
And with stiff vows renounce his Liturgy,
To seize the widowed w—e pluralitie,
From them whose sin ye envied not, abhorr’d,” &c.

“Sir Roger felt, though from different causes, pretty much the same degree of emotion on the deaths of his two sons. He was fortified against affliction at the death of the elder, from the consolation afforded him by the cause in which he had fallen; and that in which the apostate, as his father always called him, had perished, was an equal preventive against his feeling any deep or bitter grief on his dissolution.

“When his eldest son fell in the royal cause, and his friends gathered round him in officious condolence, the old loyalist replied, with a spirit worthy of the proudest days of classic heroism, “It is not for my dead son that I should weep, but for my living one.” His tears, however, were flowing at that time for another cause.

“His only daughter, during his absence, in spite of the vigilance of Mrs Ann, had been seduced by some Puritan servants in a neighbouring family, to hear an Independent preacher of the name of Sandal, who was then a serjeant in Colonel Pride’s regiment, and who was preaching in a barn in the neighbourhood, in the intervals of his military exercises. This man was a natural orator, and a vehement enthusiast; and, with the license of the day, that compromised between a pun and a text, and delighted in the union of both, this serjeant-preacher had baptized himself by the name of—“Thou-art-not-worthy-to-unloose-the-latchets-of-his-shoes,—*Sandal*.”

“This was the text on which he preached, and his eloquence had such effect on the daughter of Sir Roger Mortimer, that, forgetting the dignity of her birth, and the loyalty of her family, she united her destiny with this low-born man; and, believing herself to be suddenly inspired from this felicitous conjunction, she actually out-preached two female Quakers in a fortnight after their marriage, and wrote a letter (very ill-spelled) to her father, in which she announced her intention to “suffer affliction with the people of God,” and denounced his eternal damnation, if he declined embracing the creed of her husband;—which creed was changed the following week, on his hearing a sermon from the celebrated Hugh Peters, and a month after, on hearing an itinerant preacher of the Ranters or Antinomians, who was surrounded by a troop of licentious, half-naked, drunken disciples, whose vociferations of—“We are the naked truth,” completely silenced a fifth-monarchy man, who was preaching from a tub on the other side of the road. To this preacher Sandal was introduced, and being a man of violent

passions, and unsettled principles, he instantly embraced the opinions of the last speaker, (dragging his wife along with him into every gulph of polemical or political difficulty he plunged in), till he happened to hear another preacher of the Cameronians, whose constant topic, whether of triumph or of consolation, was the unavailing efforts made in the preceding reign, to force the Episcopalian system down the throats of the Scots; and, in default of a text, always repeated the words of Archy, jester to Charles the First, who, on the first intimation of the reluctance of the Scots to admit Episcopal jurisdiction, exclaimed to Archbishop Laud, “My Lord, who is the fool now?”—for which he had his coat stripped over his head, and was forbid the court. So Sandal vacillated between creed and creed, between preacher and preacher, till he died, leaving his widow with one son. Sir Roger announced to his widowed daughter, his determined purpose never to see her more, but he promised his protection to her son, if entrusted to his care. The widow was too poor to decline compliance with the offer of her deserted father.

“So in Mortimer Castle were, in their infancy, assembled the three grandchildren, born under such various auspices and destinies. Margaret Mortimer the heiress, a beautiful, intelligent, spirited girl, heiress of all the pride, aristocratical principle, and possible wealth of the family; Elinor Mortimer, the daughter of the Apostate, received rather than admitted into the house, and educated in all the strictness of her Independent family; and John Sandal, the son of the rejected daughter, whom Sir Roger admitted into the Castle only on the condition of his being engaged in the service of the royal family, banished and persecuted as they were; and he renewed his correspondence with some emigrant loyalists in Holland, for the establishment of his protégé, whom he described, in language borrowed from the Puritan preachers, as “a brand snatched from the burning.”

“While matters were thus at the Castle, intelligence arrived of Monk’s unexpected exertions in favour of the banished family. The result was as rapid as it was auspicious. The Restoration took place within a few days after, and the Mortimer family were then esteemed of so much consequence, that an express, girthed from his waist to his shoulders, was dispatched from London to announce the intelligence. He arrived when Sir Roger, whose chaplain he had been compelled by the ruling party to dismiss

as a malignant, was reading prayers himself to his family. The return and restoration of Charles the Second was announced. The old loyalist rose from his knees, waved his cap, (which he had reverently taken from his white head), and, suddenly changing his tone of supplication for one of triumph, exclaimed, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" As he spoke, the old man sunk on the cushion which Mrs Ann had placed beneath his knees. His grandchildren rose from their knees to assist him,—it was too late,—his spirit had parted in that last exclamation.

CHAPTER XXX.

———She sat, and thought
Of what a sailor suffers.

COWPER.

“**T**HE intelligence that was the cause of old Sir Roger’s death, who might be said to be conducted from this world to the next by a blessed *euthanasia*, (a kind of passing with a light and lofty step from a narrow entry to a spacious and glorious apartment, without ever feeling he trod the dark and rugged threshold that lies between), was the signal and pledge to this ancient family of the restitution of their faded honours, and fast-declining possessions. Grants, reversals of fines, restoration of land and chattels, and offers of pensions, and provisions, and remunerations, and all that royal gratitude, in the effervescence of its enthusiasm, could bestow, came showering on the Mortimer family, as fast and faster than fines, confiscations, and sequestrations, had poured on them in the reign of the usurper. In fact, the language of King Charles to the Mortimers was like that of the Eastern monarchs to their favourites,—“Ask what thou wilt, and it shall be granted to thee, even to the half of my kingdom.” The Mortimers asked only for their own,—and being thus more reasonable, both in their expectations and demands, than most other applicants at that period, they succeeded in obtaining what they required.

“Thus Mrs Margaret Mortimer (so unmarried females were named at the date of the narrative) was again acknowledged as the wealthy and noble heiress of the Castle. Numerous invitations were sent to her to visit the court, which, though recommended by letters from divers of the court-

ladies, who had been acquainted, traditionally at least, with her family, and enforced by a letter from Catherine of Braganza, written by her own hand, in which she acknowledged the obligations of the king to the house of Mortimer, were steadily rejected by the high-minded heiress of its honours and its spirit.—“From these towers,” said she to Mrs Ann, “my grandfather led forth his vassals and tenants in aid of his king,—to these towers he led what was left of them back, when the royal cause seemed lost for ever. Here he lived and died for his sovereign,—and here will I live and die. And I feel that I shall do more effectual service to his Majesty, by residing on my estates, and protecting my tenants, and repairing,”—she added with a smile, —“even with my needle, the rents made in the banners of our house by many a Puritan’s bullet, than if I flaunted it in Hyde-Park in my glass coach, or masqueraded it all night in that of (6)St James’s, even though I were sure to encounter the Duchess of Cleveland on one side, and Louise de Querouaille on the other,—fitter place for them than me.”—And so saying, Mrs Margaret Mortimer resumed her tapestry work. Mrs Ann looked at her with an eye that spoke volumes,—and the tear that trembled in it made the lines more legible.

“After the decided refusal of Mrs Margaret Mortimer to go to London, the family resumed their former ancestral habits of stately regularity, and decorous grandeur, such as became a magnificent and well-ordered household, of which a noble maiden was the head and president. But this regularity was without rigour, and this monotony without apathy—the minds of these highly fated females were too familiar with trains of lofty thinking, and images of noble deeds, to sink into vacancy, or feel depression from solitude. I behold them,” said the stranger, “as I once saw them, seated in a vast irregularly shaped apartment, wainscotted with oak richly and quaintly carved, and as black as ebony—Mrs Ann Mortimer, in a recess which terminated in an ancient casement window, the upper panes of which were gorgeously emblazoned with the arms of the Mortimers, and some legendary achievements of the former heroes of the family. A book she valued much(7) lay on her knee, on which she fixed her eyes intently—the light that came through the casement chequering its dark lettered pages with hues of such glorious and fantastic colouring, that they resembled the leaves

of some splendidly-illuminated missal, with all its pomp of gold, and azure, and vermilion.

“At a little distance sat her two grand-nieces, employed in work, and relieving their attention to it by conversation, for which they had ample materials. They spoke of the poor whom they had visited and assisted,—of the rewards they had distributed among the industrious and orderly,—and of the books which they were studying; and of which the well-filled shelves of the library furnished them with copious and noble stores.

“Sir Roger had been a man of letters as well as of arms. He had been often heard to say, that next to a well-stocked armoury in time of war, was a well-stocked library in time of peace; and even in the midst of his latter grievances and privations, he contrived every year to make an addition to his own.

“His grand-daughters, well instructed by him in the French and Latin languages, had read Mezeray, Thuanus, and Sully. In English, they had Froissart in the black-letter translation of Pynson, imprinted 1525. Their poetry, exclusive of the classics, consisted chiefly of Waller, Donne, and that constellation of writers that illuminated the drama in the latter end of the reign of Elizabeth, and the commencement of that of James,—Marlow, and Massinger, and Shirley, and Ford—*cum multis aliis*. Fairfax’s translations had made them familiar with the continental poets; and Sir Roger had consented to admit, among his modern collection, the Latin poems (the only ones then published) of Milton, for the sake of that *in Quintum Novembris*,—for Sir Roger, next to the fanatics, held the Catholics in utter abomination.”

“Then he will be damned to all eternity,” said Aliaga, “and that’s some satisfaction.”

“Thus their retirement was not inelegant, nor unaccompanied with those delights at once soothing and elating, which arise from a judicious mixture of useful occupation and literary tastes.

“On all they read or conversed of, Mrs Ann Mortimer was a living comment. Her conversation, rich in anecdote, and accurate to minuteness, sometimes rising to the loftiest strains of eloquence, as she related “deeds of the days of old,” and often borrowing the sublimity of inspiration, as the

reminiscences of religion softened and solemnized the spirit with which she spake,—like the influence of time on fine paintings, that consecrates the tints it mellows, and makes the colours it has half obscured more precious to the eye of feeling and of taste, than they were in the glow of their early beauty,—her conversation was to her grand-nieces at once history and poetry.

“The events of English history then not recorded, had a kind of traditional history more vivid, if not so faithful as the records of modern historians, in the memories of those who had been agents and sufferers (the terms are probably synonymous) in those memorable periods.

“There was an entertainment then, banished by modern dissipation now, but alluded to by the great poet of that nation, whom your orthodox and undeniable creed justly devotes to eternal damnation.

“In winter’s tedious nights sit by the fire,

* * * *

—————and tell the tales
Of woful ages long ago betid;
And send the hearers weeping to their beds.

* * * *

We cited up a thousand heavy times.”

* * * *

“When memory thus becomes the depository of grief, how faithfully is the charge kept!—and how much superior are the touches of one who paints from the life, and the heart, and the senses,—to those of one who dips his pen in his ink-stand, and casts his eye on a heap of musty parchments, to glean his facts or his feelings from them! Mrs Ann Mortimer had much to tell,—and she told it well. If history was the subject, she could relate the events of the civil wars—events which resembled indeed those of all civil wars, but which derived a peculiar strength of character, and brilliancy of colouring, from the hand by which they were sketched. She told of the time when she rode behind her brother, Sir Roger, to meet the King at

Shrewsbury; and she almost echoed the shout uttered in the streets of that loyal city, when the University of Oxford sent in its plate to be coined for the exigences of the royal cause. She told also, with grave humour, the anecdote of Queen Henrietta making her escape with some difficulty from a house on fire,—and, when her life was scarce secure from the flames that consumed it, rushing back among them—to save her lap-dog!

“But of all her historical anecdotes, Mrs Ann valued most what she had to relate of her own family. On the virtue and valour of her brother Sir Roger, she dwelt with an unction whose balm imparted itself to her hearers; and even Elinor, in spite of the Puritanism of her early principles, wept as she listened. But when Mrs Ann told of the King taking shelter for one night in the Castle, under the protection only of her mother and herself, to whom he intrusted his rank and his misfortunes, (arriving under a disguise),—(Sir Roger being absent fighting his battles in Yorkshire)—when she added that her aged mother, Lady Mortimer, then seventy-four, after spreading her richest velvet mantle, lined with fur, as a quilt for the bed of her persecuted sovereign, tottered into the armoury, and, presenting the few servants that followed her with what arms could be found, adjured them by brand and blade, by lady’s love, and their hopes of heaven, to defend her royal guest. When she related that a band of fanatics, after robbing a church of all its silver-plate, and burning the adjacent vicarage, drunk with their success, had invested the Castle, and cried aloud for “*the man*” to be brought unto them, that he might be hewed to pieces before the Lord in Gilgal—and Lady Mortimer had called on a young French officer in Prince Rupert’s corps, who, with his men, had been billeted on the Castle for some days—and that this youth, but seventeen years of age, had met two desperate attacks of the assailants, and twice retired covered with his own blood and that of the assailants, whom he had in vain attempted to repel—and that Lady Mortimer, finding all was lost, had counselled the royal fugitive to make his escape,—and furnished him with the best horse left in Sir Roger’s stables to effect his flight, while she returned to the great hall, whose windows were now shattered by the balls that hissed and flew round her head, and whose doors were fast yielding to the crows and other instruments which a Puritan smith, who was both chaplain and colonel of the band, had lent them, and instructed them in the use of—and how Lady

Mortimer fell on her knees before the young Frenchman, and adjured him to make good the defence till King Charles was safe, and free, and far—and how the young Frenchman had done all that man could do;—and finally, when the Castle, after an hour's obstinate resistance, yielded to the assault of the fanatics, he had staggered, covered with blood, to the foot of the great chair which that ancient lady had immoveably occupied, (paralyzed by terror and exhaustion), and dropping his sword, *then for the first time*, exclaimed, “J'ai fait mon devoir!” and expired at her feet—and how her mother sat in the same rigour of attitude, while the fanatics ravaged through the Castle,—drank half the wines in the cellar,—thrust their bayonets through the family-pictures, which they called the idols of the high-places,—fired bullets through the wainscot, and converted half the female servants after their own way,—and on finding their search after the King fruitless, in mere wantonness of mischief, were about to discharge a piece of ordnance in the hall that must have shattered it in pieces, while Lady Mortimer sat torpidly looking on,—till, perceiving that the piece was accidentally pointed towards the very door through which King Charles had passed from the hall, her recollection seemed suddenly to return, and starting up and rushing before the mouth of the piece, exclaimed, “*Not there!*—you shall not *there!*”—and as she spoke, dropt dead in the hall. When Mrs Ann told these and other thrilling tales of the magnanimity, the loyalty, and the sufferings of her high ancestry, in a voice that alternately swelled with energy, and trembled with emotion, and as she told them, pointed to the spot where each had happened,—her young hearers felt a deep stirring of the heart,—a proud yet mellowed elation that never yet was felt by the reader of a written history, though its pages were as legitimate as any sanctioned by the royal licenser at Madrid.

“Nor was Mrs Ann Mortimer less qualified to take an interesting share in their lighter studies. When Waller's poetry was its subject, she could tell of the charms of his Sacharissa, whom she knew well,—the Lady Dorothea Sidney, daughter of the Earl of Leicester,—and compare, with those of his Amoret, the Lady Sophia Murray. And in balancing the claims of these poetical heroines, she gave so accurate an account of their opposite styles of beauty,—entered so minutely into the details of their dress and deportment,—and so affectingly hinted, with a mysterious sigh, that there was *one* then

at court whom Lucius, Lord Falkland, the gallant, the learned, and the polished, had whispered was far superior to both,—that her auditors more than suspected she had herself been one of the most brilliant stars in that galaxy whose faded glories were still reflected in her memory,—and that Mrs Ann, amid her piety and patriotism, still blended a fond reminiscence of the gallantries of that court where her youth had been spent,—and over which the beauty, the magnificent taste, and national *gaiete* of the ill-fated Henrietta, had once thrown a light as dazzling as it was transient. She was listened to by Margaret and Elinor with equal interest, but with far different feelings. Margaret, beautiful, vivacious, haughty, and generous, and resembling her grandfather and his sister alike in character and person, could have listened for ever to narrations that, while they confirmed her principles, gave a kind of holiness to the governing feelings of her heart, and made her enthusiasm a kind of virtue in her eyes. An aristocrat in politics, she could not conceive that public virtue could soar to a higher pitch than a devoted attachment to the house of Stuart afforded for its flight; and her religion had never given her any disturbance.—Strictly attached to the Church of England, as her forefathers had been from its first establishment, she included in an adherence to this not only all the graces of religion, but all the virtues of morality; and she could hardly conceive how there could be majesty in the sovereign, or loyalty in the subject, or valour in man, or virtue in woman, unless they were comprised within the pale of the Church of England. These qualities, with their adjuncts, had been always represented to her as co-existent with an attachment to monarchy and Episcopacy, and vested solely in those heroic characters of her ancestry, whose lives, and even deaths, it was a proud delight to their young descendant to listen to,—while all the opposite qualities,—all that man can hate, or woman despise,—had been represented to her as instinctively resident in the partizans of republicanism and the Presbytery. Thus her feelings and her principles,—her reasoning powers and the habits of her life, all took one way; and she was not only unable to make the least allowance for a divergence from this way, but utterly unable to conceive that another existed for those who believed in a God, or acknowledged human power at all. She was as much at a loss to conceive how any good could come out of that Nazareth of her abhorrence, as an ancient

geographer would have been to have pointed out America in a classical map.—Such was Margaret.

“Elinor, on the other hand, bred up amid a clamour of perpetual contention,—for the house of her mother’s family, in which her first years had been passed, was, in the language of the profane of those times, a scruple-shop, where the godly of all denominations held their conferences of contradiction,—had her mind early awakened to differences of opinion, and opposition of principle. Accustomed to hear these differences and oppositions often expressed with the most unruly vehemence, she had never, like Margaret, indulged in a splendid aristocracy of imagination, that bore every thing before it, and made prosperity and adversity alike pay tribute to the pride of its triumph. Since her admission into the house of her grandfather, the mind of Elinor had become still more humble and patient,—more subdued and self-denied. Compelled to hear the opinions she was attached to decried, and the characters she revered vilified, she sat in reflective silence; and, balancing the opposite extremes which she was destined to witness, she came to the right conclusion,—that there must be good on both sides, however obscured or defaced by passion and by interest, and that great and noble qualities must exist in either party, where so much intellectual power, and so much physical energy, had been displayed by both. Nor could she believe that these clear and mighty spirits would be for ever opposed to each other in their future destinations,—she loved to view them as children who had “fallen out by the way,” from mistaking the path that led to their father’s house, but who would yet rejoice together in the light of his presence, and smile at the differences that divided them on their journey.

“In spite of the influence of her early education, Elinor had learned to appreciate the advantages of her residence in her grandfather’s castle. She was fond of literature and of poetry. She possessed imagination and enthusiasm,—and these qualities met with their loveliest indulgence amid the picturesque and historical scenery that surrounded the Castle,—the lofty tales told within its walls, and to which every stone in them seemed to cry out in attestation,—and the heroic and chivalrous characters of its inmates, with whom the portraits of their high descended ancestry seemed starting from their gorgeous frames to converse, as the tale of their virtues and their

valour was told in their presence. This was a different scene from that in which she had passed her childhood. The gloomy and narrow apartments, divested of all ornament, and awaking no associations but those of an awful futurity—the uncouth habits, austere visages, denunciatory language, and polemical fury of its inmates or guests, struck her with a feeling for which she reproached herself, but did not suppress; and though she continued a rigid Calvinist in her creed, and listened whenever she could to the preaching of the non-conformist ministers, she had adopted in her pursuits the literary tastes, and in her manners the dignified courtesy, that became the descendant of the Mortimers.

“Elinor’s beauty, though of a style quite different from that of her cousin, was yet beauty of the first and finest character. Margaret’s was luxuriant, lavish, and triumphant,—every movement displayed a conscious grace,—every look demanded homage, and obtained it the moment it was demanded. Elinor’s was pale, contemplative, and touching;—her hair was as black as jet, and the thousand small curls into which, according to the fashion of the day, it was woven, seemed as if every one of them had been twined by the hand of nature,—they hung so softly and shadowingly, that they appeared like a veil dropping over the features of a nun, till she shook them back, and there beamed among them an eye of dark and brilliant light, like a star amid the deepening shades of twilight. She wore the rich dress prescribed by the taste and habits of Mrs Ann, who had never, even in the hour of extreme adversity, relaxed in what may be called the rigour of her aristocratical costume, and would have thought it little less than a desecration of the solemnity, had she appeared at prayers, even though celebrated (as she loved to term it) in the Castle-hall, unless arrayed in satins and velvets, that, like ancient suits of armour, could have stood alone and erect without the aid of human inhabitant. There was a soft and yielding tone in the gently modulated harmony of Elinor’s form and movements,—a gracious melancholy in her smile,—a tremulous sweetness in her voice,—an appeal in her look, which the heart that refused to answer could not have living pulse within its region. No head of Rembrandt’s, amid its contrasted luxuries of light and shade,—no form of Guido’s, hovering in exquisite and speechful undulation between earth and heaven, could vie with the tint and character of Elinor’s countenance and form. There was but one touch to be

added to the picture of her beauty, and that touch was given by no physical grace,—no exterior charm. It was borrowed from a feeling as pure as it was intense,—as unconscious as it was profound. The secret fire that lit her eyes with that lambent glory, while it caused the paleness of her young cheek,—that preyed on her heart, while it seemed to her imagination that she clasped a young cherub in her arms, like the unfortunate queen of Virgil,—that fire was a secret even to herself.—She knew she felt, but knew not what she felt.

“When first admitted into the Castle, and treated with sufficient *hauteur* by her grandfather and his sister, who could not forget the mean descent and fanatic principles of her father’s family, she remembered, that, amid the appalling grandeur and austere reserve of her reception, her cousin, John Sandal, was the only one who spoke to her in accents of tenderness, or turned on her an eye that beamed consolation. She remembered him as the beautiful and gentle boy who had lightened all her tasks, and partaken in all her recreations.

“At an early age John Sandal, at his own request, had been sent to sea, and had never since visited the Castle. On the Restoration, the remembered services of the Mortimer family, and the high fame of the youth’s courage and ability, had procured him a distinguished situation in the navy. John Sandal’s consequence now rose in the eyes of the family, of whom he was at first an inmate on toleration only; and even Mrs Ann Mortimer began to express some anxiety to hear tidings of her valiant cousin John. When she spoke thus, the light of Elinor’s eye fell on her aunt with as rich a glow as ever summer sun on an evening landscape; but she felt, at the same moment, an oppression,—an indefinable suspension of thought, of speech, almost of breath, which was only relieved by the tears which, when retired from her aunt’s presence, she indulged in. Soon this feeling was exchanged for one of deeper and more agitating interest. The war with the Dutch broke out, and Captain John Sandal’s name, in spite of his youth, appeared conspicuous among those of the officers appointed to that memorable service.

“Mrs Ann, long accustomed to hear the names of her family uttered always in the same breath with the stirring report of high heroic deeds, felt the elation of spirit she had experienced in by-gone days, combined with

happier associations, and more prosperous auguries. Though far advanced in life, and much declined in strength, it was observed, that during the reports of the war, and while she listened to the accounts of her kinsman's valour and fast-advancing eminence, her step became firm and elastic, her lofty figure dilated to its youthful height, and a colour at times visited her cheek, with as rich and brilliant a tinge as when the first sighs of love murmured over its young roses. The high minded Margaret, partaking that enthusiasm which merged all personal feeling in the glory of her family and of her country, heard of the perils to which her cousin (whom she hardly remembered) was exposed, only with a haughty confidence that he would meet them as she felt she would have met them herself, had she been, like him, the last male descendant of the family of Mortimer. Elinor trembled and wept,—and when alone she prayed fervently.

“It was observable, however, that the respectful interest with which she had hitherto listened to the family legends so eloquently told by Mrs Ann, was now exchanged for a restless and unappeaseable anxiety for tales of the naval heroes who had dignified the family history. Happily she found a willing narrator in Mrs Ann, who had little need to search her memory, and no occasion to consult her invention, for splendid stories of those whose home was the deep, and whose battle-field was the wild waste ocean. Amid the gallery richly hung with family portraits, she pointed out the likeness of many a bold adventurer, whom the report of the riches and felicities of the new discovered world had tempted on speculations sometimes wild and disastrous, sometimes prosperous beyond the golden dreams of cupidity. “How precarious!—how perilous!” murmured Elinor, shuddering. But when Mrs Ann told the tale of her uncle, the literary speculator, the polished scholar, the brave and gentle of the family, who had accompanied Sir Walter Raleigh on his calamitous expedition, and years after died of grief for his calamitous death, Elinor, with a start of horror, caught her aunt's arm, emphatically extended towards the portrait, and implored her to desist. The decorum of the family was so great, that this liberty could not be taken without an apology for indisposition;—it was duly though faintly made, and Elinor retired to her apartment.

“From February 1665,—from the first intelligence of De Ruyter's enterprises, till the animating period when the Duke of York was appointed

to the command of the Royal fleet,—all was eager and anticipative excitement, and eloquent expatiations on ancient achievements, and presageful hopes of new honours, on the part of the heiress of Mortimer and Mrs Ann, and profound and speechless emotion on that of Elinor.

“The hour arrived, and an express was dispatched from London to Mortimer Castle with intelligence, in which King Charles, with that splendid courtesy which half redeemed his vices, announced himself most deeply interested, inasmuch as it added to the honours of the loyal family, whose services he appreciated so highly. The victory was complete,—and Captain John Sandal, in the phrase which the King’s attachment to French manners and language was beginning to render popular, had “covered himself with glory.” Amid the thickest of the fight, in an open boat, he had carried a message from Lord Sandwich to the Duke of York, under a shower of balls, and when older officers had stoutly declined the perilous errand; and when, on his return, Opdam the Dutch Admiral’s ship blew up, amid the crater of the explosion John Sandal plunged into the sea, to save the half-drowning, half-burning wretches who clung to the fragments that scorched them, or sunk in the boiling waves; and then,—dismissed on another fearful errand, flung himself between the Duke of York and the ball that struck at one blow the Earl of Falmouth, Lord Muskerry, and Mr Boyle, and when they all fell at the same moment, wiped, with unflinching hand, and on bended knee, their brains and gore, with which the Duke of York was covered from head to foot. When this was read by Mrs Ann Mortimer, with many pauses, caused by sight dim with age, and diffused with tears,—and when at length, finishing the long and laborious read detail, Mrs Ann exclaimed—“He is a hero!” Elinor tremblingly whispered to herself—“He is a Christian.”

“The details of such an event forming a kind of era in a family so sequestered, imaginative, and heroic, as that of the Mortimers, the contents of the letter signed by the King’s own hand were read over and over again. They formed the theme of converse at their meals, and the subject of their study and comment when alone. Margaret dwelt much on the gallantry of the action, and half-imagined she saw the tremendous explosion of Opdam’s ship. Elinor repeated to herself, “And he plunged amid the burning wave to save the lives of the men he had conquered!” And some

months elapsed before the brilliant vision of glory, and of grateful royalty, faded from their imagination; and when it did, like that of Miccyllus, it left honey on the eye-lids of the dreamer.

“From the date of the arrival of this intelligence, a change had taken place in the habits and manners of Elinor, so striking as to become the object of notice to all but herself. Her health, her rest, and her imagination, became the prey of indefinable fantasies. The cherished images of the past,—the lovely visions of her golden childhood,—seemed fearfully and insanely contrasted in her imagination with the ideas of slaughter and blood,—of decks strewed with corpses,—and of a young and terrible conqueror bestriding them amid showers of ball and clouds of fire. Her very senses reeled between these opposite impressions. Her reason could not brook the sudden transition from the smiling and Cupid-like companion of her childhood, to the hero of the embattled deep, and of nations and navies on fire,—garments rolled in blood,—the thunder of the battle and the shouting.

“She sat and tried, as well as her wandering fancy would allow her, to reconcile the images of that remembered eye, whose beam rested on her like the dark blue of a summer heaven swimming in dewy light,—with the flash that darted from the burning eye of the conqueror, whose light was as fatal where it fell as his sword. She saw him, as he had once sat beside her, smiling like the first morning in spring,—and smiled in return. The slender form, the soft and springy movements, the kiss of childhood that felt like velvet, and scented like balm,—was suddenly exchanged in her dream (for all her thoughts were dreams) for a fearful figure of one drenched in blood, and spattered with brains and gore. And Elinor, half-screaming, exclaimed, “Is this he whom I loved?” Thus her mind, vacillating between contrasts so strongly opposed, began to feel its moorings give way. She drifted from rock to rock, and on every rock she struck a wreck.

“Elinor relinquished her usual meetings with the family—she sat in her own apartment all the day, and most of the evening. It was a lonely turret projecting so far from the walls of the Castle, that there were windows, or rather casements, on three sides. There Elinor sat to catch the blast, let it blow as it would, and imagined she heard in its moanings the cries of drowning seamen. No music that her lute, or that which Margaret touched

with a more powerful and brilliant finger, could wean her from this melancholy indulgence.

“Hush!” she would say to the females who attended her—“Hush! let me listen to the blast!—It waves many a banner spread for victory,—it sighs over many a head that has been laid low!”

“Her amazement that a being could be at once so gentle and so ferocious—her dread that the habits of his life must have converted the *angel of her wilderness* into a brave but brutal seaman, estranged from the feelings that had rendered the beautiful boy so indulgent to her errors,—so propitiatory between her and her proud relatives,—so aidant in all her amusements,—so necessary to her very existence.—The tones of this dreamy life harmonized, awfully for Elinor, with the sound of the blast as it shook the turrets of the Castle, or swept the woods that groaned and bowed beneath its awful visitings. And this secluded life, intense feeling, and profound and heart-rooted secret of her silent passion, held perhaps fearful and indescribable alliance with that aberration of mind, that prostration at once of the heart and the intellect, that have been found to bring forth, according as the agents were impelled, “the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.” She had all the intensity of passion, combined with all the devotedness of religion; but she knew not which way to steer, or what gale to follow. She trembled and shrunk from her doubtful pilotage, and the rudder was left to the mercy of the winds and waves. Slender mercy do those experience who commit themselves to the tempests of the mental world—better if they had sunk at once amid the strife of the dark waters in their wild and wintry rage; there they would soon have arrived at the haven where they would be secure.

“Such was the state of Elinor, when the arrival of one who had been long a stranger in the vicinity of the Castle caused a strong sensation in its inhabitants.

“The widow Sandal, the mother of the young seaman, who had hitherto lived in obscurity on the interest of the small fortune bequeathed her by Sir Roger, (under the rigid injunction of never visiting the Castle), suddenly arrived in Shrewsbury, which was scarce a mile from it, and declared her intention of fixing her residence there.

“The affection of her son had showered on her, with the profusion of a sailor, and the fondness of a child, all the rewards of his services—but their glory;—and in comparative affluence, and honoured and pointed to as the mother of the young hero who stood high in royal favour, the widow of many sorrows took up her abode once more near the seat of her ancestors.

“At this period, every step taken by the member of a family was a subject of anxious and solemn consultation to those who considered themselves its heads, and there was a kind of chapter held in Mortimer Castle on this singular movement of the widow Sandal. Elinor’s heart beat hard during the debate—it subsided, however, at the determination, that the severe sentence of Sir Roger was not to be extended beyond his death, and that a descendant of the house of Mortimer should never live neglected while almost under the shadow of its walls.

“The visit was accordingly solemnly paid, and gratefully received,—there was much stately courtesy on the part of Mrs Ann towards her niece, (whom she called cousin after the old English fashion), and a due degree of retrospective humility and decorous dejection on that of the widow. They parted mutually softened towards, if not pleased with each other, and the intercourse thus opened was unremittingly sustained by Elinor, whose weekly visits of ceremony soon became the daily visits of interest and of habit. The object of the thoughts of both was the theme of the tongue of but one; and, as is not uncommon, she who said nothing felt the most. The details of his exploits, the description of his person, the fond enumeration of the promises of his childhood, and the graces and goodliness of his youth, were dangerous topics for the listener, to whom the bare mention of his name caused an intoxication of the heart, from which it scarce recovered for hours.

“The frequency of these visits was not observed to be diminished by a faint rumour, which the widow seemed to believe, rather from hope than probability, that Captain Sandal was about to visit the neighbourhood of the Castle. It was one evening in autumn, that Elinor, who had been prevented during the day from visiting her aunt, set out attended only by her maid and her usher. There was a private path through the park, that opened by a small door on the verge of the suburbs where the widow lived. Elinor, on her arrival, found her aunt from home, and was informed she had gone to pass

the evening with a friend in Shrewsbury. Elinor hesitated for a moment, and then recollecting that this friend was a grave staid widow of one of Oliver's knights, wealthy, however, and well respected, and a common acquaintance, she resolved to follow her thither. As she entered the room, which was spacious, but dimly lit by an old-fashioned casement window, she was surprised to see it filled with an unusual number of persons, some of whom were seated, but the greater number were collected in the ample recess of the window, and among them Elinor saw a figure, remarkable rather for its height, than its attitude or pretension,—it was that of a tall slender boy, about eighteen, with a beautiful infant in his arms, whom he was caressing with a tenderness that seemed rather associated with the retrospective fondness of brotherhood, than the anticipated hope of paternity. The mother of the infant, proud of the notice bestowed on her child, made, however, the usual incredulous apology for its troubling him.

“Troubling me!” said the boy, in tones that made Elinor think it was the first time she had heard music. “Oh, no—if you knew how fond I am of children,—how long it is since I had the delight of pressing one to my breast—how long it may be again before”—— and averting his head, he bowed it over the babe. The room was very dark, from the increasing shades of evening, deepened by the effect of the heavy wainscotting of its walls; but at this moment, the last bright light of an autumnal evening, in all its rich and fading glory, burst on the casement, powering on every object a golden and purpureal light. That end of the apartment in which Elinor sat remained in the deepest shade. She then distinctly beheld the figure which her heart seemed to recognize before her senses. His luxuriant hair, of the richest brown, (its feathery summits tinged by the light resembling the halo round some glorified head), hung, according to the fashion of the day, in clusters on his bosom, and half-concealed the face of the infant, as it lay like a nestling among them.

“His dress was that of a naval officer,—it was splendidly adorned with lace, and the superb insignia of a foreign order, the guerdon of some daring deed; and as the infant played with these, and then looked upward, as if to repose its dazzled sight on the smile of its young protector, Elinor thought she had never beheld association and contrast so touchingly united,—it was like a finely coloured painting, where the tints are so mellowed and mingled

into each other, that the eye feels no transition in passing from one brilliant hue to another, with such exquisite imperceptibility are they graduated,—it was like a fine piece of music, where the art of the modulator prevents your knowing that you pass from one key to another; so softly are the intermediate tones of harmony touched, that the ear knows not where it wanders, but wherever it wanders, feels its path is pleasant. The young loveliness of the infant, almost assimilated to the beauty of the youthful caresser, and yet contrasted with the high and heroic air of his figure, and the adornments of his dress, (splendid as they were), all emblematic of deeds of peril and of death, seemed to the imagination of Elinor like the cherub-angel of peace reposing on the breast of valour, and whispering that his toils were done. She was awoke from her vision by the voice of the widow.—“Niece, this is your cousin John Sandal.” Elinor started, and received the salute of her kinsman, thus abruptly introduced, with an emotion, which, if it deprived her of those courtly graces which ought to have embellished her reception of the distinguished stranger, gave her, at least, the more touching ones of diffidence.

“The forms of the day admitted of, and even sanctioned, a mode of salutation since exploded; and as Elinor felt the pressure of a lip as vermeil as her own, she trembled to think that that lip had often given the war-word to beings athirst for human blood, and that the arm that enfolded her so tenderly had pointed the weapons of death with resistless and terrible aim against bosoms that beat with all the cords of human affection. She loved her young kinsman, but she trembled in the arms of the hero.

“John Sandal sat down by her, and in a few moments the melody of his tones, the gentle facility of his manner, the eyes that smiled when the lips were closed, and the lips whose smile was more eloquent in silence than the language of the brightest eyes, made her gradually feel at ease with herself—she attempted to converse, but paused to listen—she tried to look up, but felt like the worshippers of the sun, sickening under the blaze she gazed on,—and *averted her eyes that she might see*. There was a mild, inoppressive, but most seductive light in the dark-blue eyes that fell so softly on hers, like moon-light floating over a fine landscape. And there was a young and eloquent tenderness in the tones of that voice, which she expected to have spoken in thunder, that disarmed and dulcified speech almost to luxury.

Elinor sat, and imbibed poison at every inlet of the senses, ear, and eye, and touch, for her kinsman, with a venial, and to her imperceptible licence, had taken her hand as he spoke. And he spoke much, but not of war and blood, of the scenes where he had been so eminent, and of the events to which his simple allusion would have given interest and dignity,—but of his return to his family, of the delight he felt at again beholding his mother, and of the hopes that he indulged of being not an unwelcome visitor at the Castle. He inquired after Margaret with affectionate earnestness, and after Mrs Ann with reverential regard; and in mentioning the names of these relatives, he spoke like one whose heart was at home before his steps, and whose heart could make every spot where it rested a home to itself and to others. Elinor could have listened for ever. The names of the relatives she loved and revered sounded in her ears like music, but the advancing night warned her of the necessity of returning to the Castle, where the hours were scrupulously observed; and when John Sandal offered to attend her home, she had no longer a motive to delay her departure.

“It had appeared dark in the room where they were sitting, but it was still rich and purple twilight in the sky, when they set out for the Castle.

“Elinor took the path through the park, and, absorbed in new feelings, was for the first time insensible of its woodland beauty, at once gloomy and resplendent, mellowed by the tints of autumnal colouring, and glorious with the light of an autumnal evening,—till she was roused to attention by the exclamations of her companion, who appeared rapt into delight at what he beheld. This sensibility of nature, this fresh and unworn feeling, in one whom she had believed hardened by scenes of toil and terror against the perception of beauty,—whom her imagination had painted to her as *fitter to cross the Alps, than to luxuriate in Campania*,—touched her deeply. She attempted to reply, but was unable,—she remembered how her quick susceptibility of nature had enabled her to sympathize with and improve on the admiration expressed by others, and she wondered at her silence, for she knew not its cause.

“As they approached the Castle, the scene became glorious beyond the imagination of a painter, whose eye has dreamed of sun-set in foreign climes. The vast edifice lay buried in shade,—all its varied and strongly charactered features of tower and pinnacle, bartizan and battlement, were

melted into one dense and sombrous mass. The distant hills, with their conical summits, were still clearly defined in the dark-blue heaven, and their peaks still retained a hue of purple so brilliant and lovely, that it seemed as if the light had loved to linger there, and, parting, had left that tint as the promise of a glorious morning. The woods that surrounded the Castle stood as dark, and apparently as solid as itself. Sometimes a gleam like gold trembled over the tufted foliage of their summits, and at length, through a glade which opened among the dark and massive boles of the ancient trees, one last rich and gorgeous flood of light burst in, turned every blade of grass it touched into emerald for a moment,—paused on its lovely work—and parted. The effect was so instantaneous, brilliant, and evanishing, that Elinor had scarce time for a half uttered exclamation, as she extended her arm in the direction where the light had fallen so brightly and so briefly. She raised her eyes to her companion, in that full consciousness of perfect sympathy that make words seem like counters, compared to the sterling gold of a heart-minted look. Her companion had turned towards it too. He neither uttered exclamation, nor pointed with finger,—he smiled, and his countenance was as that of an angel. It seemed to reflect and answer the last bright farewell of day, as if friends had parted smiling at each other. It was not alone the lips that smiled,—the eyes, the cheeks, every feature had its share in that effulgent light that was diffused over his aspect, and all combined to make that harmony to the eye, which is often as deliciously perceptible, as the combination of the most exquisite voices with the most perfect modulation, is to the ear. To the last hour of her mortal existence, that smile, and the scene where it was *uttered*, were engraved on the heart of Elinor. It announced at once a spirit, that, like the ancient statue, answered every ray of light that fell on it with a voice of melody, and blended the triumph of the glories of nature with the profound and tender felicities of the heart. They spoke no more during the remainder of their walk, but there was more eloquence in their silence than in many words. * * * * *

“It was almost night before they arrived at the Castle. Mrs Ann received her distinguished kinsman with stately cordiality, and affection mingled with pride. Margaret welcomed him rather as the hero than the relative; and John, after the ceremonies of introduction, turned to repose himself on the

smile of Elinor. They had arrived just at the time when the chaplain was about to read the evening prayers,—a form so strictly adhered to at the Castle, that not even the arrival of a stranger was permitted to interfere with its observance. Elinor watched this moment with peculiar solicitude;—her religious feelings were profound, and amid all the young hero's vivid display of the gentlest affections, and purest sensibilities by which our wretched existence can be enhanced or beautified, she still dreaded that religion, the companion of deep thought and solemn habits, might wander far for an abode before it settled in the heart of a sailor. The last doubt passed from her mind, as she beheld the intense but silent devotion with which John mingled in the family rite. There is something very ennobling in the sight of male piety. To see that lofty form, that never bowed to man, bowed to the earth to God,—to behold the knee, whose joints would be as adamant under the influence of mortal force or threat, as flexible as those of infancy in the presence of the Almighty,—to see the locked and lifted hands, to hear the fervent aspiration, to feel the sound of the mortal weapon as it drags on the floor beside the kneeling warrior,—these are things that touch the senses and the heart at once, and suggest the awful and affecting image of all physical energy prostrate before the power of the Divinity. Elinor watched him even to the forgetfulness of her own devotions;—and when his white hands, that seemed never formed to grasp a weapon of destruction, were clasped in devotion, and one of them slightly and occasionally raised to part the redundant curls that shaded his face as he knelt, she thought that she beheld at once angelic strength and angelic purity.

“When the service concluded, Mrs Ann, after repeating her solemn welcome to her nephew, could not help expressing her satisfaction at the devotion he had showed; but she mingled with that expression a kind of incredulity, that men accustomed to toil and peril could ever have devotional feelings. John Sandal bowed to the congratulatory part of Mrs Ann's speech, and, resting one hand on his short sword, and with the other removing the thick ringlets of his luxuriant hair, he stood before them a hero in deed, and a boy in form. A blush overspread his young features, as he said, in accents at once emphatic and tremulous, “Dear Aunt, why should you accuse those of neglecting the protection of the Almighty who need it

most. They who “go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in the great waters,” have the best right to feel, in their hour of peril, “it is but the wind and the storm fulfilling his word.” A seaman without a belief and hope in God, is worse off than a seaman without chart or pilot.”

“As he spoke with that trembling eloquence that makes conviction be felt almost before it is heard, Mrs Ann held out to him her withered but still snow-white hand to kiss. Margaret presented hers also, like a heroine to a feudal knight; and Elinor turned aside, and wept in delicious agony. * * * *

“When we set ourselves resolutely to discover perfection in a character, we are always sure to find it. But Elinor needed little aid from the pencil of imagination to colour the object that had been stamped by an ineffaceable touch upon her heart. Her kinsman’s character and temper developed themselves slowly, or rather were developed by external and accidental causes; for a diffidence almost feminine prevented his ever saying much,—and when he did, himself was the last theme he touched on. He unfolded himself like a blowing flower,—the soft and silken leaves expanded imperceptibly to the eye, and every day the tints were deepening, and the scent becoming richer, till Elinor was dazzled by their lustre, and inebriated with the fragrance.

“This wish to discover excellencies in the object we love, and to identify esteem and passion by seeking the union of moral beauty and physical grace, is a proof that love is of a very ennobling character,—that, however the stream may be troubled by many things, the source at least is pure,—and that the heart capable of feeling it intensely, proves it possesses an energy that may one day be rewarded by a brighter object, and a holier flame, than earth ever afforded, or nature ever could kindle. * * * * *

“Since her son’s arrival, the widow Sandal had betrayed a marked degree of anxiety, and a kind of restless precaution against some invisible evil. She was now frequently at the Castle. She could not be blind to the increasing attachment of John and Elinor,—and her only thought was how to prevent the possibility of their union, by which the interest of the former and her own importance would be materially affected.

“She had obtained, by indirect means, a knowledge of the contents of Sir Roger’s will; and the whole force of a mind which possessed more of art than of power, and of a temper which had more passion than energy, was strained to realize the hopes it suggested. Sir Roger’s will was singular. Alienated as he was from his daughter Sandal, and his younger son the father of Elinor, by the connexions they had adopted, it seemed to be the strongest object of his wishes to unite their descendants, and invest the wealth and rank of the house of Mortimer in the last of its representatives. He had therefore bequeathed his immense estates to his grand-daughter Margaret, in the event of her marrying her kinsman John Sandal;—in the case of his marrying Elinor, he was entitled to no more than her fortune of £.5000;—and the bequest of the greater part of the property to a distant relative who bore the name of Mortimer, was to be the consequence of the non-intermarriage of Sandal with either of his cousins.

“Mrs Ann Mortimer, anticipating the effect that this opposition of interest to affection might produce in the family, had kept the contents of the will a secret,—but Mrs Sandal had discovered it by means of the domestics at the Castle, and her mind wrought intensely on the discovery. She was a woman too long familiar with want and privation to dread any evil but their continuance, and too ambitious of the remembered distinctions of her early life, not to risk any thing that might enable her to recover them. She felt a personal feminine jealousy of the high-minded Mrs Ann, and the noble-hearted beautiful Margaret, which was unappeasable; and she hovered round the walls of the Castle like a departed spirit groaning for its re-admission to the place from which it had been driven, and feeling and giving no peace till its restoration was accomplished.

“When with these feelings was united the anxiety of maternal ambition for her son, who might be raised to a noble inheritance, or sunk to comparative mediocrity by his choice, the result may be easily guessed; and the widow Sandal, once determined on the end, felt little scruple about the means. Want and envy had given her an unslakeable appetite for the restored splendours of her former state; and false religion had taught her every shade and penumbra of hypocrisy, every meanness of artifice, every obliquity of insinuation. In her varied life she had known the good, and

chosen the evil. The widow Sandal was now determined to interpose an insurmountable obstruction to their union. * * * * *

“Mrs Ann still flattered herself that the secret of Sir Roger’s will was suppressed. She saw the intense and disruptable feeling that seemed to mark John and Elinor for each other; and, with a feeling half-borrowed from magnanimity, half from romance, (for Mrs Ann had been fond of the high-toned romances of her day), she looked forward to the felicity of their union as being little disturbed by the loss of land and lordship,—of the immense revenues,—and the far-descended titles of the Mortimer family.

“Highly as she prized these distinctions, dear to every noble mind, she prized still more highly the union of devoted hearts and congenial spirits, who, trampling on the golden apples that were flung in their path, pressed forward with unremitting ardour for the prize of felicity.

“The wedding-day of John and Elinor was fixed,—the bridal clothes were made,—the noble and numerous friends summoned,—the Castle hall decorated, the bells of the parish church ringing out a loud and merry peal, and the blue-coated serving men adorned with favours, and employed in garnishing the wassail bowl, which was doomed by many a thirsty eye to be often drained and often replenished. Mrs Ann herself took with her own hands, from an ample chest of ebony, a robe of velvet and satin, which she had worn at the court of James the First, on the marriage of the princess Elizabeth with the prince palatine, of whom the former, to borrow the language of a contemporary writer, had “brided and bridled it so well, and indeed became herself so handsomely,” that Mrs Ann, as she arrayed herself, thought she saw the splendid vision of the royal bridal float before her faded eyes in dim but gorgeous pageantry once more. The heiress, too, attired herself splendidly, but it was observed, that her beautiful cheek was paler than even that of the bride, and the smile which held a fixed unjoyous station on her features all that morning, seemed more like the effort of resolution than the expression of felicity. The widow Sandal had betrayed considerable agitation, and quitted the Castle at an early hour. The bridegroom had not yet appeared, and the company, after having in vain for some time awaited his arrival, set out for the church, where they supposed he was impatiently expecting them.

“The cavalcade was magnificent and numerous—the dignity and consequence of the Mortimer family had assembled all who had aspired to the distinction of their acquaintance, and such was then the feudal grandeur attendant on the nuptials of a high-descended family, that relatives, however remote in blood or in local distance, collected for sixty miles in every direction around the Castle, and presented a “host of friends, gorgeously arrayed and attended on that eventful morning.”

“Most of the company, even including the females, were mounted on horseback, and this, by apparently increasing the number of the procession, added to its tumultuous magnificence. There were some cumbrous vehicles, misnamed carriages, of a fashion indescribably inconvenient, but gorgeously gilded and painted,—and the Cupids on the pannels had been re-touched for the occasion. The bride was lifted on her palfrey by two peers,—Margaret rode beside her gallantly attended,—and Mrs Ann, who once more saw nobles contending for her withered hand, and adjusting her silken rein, felt the long-faded glories of her family revive, and led the van of the pompous procession with as much dignity of demeanour, and as much glow of faded beauty, once eminent and resistless, as if she still followed the gorgeous nuptial progress of the princess palatine. They arrived at the church,—the bride, the relatives, the splendid company, the minister—all but the bridegroom, were there. There was a long painful silence. Several gentlemen of the bridal party rode rapidly out in every direction in which it was thought probable to meet him,—the clergyman stood at the altar, till, weary of standing, he retired. The crowd from the neighbouring villages, combined with the numerous attendants, filled the church-yard. Their acclamations were incessant,—the heat and distraction became intolerable, and Elinor begged for a few moments to be allowed to retire to the vestry.

“There was a casement window which opened on the road, and Mrs Ann supported the bride as she tottered towards it, attempting to loose her wimple, and veil of costly lace. As Elinor approached the casement, the thundering hoofs of a horse at full speed shook the road. Elinor looked up mechanically,—the rider was John Sandal,—he cast a look of horror at the pale bride, and plunging his desperate spurs deeper, disappeared in a moment. * * * * *

“A year after this event, two figures were seen to walk, or rather wander, almost every evening, in the neighbourhood of a small hamlet in a remote part of Yorkshire. The vicinage was picturesque and attractive, but these figures seemed to move amid the scenery like beings, who, if they still retained eyes for nature, had lost all heart for it. That wan and attenuated form, so young, yet so withered, whose dark eyes emit a fearful light amid features chill and white as those of a statue, and the young graces of whose form seem to have been nipt like those of a lily that bloomed too soon in spring, and was destroyed by the frost of the treacherous season, whose whispers had first invited it to bud,—that is Elinor Mortimer,—and that figure that walks beside her, so stiff and rectangular, that it seems as its motion was regulated by mechanism, whose sharp eyes are directed so straight forward, that they see neither tree on the right hand, or glade on the left, or heaven above, or earth beneath, or any thing but a dim vision of mystic theology for ever before them, which is aptly reflected in their cold contemplative light, that is the Puritan maiden sister of her mother, with whom Elinor had fixed her residence. Her dress is arranged with as much precision as if a mathematician had calculated the angles of every fold,—every pin’s point knows its place, and does its duty—the plaits of her round-eared cap do not permit one hair to appear on her narrow forehead, and her large hood, adjusted after the fashion in which it was worn by the godly sisters, who rode out to meet Prynne on his return from the pillory, lends a deeper shade to her rigid features,—a wretched-looking lacquey is carrying a huge clasped bible after her, in the mode in which she remembered to have seen Lady Lambert and Lady Desborough march to prayer, attended by their pages, while she proudly followed in their train, distinguished as the sister of that godly man and powerful preacher of the word, Sandal. From the day of her disappointed nuptials, Elinor, with that insulted feeling of maiden pride, which not even the anguish of her broken heart could suppress, had felt an unappeaseable anxiety to quit the scene of her disgrace and her misfortune. It was vainly opposed by her aunt and Margaret, who, horror-struck at the event of those disastrous nuptials, and wholly unconscious of the cause, had implored her, with all the energy of affection, to fix her residence at the Castle, within whose walls they pledged themselves he who had abandoned her should never be permitted to place his foot. Elinor answered the impassioned importunities, only by eager and

clinging pressures of her cold hands, and by tears which trembled on her eye-lids, without the power to fall.—“Nay, stay with us,” said the kind and noble-hearted Margaret, “you shall not leave us!” And she pressed the hands of her kinswoman, with that cordial touch that gives a welcome as much to the heart as to the home of the inviter.—“Dearest cousin,” said Elinor, answering, for the first time, this affectionate appeal with a faint and ghastly smile—“I have so many enemies within these walls, that I can no longer encounter them with safety to my life.”—“Enemies!” repeated Margaret.—“Yes, dearest cousin—there is not a spot where *he* trod—not a prospect on which he has gazed—not an echo which has repeated the sound of his voice,—that does not send daggers through my heart, which those who wish me to live would not willingly see infixed any longer.” To the emphatic agony with which these words were uttered, Margaret had nothing to reply but with tears; and Elinor set out on her journey to the relative of her mother, a rigid Puritan, who resided in Yorkshire.

“As the carriage was ordered for her departure, Mrs Ann, supported by her female attendants, stood on the draw-bridge to take leave of her niece, with solemn and affectionate courtesy. Margaret wept bitterly, and aloud, as she stood at a casement, and waved her hand to Elinor. Her aunt never shed a tear, till out of the presence of the domestics,—but when all was over, —“she entered into her chamber, and wept there.”

“When her carriage had driven some miles from the Castle, a servant on a fleet horse followed it at full speed with Elinor’s lute, which had been forgotten,—it was offered to her, and after viewing it for some moments with a look in which memory struggled with grief, she ordered its strings to be broken on the spot, and proceeded on her journey.

“The retreat to which Elinor had retired, did not afford her the tranquillity she expected. Thus, change of place always deceives us with the tantalizing hope of relief, as we toss on the feverish bed of life.

“She went in a faint expectation of the revival of her religious feelings—she went to wed, amid the solitude and desert where she had first known him, the immortal bridegroom, who would never desert her as the mortal one had done,—but she did not find him there—the voice of God was no longer heard in the garden—either her religious sensibility had abated, or those from whom she first received the impression, had no longer power to

renew it, or perhaps the heart which has exhausted itself on a mortal object, does not find its powers soon recruited to meet the image of celestial beneficence, and exchange at once the visible for the invisible,—the felt and present, for the future and the unknown.

“Elinor returned to the residence of her mother’s family in the hope of renewing former images, but she found only the words that had conveyed those ideas, and she looked around in vain for the impressions they had once suggested. When we thus come to feel that *all* has been illusion, even on the most solemn subjects,—that the future world seems to be deserting us along with the present, and that our own hearts, with all their treachery, have done us no more wrong than the false impressions which we have received from our religious instructors, we are like the deity in the painting of the great Italian artist, extending one hand to the sun, and the other to the moon, but touching neither. Elinor had imagined or hoped, that the language of her aunt would have revived her habitual associations—she was disappointed. It is true no pains were spared—when Elinor wished to read, she was furnished amply with the Westminster Confession, or Prynne’s *Histriomatrix*; or if she wished for lighter pages, for the *Belles Lettres* of Puritanism, there were John Bunyan’s *Holy War*, or the life of Mr Badman. If she closed the book in despair at the insensibility of her untouched heart, she was invited to a godly conference, where the non-conformist ministers, who had been, in the language of the day, extinguished under the Bartholomew bushel⁽⁸⁾, met to give the precious word in season to the scattered fold of the Lord. Elinor knelt and wept too at these meetings; but, while her form was prostrated before the Deity, her tears fell for one whom she dared not name. When, in incontrollable agony, she sought, like Joseph, where she might weep unobserved and unrestrained, and rushed into the narrow garden that skirted the cottage of her aunt, and wept there, she was followed by the quiet, sedate figure, moving at the rate of an inch in a minute, who offered her for her consolation, the newly published and difficultly obtained work of Marshall on Sanctification.

“Elinor, accustomed too much to that fatal excitement of the heart, which renders all other excitement as faint and feeble as the air of heaven to one who has been inhaling the potent inebriation of the strongest perfumes,

wondered how this being, so abstracted, cold, and unearthly, could tolerate her motionless existence. She rose at a fixed hour,—at a fixed hour she prayed,—at a fixed hour received the godly friends who visited her, and whose existence was as monotonous and apathetic as her own,—at a fixed hour she dined,—and at a fixed hour she prayed again, and then retired,—yet she prayed without unction, and fed without appetite, and retired to rest without the least inclination to sleep. Her life was mere mechanism, but the machine was so well wound up, that it appeared to have some quiet consciousness and sullen satisfaction in its movements.

“Elinor struggled in vain for the renewal of this life of cold mediocrity,—she thirsted for it as one who, in the deserts of Afric, expiring for want of water, would wish for the moment to be an inmate of Lapland, to drink of their eternal snows,—yet at that moment wonders how its inhabitants can live among SNOW. She saw a being far inferior to herself in mental power,—of feelings that hardly deserved the name—*tranquil*, and wondered that she herself was wretched.—Alas! she did not know, that the heartless and unimaginative are those alone who entitle themselves to the comforts of life, and who can alone enjoy them. A cold and sluggish mediocrity in their occupations or their amusements, is all they require—pleasure has with them no meaning but the exemption from actual suffering, nor do they annex any idea to pain but the immediate infliction of corporeal suffering, or of external calamity—the source of pain or pleasure is never found in their *hearts*—while those who have profound feelings scarce ever look elsewhere for either. So much the worse for them,—the being reduced to providing for the necessities of human life, and being satisfied when that provision is made, is perhaps the best condition of human life—beyond that, all is the dream of insanity, or the agony of disappointment. Far better the dull and dusky winter’s day, whose gloom, if it never abates, never increases,—(and to which we lift up an eye of listlessness, in which there is no apprehension of future and added terrors),—to the glorious fierceness of the summer’s day, whose sun sets amid purple and gold,—while, panting under its parting beams, we see the clouds collecting in the darkening East, and view the armies of heaven on their march, whose thunders are to break our rest, and whose lightnings may crumble us to ashes. * * * * *

“Elinor strove hard with her fate,—the strength of her intellect had been much developed since her residence at Mortimer Castle, and there also the energies of her heart had been developed fatally. How dreadful is the conflict of superior intellect and a burning heart, with the perfect mediocrity of the characters and circumstances they are generally doomed to live with! The battering-rams play against wool-bags,—the lightnings glance on ice, hiss, and are extinguished. The greater strength we exhibit, we feel we are more and more paralyzed by the weakness of our enemies,—our very energy becomes our bitterest enemy, as it fights in vain against the impregnable fortress of total vacuity! It is in vain we assail a foe who neither knows our language or uses our weapons. Elinor gave it up,—yet still she struggled with her own feelings; and perhaps the conflict which she now undertook was the hardest of all. She had received her first religious impressions under the roof of her Puritanic aunt, and, true or false, they had been so vivid, that she was anxious to revive them. When the heart is robbed of its first-born, there is nothing it will not try to adopt. Elinor remembered a very affecting scene that had occurred in her childhood, beneath the roof where she now resided.

“An old non-conformist minister, a very Saint John for sanctity of life, and simplicity of manners, had been seized by a magistrate while giving the word of consolation to a few of his flock who had met at the cottage of her aunt.

“The old man had supplicated for a moment’s delay on the part of the civil power, and its officers, by an unusual effort of toleration or of humanity, complied. Turning to his congregation, who, amid the tumult of the arrest, had never risen from their knees, and only changed the voice of supplication from praying with their pastor, to praying for him,—he quoted to them that beautiful passage from the prophet Malachi, which appears to give such delightful encouragement to the spiritual intercourse of Christians,—“Then they that feared the Lord, spoke often to one another, and the Lord heard it,” &c. As he spoke, the old man was dragged away by some rougher hands, and died soon after in confinement.

“On the young imagination of Elinor, this scene was indelibly written. Amid the magnificence of Mortimer Castle, it had never been effaced or

obscured, and now she tried to make herself in love with the sounds and the scene that had so deeply touched her infant heart.

“Resolute in her purposes, she spared no pains to excite this reminiscence of religion,—it was her last resource. Like the wife of Phineas, she struggled to bear an heir of the soul, even while she named him *Ichabod*,—and felt the glory was departed. She went to the narrow apartment,—she seated herself in the very chair that venerable man occupied when he was torn from it, and his departure appeared to her like that of an ascending prophet. She would *then* have caught the folds of his mantle, and mounted with him, even though his flight had led to prison and to death. She tried, by repeating his last words, to produce the same effect they had once had on her heart, and wept in indescribable agony at feeling those words had no meaning now for her. When life and passion have thus rejected us, the backward steps we are compelled to tread towards the path we have wandered from, are ten thousand times more torturing and arduous than those we have exhausted in their pursuit. Hope then supported our hands every step we took. Remorse and disappointment scourge us back, and every step is tinged with tears or with blood; and well it is for the pilgrim if that blood is drained from his heart, for then—his pilgrimage will be sooner terminated. * * * * *

“At times Elinor, who had forgotten neither the language or habits of her former existence, would speak in a manner that gave her Puritanic relative hopes that, according to the language of the times, “the root of the matter was in her,”—and when the old lady, in confidence of her returning orthodoxy, discussed long and learnedly on the election and perseverance of the saints, the listener would startle her by a burst of feeling, that seemed to her aunt more like the ravings of a demoniac, than the language of a human being,—especially one who had from her youth known the Scriptures. She would say, “Dearest aunt, I am not insensible of what you say; from a child, (thanks to your care), I have known the holy scriptures. I *have* felt the power of religion. At a latter period I have experienced all the enjoyments of an intellectual existence. Surrounded by splendour, I have conversed with enlarged minds,—I have seen all that life can shew me,—I have lived with the mean and the rich,—the spiritual in their poverty, and the worldly-minded in their grandeur,—I have deeply drank of the cup which both

modes of existence held to my lip,—and at this moment I swear to you,—*one moment of heart*,—one dream such as once I dreamed, (and thought I should never awake from), is worth all the existence that the earthly-minded lavish on this world, and those who mystify expend on the next!”—“Unfortunate wretch! and undone for everlasting!” cried the terrified Calvinist, lifting up her hands,—“Cease, cease,” said Elinor with that dignity which grief alone can give,—“If I have indeed devoted to an earthly love that which is due to God alone, is not my punishment certain in a future state? Has it not already commenced here? May not then all reproaches be spared when we are suffering more than human enmity can wish us,—when our very existence is a bitterer reproach to us than malignity can utter?”—As she spoke, she added, wiping a cold tear from her wasted cheek, “My stroke is heavier than my groaning!”

“At other times she appeared to listen to the language of the Puritan preachers (for all were preachers who frequented the house) with some appearance of attention, and then, rushing from them without any conviction but that of despair, exclaimed in her haste, “All men are liars!” Thus it fares with those who wish to make an instant transition from one world to another,—it is impossible,—the cold wave interposes—for ever interposes, between the wilderness and the land of promise—and we may as soon expect to tread the threshold which parts life and death without pain, as to cross the interval which separates two modes of existence so distinct as those of passion and religion, without struggles of the soul inexpressible—without groanings which cannot be uttered.

“To these struggles there was soon to be an addition. Letters at this period circulated very slowly, and were written only on important occasions. Within a very short period, Elinor received two letters by express from Mortimer Castle, written by her cousin Margaret. The first announced the arrival of John Sandal at the Castle,—the second, the death of Mrs Ann,—the postscriptums of both contained certain mysterious hints relative to the interruption of the marriage,—intimations that the cause was known only to the writer, to Sandal and to his mother,—and entreaties that Elinor would return to the Castle, and partake of the *sisterly* love with which Margaret and John Sandal would be glad to receive her. The letters dropt from her hand as she received them,—of John Sandal she had never ceased to think, but she had never ceased to wish not to think,—and his name even now gave her a pang which she could neither utter or suppress, and which burst forth in an involuntary shriek, that seemed like the last string that breaks in the exquisite and too-highly strung instrument of the human heart.

“Over the account of Mrs Ann’s death, she lingered with that fearful feeling that a young adventurer experiences, who sees a noble vessel set out before him on a voyage of discovery, and wishes, while lingering in harbour himself, that he was already at the shore where *it* has arrived, and tasted of its repose, and participated in its treasures.

“Mrs Ann’s death had not been unworthy of that life of magnanimity and high heroic feeling which had marked every hour of her mortal existence—she had espoused the cause of the rejected Elinor, and sworn in

the chapel of Mortimer Castle, while Margaret knelt beside, never to admit within its walls the deserter of his betrothed bride.

“On a dim autumnal evening, when Mrs Ann, with fading sight but undiminished feeling, was poring over some of Lady Russel’s letters in manuscript, and, to relieve her eyes, sometimes glanced on the manuscript of Nelson’s *Fasts and Festivals of the Church of England*,—it was announced to her that a Cavalier (the servants well knew the charm of that name to the ear of the ancient loyalist) had crossed the draw-bridge, entered the hall, and was advancing to the apartment where she sat. “Let him be admitted,” was her answer, and rising from her chair, which was so lofty and so spacious, that as she lifted herself from it to greet the stranger with a courtly reception, her form appeared like a spectre rising from an ancient monument,—she stood facing the entrance—at that entrance appeared John Sandal. She bent forwards for a moment, but her eyes, bright and piercing, still recognized him in a moment.

“Back!—back!”—exclaimed the stately ancestress, waving him off with her withered hand—“Back!—profane not this floor with another step!”—“Hear me, madam, for one moment—suffer me to address you, even on my knees—I pay the homage to your rank and relationship—misunderstand it not as an acknowledgement of guilt on my part!”

“Mrs Ann’s features at this action underwent a slight contraction—a short spasmodic affection. “Rise, Sir—rise,” she said—“and say what you have to say—but utter it, Sir, at the door whose threshold you are unworthy to tread.”

“John Sandal rose from his knees, and pointed instinctively as he rose to the portrait of Sir Roger Mortimer, to whom he bore a striking resemblance. Mrs Ann acknowledged the appeal—she advanced a few steps on the oaken floor—she stood erect for a moment, and then, pointing with a dignity of action which no pencil could embody to the portrait, seemed to consider her attitude as a valid and eloquent answer—it said—he to whose resemblance you point, and claim protection from, never like you dishonoured these walls by an act of baseness—of heartless treachery! Betrayer!—look to his portrait! Her expression had in it something of the sublime—the next moment a strong spasm contracted her features—she attempted to speak, but her lips no longer obeyed her—she seemed to speak, but was not heard

even by herself. She stood for a moment before John Sandal in that rigid immoveable attitude that says, “Advance not another step at your peril—insult not the portraits of your ancestors—insult not their living representative, by another step of intrusion!” As she spoke thus, (for her attitude spoke), a stronger spasm contracted her features. She attempted to move—the same rigid constriction extended to her limbs; and, waving her prohibitory arm still, as if in defiance at once of the approach of death and of her rejected kinsman, she dropt at his feet. * * * * *

“She did not long survive the interview, nor did she ever recover the use of speech. Her powerful intellect was, however, unimpaired; and to the last she expressed herself most intelligibly by action, as determined not to hear a word explanatory of Sandal’s conduct. This explanation was therefore made to Margaret, who, though much shocked and agitated at the first disclosure, seemed afterwards perfectly reconciled to it. * * * * *

“Shortly after the receipt of these letters, Elinor took a sudden, but perhaps not singular resolution,—she determined to set out immediately for Mortimer Castle. It was not her weariness of the withering life, the ἀβιωτος βιος she lived at her Puritanic aunt’s—it was not the wish to enjoy again the stately and splendid ceremonial of Mortimer Castle, contrasted with the frugal fare and monastic rigour of the cottage in Yorkshire—it was not even the wish for that change of place that always flatters us with change of circumstance, as if we did not carry our own hearts with us wherever we go, and might not therefore be sure that an innate and eroding ulcer must be our companion from the Pole to the Equator—it was not this, but a whisper half unheard, yet believed, (just in proportion as it was inaudible and incredible), that murmured from the bottom of her credulous heart, ‘Go—and *perhaps*’—

“Elinor set out on her journey, and after having performed it with fewer difficulties than can be imagined, considering the state of the roads, and the modes of travelling in the year 1667 or thereabouts, she arrived in the vicinity of Mortimer Castle. It was a scene of reminiscence to her,—her heart throbbed audibly as the carriage stopped at a Gothic gate, through which there was a walk between two rows of lofty elms. She alighted, and to the request of the servant who followed her, that he might be permitted to shew her the way through a path entangled by the intersecting roots of the

trees, and dim with twilight, she answered only by her tears. She waved him off, and advanced on foot and alone. She remembered, from the bottom of her soul, how she had once wandered amid that very grove with John Sandal—how his smile had shed a richer light on the landscape, than even the purple smile of the dying day-light. She thought of that smile, and lingered to catch it amid the rich and burning hues flung by the fading light on the many-tinted boles of the ancient trees. The trees were there—and the light was there—but his smile, that once eclipsed the sun-light, was there no longer!

“She advanced alone—the lofty avenue of trees still retained its magnificent depth of shade, and gorgeous colouring of trunk and leaf. She sought among them for that which she had once felt—and God and nature alone are conscious of the agony with which we demand from them the object which we are conscious was once consecrated to our hearts, and which we now require of both in vain! God withholds,—and Nature denies them!

“As Elinor with trembling steps advanced towards the Castle, she saw the funeral scutcheon which Mrs Margaret, in honour of her grand-aunt, had caused to be affixed over the principal tower since her decease, with the same heraldic decorum as if the last male of the Mortimer family were extinct. Elinor looked up, and many thoughts rushed on her heart.—“There is one departed,” she thought, “whose mind was always fixed on glorious thoughts—the most exalted actions of humanity, or the sublime associations of eternity! Her noble heart had room but for two illustrious guests—the love of God, and the love of her country. They tarried with her to the last, for they found the abode worthy of them; and when they parted, the inmate found the mansion untenable any longer—the soul fled with its glorious visitors to heaven! My treacherous heart welcomed another inmate, and how has he repaid its hospitality?—By leaving the mansion in ruins!” As she spoke thus, she approached the entrance of the Castle.

“In the spacious hall she was received by Margaret Mortimer with the embrace of rooted affection, and by John Sandal, who advanced after the first enthusiasm of meeting was over, with that calm and brother-like goodwill, from which there was—nothing to be hoped. There was the same heavenly smile, the same clasp of the hand, the same tender and almost

feminine expression of anxiety for her safety—even Margaret herself, who must have felt, and who did feel the perils of the long journey, did not enter into them with that circumstantiality, or appear to sympathize with them so vividly, or, when the tale of toil and travel was told, appear to urge the necessity of speedy retirement, with such solicitude as did John Sandal. Elinor, faint and gasping, grasped the hands of both, and by an involuntary motion locked both together. The widow Sandal was present—she shewed much agitation at the appearance of Elinor; but when she saw this extraordinary and spontaneous movement, it was observed she smiled.

“Soon after, Elinor retired to the apartment she had formerly occupied. By the affectionate and delicate prevoyance of Margaret, the furniture had all been changed—there was nothing to remind her of former days, except her heart. She sat for some time reflecting on her reception, and hope died within her heart as she thought of it. The strongest expression of aversion or disdain would not have been so withering.

“It is certain that the fiercest passions may be exchanged for their widest extremes in a time incredibly short, and by means the most incalculable. Within the narrow circle of a day, enemies may embrace, and lovers may hate,—but, in the course of centuries, pure complacency and cordial good-will never can be exalted into passion. The wretched Elinor felt this,—and feeling it, knew that all was lost.

“She had now, for many days, to undergo the torture of complacent and fraternal affection from the man she loved,—and perhaps a keener torture was never endured. To feel hands that we long to press to our burning hearts, touch ours with cool and pulseless tranquillity—to see eyes in whose light we live, throw on us a cold but smiling beam, that gives light, but not fertility, to the parched and thirsting soil of the heart—to hear the ordinary language of affectionate civility addressed to us in tones of the most delicious suavity—to seek in these expressions an ulterior meaning, and to find it not—— This—this is an agony which only those who have felt can conceive!

“Elinor, with an effort that cost her heart many a pang, mingled in the habits of the house, which had been greatly changed since the death of Mrs Ann. The numerous suitors of the wealthy and noble heiress, now crowded to the Castle; and, according to the custom of the times, they were

sumptuously entertained, and invited to prolong their stay by numerous banquets.

“On these occasions, John Sandal was the first to pay distinguished attention to Elinor. They danced together; and though her Puritanic education had taught her an abhorrence of those “devil’s measures,” as her family was accustomed to term them, she tried to adapt herself to the gay steps of the Canaries⁽⁹⁾, and the stately movements of the Measures—for the newer dances had not, even in report, reached Mortimer Castle—and her slender and graceful form needed no other inspiration than the support of John Sandal’s arms, (who was himself an exquisite dancer), to assume all the graces of that delightful exercise. Even the practised courtiers applauded her. But, when it was over, Elinor felt, that had John Sandal been dancing with a being the most indifferent to him on earth, his manner would have been exactly the same. No one could point with more smiling grace to her slight deviations from the figure,—no one could attend her to her seat with more tender and anxious politeness, and wave the vast fan of those days over her with more graceful and assiduous courtesy. But Elinor felt that these attentions, however flattering, were offered not by a lover. * * * * *

* * *

“Sandal was absent on a visit to some neighbouring nobleman, and Margaret and Elinor were one evening completely alone. Each seemed equally anxious for an explanation, which neither appeared willing to begin. Elinor had lingered till twilight at the casement, from which she had seen him ride, and lingered still when to see him was no longer possible. Her sight was strained to catch a glimpse of him through the gathering clouds, as her imagination still toiled to catch a gleam of that light of the heart, which now struggled dimly amid clouds of gloomy and unpierceable mystery. “Elinor,” said Margaret emphatically, “look for him no longer,—he never can be yours!”

“The sudden address, and the imperative tone of conviction, had upon Elinor the effect of being addressed by a supernatural monitor. She was unable even to ask how the terrible intelligence that burst on her so decisively, was obtained.

“There is a state of mind in which we listen thus to a human voice as if it were an oracle,—and instead of asking an explanation of the destiny it

announces, we wait submissively for what yet remains to be told. In this mood, Elinor slowly advanced from the casement, and asked in a voice of fearful calmness, “Has he explained himself perfectly to you?”—“Perfectly.”—“And there is nothing to expect?”—“Nothing.”—“And you have heard this from himself—his very self?”—“I have; and, dear Elinor, let us never again speak on the subject.”—“Never!” answered Elinor,—“Never!”

“The veracity and dignity of Margaret’s character, were inviolable securities for the truth of what she uttered; and perhaps that was the very reason why Elinor tried to shrink most from the conviction. In a morbid state of heart, we cannot bear truth—the falsehood that intoxicates us for a moment, is worth more than the truth that would disenchant us for life.—*I hate him because he tells me the truth*, is the language natural to the human mind, from the slave of power to the slave of passion. * * * * *

“Other symptoms that could not escape the notice of the most shallow, struck her every hour. That devotion of the eye and heart,—of the language and the look, that cannot be mistaken,—were all obviously directed to Margaret. Still Elinor lingered in the Castle, and said to herself, while every day she saw and felt what was passing, “Perhaps.” That is the last word that quits the lips of those who love. * * * * *

“She saw with all her eyes,—she felt to the bottom of her soul,—the obviously increasing attachment of John Sandal and Margaret; yet still she dreamed of interposing obstacles,—of *an explanation*. When passion is deprived of its proper aliment, there is no telling the food on which it will prey,—the impossibilities to which, like a famished garrison, it will look for its wretched sustenance.

“Elinor had ceased to demand the heart of the being she was devoted to. She now lived on his looks. She said to herself, Let him smile, though not on me, and I am happy still—wherever the sun-light falls, the earth must be blessed. Then she sunk to lower claims. She said, Let me but be in his presence, and that is enough—let his smiles and his soul be devoted to another, one wandering ray may reach me, and that will be enough!

“Love is a very noble and exalting sentiment in its first germ and principle. We never loved without arraying the object in all the glories of

moral as well as physical perfection, and deriving a kind of dignity to ourselves from our capacity of admiring a creature so excellent and dignified; but this lavish and magnificent prodigality of the imagination often leaves the heart a bankrupt. Love in its iron age of disappointment, becomes very degraded—it submits to be satisfied with merely exterior indulgences—a look, a touch of the hand, though occurring by accident—a kind word, though uttered almost unconsciously, suffices for its humble existence. In its first state, it is like man before the fall, inhaling the odours of paradise, and enjoying the communion of the Deity; in the latter, it is like the same being toiling amid the briar and the thistle, barely to maintain a squalid existence without enjoyment, utility, or loveliness. * * * * *

“About this time, her Puritan aunt made a strong effort to recover Elinor out of the snare of the enemy. She wrote a long letter (a great exertion for a woman far advanced in years, and never in the habits of epistolary composition) adjuring her apostate niece to return to the guide of her youth, and the covenant of her God,—to take shelter in the everlasting arms while they were still held out to her,—and to flee to the city of refuge while its gates were yet open to receive her. She urged on her the truth, power, and blessedness of the system of Calvin, which she termed the gospel.—She supported and defended it with all the metaphysical skill, and all the scriptural knowledge she possessed,—and the latter was not scanty.—And she affectingly reminded her, that the hand that traced these lines, would be unable ever to repeat the admonition, and would probably be mouldering into dust while she was employed in their perusal.

“Elinor wept while she read, but that was all. She wept from physical emotion, not from mental conviction; nor is there such an induration of heart caused by any other power, as by that of the passion which seems to soften it most. She answered the letter, however, and the effort scarce cost her less than it did her decrepid and dying relative. She acknowledged her dereliction of all religious feeling, and bewailed it—the more, she added with painful sincerity, because *I feel my grief is not sincere*. “Oh, my God!” she continued, “you who have clothed my heart with such burning energies—you who have given to it a power of loving so intense, so devoted, so concentrated—you have not given it in vain;—no, in some happier world, or perhaps even in this, when this “tyranny is overpast,” you will fill my

heart with an image worthier than him whom I once believed your image on earth. The stars, though their light appears so dim and distant to us, were not lit by the Almighty hand in vain. Their glorious light burns for remote and happier worlds; and the beam of religion that glows so feebly to eyes almost blind with earthly tears, may be rekindled when a broken heart has been my passport to a place of rest. * * * * *

“Do not think me, dear aunt, deserted by all hope of religion, even though I have lost the sense of it. Was it not said by unerring lips to a sinner, that her transgressions were forgiven because she *loved much*? And does not this capacity of love prove that it will one day be more worthily filled, and more happily employed. * * * * *

“Miserable wretch that I am! At this moment, a voice from the bottom of my heart asks me “*Whom* hast thou loved so much? Was it man or God, that thou darest to compare thyself with her who knelt and wept—not before a mortal idol, but at the feet of an incarnate divinity?” * * * * *

“It may yet befall, that the ark which has floated through the waste of waters may find its resting-place, and the trembling inmate debark on the shores of an unknown but purer world.” * * * * *

CHAPTER XXXI.

There is an oak beside the froth-clad pool,
Where in old time, as I have often heard,
A woman desperate, a wretch like me,
Ended her woes!—Her woes were not like mine!

* * * *

—————Ronan will know;
When he beholds me floating on the stream,
His heart will tell him why Rivine died!

HOME'S FATAL DISCOVERY.

“THE increasing decline of Elinor's health was marked by all the family; the very servant who stood behind her chair looked sadder every day—even Margaret began to repent of the invitation she had given her to the Castle.

“Elinor felt this, and would have spared her what pain she could; but it was not possible for herself to be insensible of the fast-fading remains of her withering youth and blighted beauty. The place—the place itself, was the principal cause of that mortal disease that was consuming her; yet from that place she felt she had less resolution to tear herself every day. So she lived, like those sufferers in eastern prisons, who are not allowed to taste food unless mixed with poison, and who must perish alike whether they eat or forbear.

“Once, urged by intolerable pain of heart, (tortured by living in the placid light of John Sandal's sunny smile), she confessed this to Margaret.

She said, "It is impossible for me to support this existence—impossible! To tread the floor which those steps have trod—to listen for their approach, and when they come, feel they do not bear him we seek—to see every object around me reflect his image, but never—never to see the reality—to see the door open which once disclosed his figure, and when it opens, not to see *him*, and when he does appear, to see him not what he was—to feel he is the same and not the same,—the same to the eye, but not to the heart—to struggle thus between the dream of imagination and the cruel awaking of reality—Oh! Margaret—that undeception plants a dagger in the heart, whose point no human hand can extract, and whose venom no human hand can heal!" Margaret wept as Elinor spoke thus, and slowly, very slowly, expressed her consent that Elinor should quit the Castle, if it was necessary for her peace.

"It was the very evening after this conversation, that Elinor, whose habit was to wander among the woods that surrounded the Castle unattended, met with John Sandal. It was a glorious autumnal evening, just like that on which they had first met,—the associations of nature were the same, those of the heart alone had suffered change. There is that light in an autumnal sky,—that shade in autumnal woods,—that dim and hallowed glory in the evening of the year, which is indefinably combined with recollections. Sandal, as they met, had spoken to her in the same voice of melody, and with the same heart-thrilling tenderness of manner, that had never ceased to visit her ear since their first meeting, like music in dreams. She imagined there was more than usual feeling in his manner; and the spot where they were, and which memory made populous and eloquent with the imagery and speech of other days, flattered this illusion. A vague hope trembled at the bottom of her heart,—she thought of what she dared not to utter, and yet dared to believe. They walked on together,—together they watched the last light on the purple hills, the deep repose of the woods, whose summits were still like "feathers of gold,"—together they once more tasted the confidence of nature, and, amid the most perfect silence, there was a mutual and unutterable eloquence in their hearts. The thoughts of other days rushed on Elinor,—she ventured to raise her eyes to that countenance which she once more saw "as it had been that of an angel." The glow and the smile, that made it appear like a reflexion of heaven, were there still,—but that glow

was borrowed from the bright flush of the glorious west, and that smile was for nature,—not for her. She lingered till she felt it fade with the fading light,—and a *last* conviction striking her heart, she burst into an agony of tears. To his words of affectionate surprise, and gentle consolation, she answered only by fixing her appealing eyes on him, and agonizingly invoking his name. She had trusted to nature, and to this scene of their first meeting, to act as an interpreter between them,—and still even in despair she trusted to it.

“Perhaps there is not a more agonizing moment than that in which we feel the aspect of nature give a perfect vitality to the associations of *our* hearts, while they lie buried in those in which we try *in vain to revive them*.

“She was soon undeceived. With that benignity which, while it speaks of consolation, forbids hope—with that smile which angels may be supposed to give on the last conflict of a sufferer who is casting off the garments of mortality in pain and hope—with such an expression he whom she loved regarded her. From another world he might have cast such a glance on her,—and it sealed her doom in this for ever. * * * * *

“As, unable to witness the agony of the wound he had inflicted but could not heal, he turned from her, the last light of day faded from the hills—the sun of both worlds set on her eye and soul—she sunk on the earth, and notes of faint music that seemed designed to echo the words—“No—no—no—never—never more!” trembled in her ears. They were as simple and monotonous as the words themselves, and were played accidentally by a peasant boy who was wandering in the woods. But to the unfortunate, every thing seems prophetic; and amid the shades of evening, and accompanied by the sound of his departing footsteps, the breaking heart of Elinor accepted the augury of these melancholy notes⁽¹⁰⁾. * * * * *

“A few days after this final meeting, Elinor wrote to her aunt in York to announce, that if she still lived, and was not unwilling to admit her, she would reside with her for life; and she could not help intimating, that *her* life would probably not outlast that of her hostess. She did not tell what the widow Sandal had whispered to her at her first arrival at the Castle, and what she now ventured to repeat with a tone that struggled between the imperative and the persuasive,—the conciliating and the intimidative.

Elinor yielded,—and the indelicacy of this representation, had only the effect to make her shrink from its repetition.

“On her departure, Margaret wept, and Sandal shewed as much tender officiousness about her journey, as if it were to terminate in their renewed bridal. To escape from this, Elinor hastened her preparations for departure.

“When she arrived at a certain distance from the Castle, she dismissed the family carriage, and said she would go on foot with her female servant to the farmhouse where horses were awaiting her. She went there, but remained concealed, for the report of the approaching bridal resounded in her ears. * * * * *

“The day arrived—Elinor rose very early—the bells rung out a merry peal—(as she had once heard them do on another occasion)—the troops of friends arrived in greater numbers, and with equal gaiety as they had once assembled to escort her—she saw their equipages gleaming along—she heard the joyous shouts of half the county—she imagined to herself the timid smile of Margaret, and the irradiated countenance of him who had been *her* bridegroom.

“Suddenly there was a pause. She felt that the ceremony was going on—was finished—that the irrevocable words were spoken—the indissoluble tie was knit! Again the shout and wild joyance burst forth as the sumptuous cavalcade returned to the Castle. The glare of the equipages,—the splendid habits of the riders,—the cheerful groupe of shouting tenantry,—she saw it all! * * * * *

“When all was over, Elinor glanced accidentally at her dress—it was white like her bridal habit;—shuddering she exchanged it for a mourning habit, and set out, as she hoped, on her last journey.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Fuimus, non sumus.

“**W**HEN Elinor arrived in Yorkshire, she found her aunt was dead. Elinor went to visit her grave. It was, in compliance with her last request, placed near the window of the independent meeting-house, and bore for inscription her favourite text, “Those whom he foreknew, he also predestinated,” &c. &c. Elinor stood by the grave some time, but could not shed a tear. This contrast of a life so rigid, and a death so hopeful,—this silence of humanity, and eloquence of the grave,—pierced through her heart, as it will through every heart that has indulged in the inebriation of human passion, and feels that the draught has been drawn from broken cisterns.

“Her aunt’s death made Elinor’s life, if possible, more secluded, and her habits more monotonous than they would otherwise have been. She was very charitable to the cottagers in her neighbourhood; but except to visit their habitations, she never quitted her own. * * * * *

“Often she contemplated a small stream that flowed at the end of her garden. As she had lost all her sensibility of nature, another motive was assigned for this mute and dark contemplation; and her servant, much attached to her, watched her closely. * * * * *

“She was roused from this fearful state of stupefaction and despair, which those who have felt shudder at the attempt to describe, by a letter from Margaret. She had received several from her which lay unanswered, (no unusual thing in those days), but this she tore open, read with interest inconceivable, and prepared instantly to answer by action.

“Margaret’s high spirits seemed to have sunk in her hour of danger. She hinted that that hour was rapidly approaching, and that she earnestly implored the presence of her affectionate kinswoman to soothe and sustain in the moment of her approaching peril. She added, that the manly and affectionate tenderness of John Sandal at this period, had touched her heart more deeply, if possible, than all the former testimonies of his affection—but that she could not bear his resignation of all his usual habits of rural amusement, and of the neighbouring society—that she in vain had chided him from her couch, where she lingered in pain and hope, and hoped that Elinor’s presence might induce him to yield to her request, as he must feel, on her arrival, the dearest companion of her youth was present—and that, at such a moment, a female companion was more suitable than even the gentlest and most affectionate of the other sex. * * * * *

“Elinor set out directly. The purity of her feelings had formed an impenetrable barrier between her heart and its object,—and she apprehended no more danger from the presence of one who was wedded, and wedded to her relative, than from that of her own brother.

“She arrived at the Castle—Margaret’s hour of danger had begun—she had been very ill during the preceding period. The natural consequences of her situation had been aggravated by a feeling of dignified responsibility on the birth of an heir to the house of Mortimer—and this feeling had not contributed to render that situation more supportable.

“Elinor bent over the bed of pain—pressed her cold lips to the burning lips of the sufferer—and prayed for her.

“The first medical assistance in the country (then very rarely employed on such occasions) had been obtained at a vast expence. The widow Sandal, declining all attendance on the sufferer, paced through the adjacent apartments in agony unutterable and *unuttered*.

“Two days and nights went on in hope and terror—the bell-ringers sat up in every church within ten miles round—the tenantry crowded round the Castle with honest heartfelt solicitude—the neighbouring nobility sent their messages of inquiry every hour. An accouchement in a noble family was then an event of importance.

“The hour came—twins were born dead—and the young mother was fated to follow them within a few hours! While life yet remained, Margaret shewed the remains of the lofty spirit of the Mortimers. She sought with her cold hand that of her wretched husband and of the weeping Elinor. She joined them in an embrace which one of them at least understood, and prayed that their union might be eternal. She then begged to see the bodies of her infant sons—they were produced; and it was said that she uttered expressions, intimating that, had they not been the heirs of the Mortimer family—had not expectation been wound so high, and supported by all the hopes that life and youth could flatter her with,—she and they might yet have existed.

“As she spoke, her voice grew feebler, and her eyes dim—their last light was turned on him she loved; and when sight was gone, she still felt his arms enfold her. The next moment they enfolded—nothing!

“In the terrible spasms of masculine agony—the more intensely felt as they are more rarely indulged—the young widower dashed himself on the bed, which shook with his convulsive grief; and Elinor, losing all sense but that of a calamity so sudden and so terrible, echoed his deep and suffocating sobs, as if she whom they deplored had not been the only obstacle to her happiness. * * * * *

“Amid the voice of mourning that rung through the Castle from vault to tower in that day of trouble, none was loud like that of the widow Sandal—her wailings were shrieks, her grief was despair. Rushing through the rooms like one distracted, she tore her hair out by the roots, and imprecated the most fearful curses on her head. At length she approached the apartment where the corse lay. The servants, shocked at her distraction, would have withheld her from entering it, but could not. She burst into the room, cast one wild look on its inmates—the still corse and the dumb mourners—and then, flinging herself on her knees before her son, confessed the secret of her guilt, and developed to its foul base the foundation of that pile of iniquity and sorrow which had now reached its summit.

“Her son listened to this horrible confession with fixed eye and features unmoved; and at its conclusion, when the wretched penitent implored the assistance of her son to raise her from her knees, he repelled her outstretched hands, and with a weak wild laugh, sunk back on the bed. He

never could be removed from it till the corse to which he clung was borne away, and then the mourners hardly knew which to deplore—her who was deprived of the light of life, or him in whom the light of reason was extinguished for ever! * * * * *

“The wretched, guilty mother, (but for her fate no one can be solicitous), a few months after, on her dying bed, declared the secret of her crime to a minister of an independent congregation, who was induced, by the report of her despair, to visit her. She confessed that, being instigated by avarice, and still more by the desire of regaining her lost consequence in the family, and knowing the wealth and dignity her son would acquire, and in which she must participate, by his marriage with Margaret, she had, after using all the means of persuasion and intreaty, been driven, in despair at her disappointment, to fabricate a tale as false as it was horrible, which she related to her deluded son on the evening before his intended nuptials with Elinor. She had assured him he was not her son, but the offspring of the illicit commerce of her husband the preacher with the Puritan mother of Elinor, who had formerly been one of his congregation, and whose well-known and strongly-expressed admiration of his preaching had been once supposed extended to his person,—had caused her much jealous anxiety in the early years of their marriage, and was now made the basis of this horrible fiction. She added, that Margaret’s obvious attachment to her cousin had, in some degree, palliated her guilt to herself; but that, when she saw him quit her house in despair on the morning of his intended marriage, and rush he knew not whither, she was half tempted to recall him, and confess the truth. Her mind again became hardened, and she reflected that her secret was safe, as she had bound him by an oath, from respect to his father’s memory, and compassion to the guilty mother of Elinor, never to disclose the truth to her daughter.

“The event had succeeded to her guilty wishes.—Sandal beheld Elinor with the eyes of a brother, and the image of Margaret easily found a place in his unoccupied affections. But, as often befalls to the dealers in falsehood and obliquity, the apparent accomplishment of her hopes proved her ruin. In the event of the marriage of John and Margaret proving issueless, the estates and title went to the distant relative named in the will; and her son, deprived of reason by the calamities in which her arts had involved him,

was by them also deprived of the wealth and rank to which they were meant to raise him, and reduced to the small pension obtained by his former services,—the poverty of the King, then himself a pensioner of Lewis XIV., forbidding the possibility of added remuneration. When the minister heard to the last the terrible confession of the dying penitent, in the awful language ascribed to Bishop Burnet when consulted by another criminal,—he bid her “almost despair,” and departed. * * * * *

“Elinor has retired, with the helpless object of her unfading love and unceasing care, to her cottage in Yorkshire. There, in the language of that divine and blind old man, the fame of whose poetry has not yet reached this country, it is

“Her delight to see him sitting in the house,”

and watch, like the father of the Jewish champion, the growth of that “God-given strength,” that intellectual power, which, unlike Samson’s, will never return.

“After an interval of two years, during which she had expended a large part of the capital of her fortune in obtaining the first medical advice for the patient, and “suffered many things of many physicians,” she gave up all hope,—and, reflecting that the interest of her fortune thus diminished would be but sufficient to procure the comforts of life for herself and him whom she has resolved never to forsake, she sat down in patient misery with her melancholy companion, and added one more to the many proofs of woman’s heart, “unwearied in well-doing,” without the intoxication of passion, the excitement of applause, or even the gratitude of the unconscious object.

“Were this a life of calm privation, and pulseless apathy, her efforts would scarce have merit, and her sufferings hardly demand compassion; but it is one of pain incessant and immitigable. The first-born of her heart lies dead within it; but that heart is still alive with all its keenest sensibilities, its most vivid hopes, and its most exquisite sense of grief. * * * * *

“She sits beside him all day—she watches that eye whose light was life, and sees it fixed on her in glassy and unmeaning complacency—she dreams of that smile which burst on her soul like the morning sun over a landscape

in spring, and sees that smile of vacancy which tries to convey satisfaction, but cannot give it the language of expression. Averting her head, she thinks of other days. A vision passes before her.—Lovely and glorious things, the hues of whose colouring are not of this world, and whose web is too fine to be woven in the loom of life,—rise to her eye like the illusions of enchantment. A strain of rich remembered music floats in her hearing—she dreams of the hero, the lover, the beloved,—him in whom were united all that could dazzle the eye, inebriate the imagination, and melt the heart. She sees him as he first appeared to her,—and the mirage of the desert present not a vision more delicious and deceptive—she bends to drink of that false fountain, and the stream disappears—she starts from her reverie, and hears the weak laugh of the sufferer, as he moves a little water in a shell, and imagines he sees the ocean in a storm! * * * * *

“She has one consolation. When a short interval of recollection returns,—when his speech becomes articulate,—he utters *her* name, not that of Margaret, and a beam of early hope dances on her heart as she hears it, but fades away as fast as the rare and wandering ray of intellect from the lost mind of the sufferer! * * * * *

“Unceasingly attentive to his health and his comforts, she walked out with him every evening, but led him through the most sequestered paths, to avoid those whose mockful persecution, or whose vacant pity, might be equally torturing to her feelings, or harassing to her still gentle and smiling companion.

“It was at this period,” said the stranger to Aliaga, “I first became acquainted with—— I mean—at this time a stranger, who had taken up his abode near the hamlet where Elinor resided, was seen to watch the two figures as they passed slowly on their retired walk. Evening after evening he watched them. He knew the history of these two unhappy beings, and prepared himself to take advantage of it. It was impossible, considering their secluded mode of existence, to obtain an introduction. He tried to recommend himself by his occasional attentions to the invalid—he sometimes picked up the flowers that an unconscious hand flung into the stream, and listened, with a gracious smile, to the indistinct sounds in which the sufferer, who still retained all the graciousness of his perished mind, attempted to thank him.

“Elinor felt grateful for these occasional attentions; but she was somewhat alarmed at the assiduity with which the stranger attended their melancholy walk every evening,—and, whether encouraged, neglected, or even repelled, still found the means of insinuating himself into companionship. Even the mournful dignity of Elinor’s demeanour,—her deep dejection,—her bows or brief replies,—were unavailing against the gentle but indefatigable importunity of the intruder.

“By degrees he ventured to speak to her of her misfortunes,—and that topic is a sure key to the confidence of the unhappy. Elinor began to listen to him;—and, though somewhat amazed at the knowledge he displayed of every circumstance of her life, she could not but feel soothed by the tone of sympathy in which he spoke, and excited by the mysterious hints of hope which he sometimes suffered to escape him as if involuntarily. It was observed soon by the inmates of the hamlet, whom idleness and the want of any object of excitement had made curious, that Elinor and the stranger were inseparable in their evening walks. * * * * *

“It was about a fortnight after this observation was first made, that Elinor, unattended, drenched with rain, and her head uncovered, loudly and eagerly demanded admittance, at a late hour, at the house of a neighbouring clergyman. She was admitted,—and the surprise of her reverend host at this visit, equally unseasonable and unexpected, was exchanged for a deeper feeling of wonder and terror as she related the cause of it. He at first imagined (knowing her unhappy situation) that the constant presence of an insane person might have a contagious effect on the intellects of one so perseveringly exposed to that presence.

“As Elinor, however, proceeded to disclose the awful proposal, and the scarcely less awful name of the unholy intruder, the clergyman betrayed considerable emotion; and, after a long pause, desired permission to accompany her on their next meeting. This was to be the following evening, for the stranger was unremitting in his attendance on her lonely walks.

“It is necessary to mention, that this clergyman had been for some years abroad—that events had occurred to him in foreign countries, of which strange reports were spread, but on the subject of which he had been always profoundly silent—and that having but lately fixed his residence in the

neighbourhood, he was equally a stranger to Elinor, and to the circumstances of her past life, and of her present situation. * * * * *

“It was now autumn,—the evenings were growing short,—and the brief twilight was rapidly succeeded by night. On the dubious verge of both, the clergyman quitted his house, and went in the direction where Elinor told him she was accustomed to meet the stranger.

“They were there before him; and in the shuddering and averted form of Elinor, and the stern but calm importunity of her companion, he read the terrible secret of their conference. Suddenly he advanced and stood before the stranger. They immediately recognised each other. An expression that was never before beheld there—an expression of fear—wandered over the features of the stranger! He paused for a moment, and then departed without uttering a word—nor was Elinor ever again molested by his presence. * * *
* *

“It was some days before the clergyman recovered from the shock of this singular encounter sufficiently to see Elinor, and explain to her the cause of his deep and painful agitation.

“He sent to announce to her when he was able to receive her, and appointed the night for the time of meeting, for he knew that during the day she never forsook the helpless object of her unalienated heart. The night arrived—imagine them seated in the antique study of the clergyman, whose shelves were filled with the ponderous volumes of ancient learning—the embers of a peat fire shed a dim and fitful light through the room, and the single candle that burned on a distant oaken stand, seemed to shed its light on that alone—not a ray fell on the figures of Elinor and her companion, as they sat in their massive chairs of carved-like figures in the richly-wrought niches of some Catholic place of worship——”

“That is a most profane and abominable comparison,” said Aliaga, starting from the doze in which he had frequently indulged during this long narrative.

“But hear the result,” said the pertinacious narrator. “The clergyman confessed to Elinor that he had been acquainted with an Irishman of the name of Melmoth, whose various erudition, profound intellect, and intense appetency for information, had interested him so deeply as to lead to a

perfect intimacy between them. At the breaking out of the troubles in England, the clergyman had been compelled, with his father's family, to seek refuge in Holland. There again he met Melmoth, who proposed to him a journey to Poland—the offer was accepted, and to Poland they went. The clergyman here told many extraordinary tales of Dr Dee, and of Albert Alasco, the Polish adventurer, who were their companions both in England and Poland—and he added, that he felt his companion Melmoth was irrevocably attached to the study of that art which is held in just abomination by all “who name the name of Christ.” The power of the intellectual vessel was too great for the narrow seas where it was coasting—it longed to set out on a voyage of discovery—in other words, Melmoth attached himself to those impostors, or worse, who promised him the knowledge and the power of the future world—on conditions that are unutterable.” A strange expression crossed his face as he spoke. He recovered himself, and added, “From that hour our intercourse ceased. I conceived of him as of one given up to diabolical delusions—to the power of the enemy.

“I had not seen Melmoth for some years. I was preparing to quit Germany, when, on the eve of my departure, I received a message from a person who announced himself as my friend, and who, believing himself dying, wished for the attendance of a Protestant minister. We were then in the territories of a Catholic electoral bishop. I lost no time in attending the sick person. As I entered his room, conducted by a servant, who immediately closed the door and retired, I was astonished to see the room filled with an astrological apparatus, books and implements of a science I did not understand; in a corner there was a bed, near which there was neither priest or physician, relative or friend—on it lay extended the form of Melmoth. I approached, and attempted to address to him some words of consolation. He waved his hand to me to be silent—and I was so. The recollection of his former habits and pursuits, and the view of his present situation, had an effect that appalled more than it amazed me. “Come near,” said Melmoth, speaking very faintly—“nearer. I am dying—how my life has been passed you know but too well. Mine was the great angelic sin—pride and intellectual glorying! It was the first mortal sin—a boundless aspiration after forbidden knowledge! I am now dying. I ask for no forms of

religion—I wish not to hear words that have to me no meaning, or that I wish had none! Spare your look of horror. I sent for you to exact your solemn promise that you will conceal from every human being the fact of my death—let no man know that I died, or when, or where.”

“He spoke with a distinctness of tone, and energy of manner, that convinced me he could not be in the state he described himself to be, and I said, “But I cannot believe you are dying—your intellects are clear, your voice is strong, your language is coherent, and but for the paleness of your face, and your lying extended on that bed, I could not even imagine you were ill.” He answered, “Have you patience and courage to abide by the proof that what I say is true?” I replied, that I doubtless had patience, and for the courage, I looked to that Being for whose name I had too much reverence to utter in his hearing. He acknowledged my forbearance by a ghastly smile which I understood too well, and pointed to a clock that stood at the foot of his bed. “Observe,” said he, “the hour-hand is on eleven, and I am now sane, clear of speech, and apparently healthful—tarry but an hour, and you yourself will behold me dead!”

“I remained by his bed-side—the eyes of both were fixed intently on the slow motion of the clock. From time to time he spoke, but his strength now appeared obviously declining. He repeatedly urged on me the necessity of profound secrecy, its importance to myself, and yet he hinted at the possibility of our future meeting. I asked why he thought proper to confide to me a secret whose divulgement was so perilous, and which might have been so easily concealed? Unknowing whether he existed, or where, I must have been equally ignorant of the mode and place of his death. To this he returned no answer. As the hand of the clock approached the hour of twelve, his countenance changed—his eyes became dim—his speech inarticulate—his jaw dropped—his respiration ceased. I applied a glass to his lips—but there was not a breath to stain it. I felt his wrist—but there was no pulse. I placed my hand on his heart—there was not the slightest vibration. In a few minutes the body was perfectly cold. I did not quit the room till nearly an hour after—the body gave no signs of returning animation.

“Unhappy circumstances detained me long abroad. I was in various parts of the Continent, and every where I was haunted with the report of Melmoth being still alive. To these reports I gave no credit, and returned to

England in the full conviction of his being dead. *Yet it was Melmoth who walked and spoke with you the last night of our meeting.* My eyes never more faithfully attested the presence of living being. It was Melmoth himself, such as I beheld him many years ago, when my hairs were dark and my steps were firm. I am changed, but he is the same—time seems to have forborne to touch him from terror. By what means or power he is thus enabled to continue his posthumous and preternatural existence, it is impossible to conceive, unless the fearful report that every where followed his steps on the Continent, be indeed true.”

“Elinor, impelled by terror and wild curiosity, inquired into that report which dreadful experience had anticipated the meaning of. “Seek no farther,” said the minister, “you know already more than should ever have reached the human ear, or entered into the conception of the human mind. Enough that you have been enabled by Divine Power to repel the assaults of the evil one—the trial was terrible, but the result will be glorious. Should the foe persevere in his attempts, remember that he has been already repelled amid the horrors of the dungeon and of the scaffold, the screams of Bedlam and the flames of the Inquisition—he is yet to be subdued by a foe that he deemed of all others the least invincible—the withered energies of a broken heart. He has traversed the earth in search of victims, “Seeking whom he might devour,”—and has found no prey, even where he might seek for it with all the cupidity of infernal expectation. Let it be your glory and crown of rejoicing, that even the feeblest of his adversaries has repulsed him with a power that will always annihilate his.” * * * * *

“Who is that faded form that supports with difficulty an emaciated invalid, and seems at every step to need the support she gives?—It is still Elinor tending John. Their path is the same, but the season is changed—and that change seems to her to have passed alike on the mental and physical world. It is a dreary evening in Autumn—the stream flows dark and turbid beside their path—the blast is groaning among the trees, and the dry discoloured leaves are sounding under their feet—their walk is uncheered by human converse, for one of them no longer thinks, and seldom speaks!

“Suddenly he gives a sign that he wishes to be seated—it is complied with, and she sits beside him on the felled trunk of a tree. He declines his head on her bosom, and she feels with delighted amazement, a few tears

streaming on it for the first time for years—a soft but conscious pressure of her hand, seems to her like the signal of reviving intelligence—with breathless hope she watches him as he slowly raises his head, and fixes his eyes—God of all consolation, there is intelligence in his glance! He thanks her with an unutterable look for all her care, her long and painful labour of love! His lips are open, but long unaccustomed to utter human sounds, the effort is made with difficulty—again that effort is repeated and fails—his strength is exhausted—his eyes close—his last gentle sigh is breathed on the bosom of faith and love—and Elinor soon after said to those who surrounded her bed, that she died happy, since he knew her once more! She gave one parting awful sign to the minister, which was understood and answered!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Cum mihi non tantum furesque feræque suëtæ,
Hunc vexare locum, curæ sunt atque labori;
Quantum carminibus quæ versant atque venenis,
Humanos animos.

HORACE.

“IT is inconceivable to me,” said Don Aliaga to himself, as he pursued his journey the next day—“it is inconceivable to me how this person forces himself on my company, harasses me with tales that have no more application to me than the legend of the Cid, and may be as apocryphal as the ballad of Roncesvalles—and now he has ridden by my side all day, and, as if to make amends for his former uninvited and unwelcome communicativeness, he has never once opened his lips.”

“Senhor,” said the stranger, then speaking for the first time, as if he read Aliaga’s thoughts—“I acknowledge myself in error for relating to you a narrative in which you must have felt there was little to interest you. Permit me to atone for it, by recounting to you a very brief one, in which I flatter myself you will be disposed to feel a very peculiar interest.”—“You assure me it will be brief,” said Aliaga. “Not only so, but the last I shall obtrude on your patience,” replied the stranger. “On that condition,” said Aliaga, “in God’s name, brother, proceed. And look you handle the matter discreetly, as you have said.”

“There was,” said the stranger, “a certain Spanish merchant, who set out prosperously in business; but, after a few years, finding his affairs assume an unfavourable aspect, and being tempted by an offer of partnership with a

relative who was settled in the East Indies, had embarked for those countries with his wife and son, leaving behind him an infant daughter in Spain.”—“That was exactly my case,” said Aliaga, wholly unsuspecting of the tendency of this tale.

“Two years of successful occupation restored him to opulence, and to the hope of vast and future accumulation. Thus encouraged, our Spanish merchant entertained ideas of settling in the East Indies, and sent over for his young daughter with her nurse, who embarked for the East Indies with the first opportunity, which was then very rare.”—“This reminds me exactly of what occurred to myself,” said Aliaga, whose faculties were somewhat obtuse.

“The nurse and infant were supposed to have perished in a storm which wrecked the vessel on an isle near the mouth of a river, and in which the crew and passengers perished. It was said that the nurse and child alone escaped; that by some extraordinary chance they arrived at this isle, where the nurse died from fatigue and want of nourishment, and the child survived, and grew up a wild and beautiful daughter of nature, feeding on fruits,—and sleeping amid roses,—and drinking the pure element,—and inhaling the harmonies of heaven,—and repeating to herself the few Christian words her nurse had taught her, in answer to the melody of the birds that sung to her, and of the stream whose waves murmured in accordance to the pure and holy music of her unearthly heart.”—“I never heard a word of this before,” muttered Aliaga to himself. The stranger went on.

“It was said that some vessel in distress arrived at the isle,—that the captain had rescued this lovely lonely being from the brutality of the sailors,—and, discovering from some remains of the Spanish tongue which she still spoke, and which he supposed must have been cultivated during the visits of some other wanderer to the isle, he undertook, like a man of honour, to conduct her to her parents, whose names she could tell, though not their residence, so acute and tenacious is the memory of infancy. He fulfilled his promise, and the pure and innocent being was restored to her family, who were then residing in the city of Benares.” Aliaga, at these words, stared with a look of intelligence somewhat ghastly. He could not interrupt the stranger—he drew in his breath, and closed his teeth.

“I have since heard,” said the stranger, “that the family has returned to Spain,—that the beautiful inhabitant of the foreign isle is become the idol of your cavaliers of Madrid,—your loungers of the Prado,—your *sacravienses*,—your—by what other name of contempt shall I call them? But listen to me,—there is an eye fixed on her, and its fascination is more deadly than that fabled of the snake!—There is an arm extended to seize her, in whose grasp humanity withers!—That arm even now relaxes for a moment,—its fibres thrill with pity and horror,—it releases the victim for a moment,—it even beckons her father to her aid!—Don Francisco, do you understand me now?—Has this tale interest or application for you?”

“He paused, but Aliaga, chilled with horror, was unable to answer him but by a feeble exclamation. “If it has,” resumed the stranger, “lose not a moment to save your daughter!” and, clapping spurs to his mule, he disappeared through a narrow passage among the rocks, apparently never intended to be trod by earthly traveller. Aliaga was not a man susceptible of strong impressions from nature; but, if he had been, the scene amid which this mysterious warning was uttered would have powerfully ministered to its effect. The time was evening,—a grey and misty twilight hung over every object;—the way lay through a rocky road, that wound among mountains, or rather stony hills, bleak and bare as those which the weary traveller through the (11)western isle sees rising amid the moors, to which they form a contrast without giving a relief. Heavy rains had made deep gullies amid the hills, and here and there a mountain-stream brawled amid its stony channel, like a proud and noisy upstart, while the vast chasms that had been the beds of torrents which once swept through them in thunder, now stood gaping and ghastly like the deserted abodes of ruined nobility. Not a sound broke on the stillness, except the monotonous echo of the hoofs of the mules answered from the hollows of the hill, and the screams of the birds, which, after a few short circles in the damp and cloudy air, fled back to their retreats amid the cliffs. * * * * *

“It is almost incredible, that after this warning, enforced as it was by the perfect acquaintance which the stranger displayed of Aliaga’s former life and family-circumstances, it should not have had the effect of making him hurry homewards immediately, particularly as it seems he thought it of

sufficient importance to make it the subject of correspondence with his wife. So it was however.

“At the moment of the stranger’s departure, it was his resolution not to lose a moment in hastening homewards; but at the next stage he arrived at, there were letters of business awaiting him. A mercantile correspondent gave him the information of the probable failure of a house in a distant part of Spain, where his speedy presence might be of vital consequence. There were also letters from Montilla, his intended son-in-law, informing him that the state of his father’s health was so precarious, it was impossible to leave him till his fate was decided. As the decisions of fate involved equally the wealth of the son, and the life of the father, Aliaga could not help thinking there was as much prudence as affection in this resolution.

“After reading these letters, Aliaga’s mind began to flow in its usual channel. There is no breaking through the inveterate habitudes of a thorough-paced mercantile mind, “though one rose from the dead.” Besides, by this time the mysterious image of the stranger’s presence and communications were fading fast from a mind not at all habituated to visionary impressions. He shook off the terrors of this visitation by the aid of time, and gave his courage the credit due to that aid. Thus we all deal with the illusions of the imagination,—with this difference only, that the impassioned recal them with the tear of regret, and the unimaginative with the blush of shame. Aliaga set out for the distant part of Spain where his presence was to save this tottering house in which he had an extensive concern, and wrote to Donna Clara, that it might be some months before he returned to the neighbourhood of Madrid.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Husband, husband, I've the ring
Thou gavest to-day to me;
And thou to me art ever wed,
As I am wed to thee!

LITTLE'S POEMS.

“THE remainder of that dreadful night when Isidora disappeared, had been passed almost in despair by Donna Clara, who, amid all her rigour and chilling mediocrity, had still the feelings of a mother—and by Fra Jose, who, with all his selfish luxury and love of domination, had a heart where distress never knocked for admittance, that she did not find pity ready to open the door.

“The distress of Donna Clara was aggravated by her fear of her husband, of whom she stood in great awe, and who, she dreaded, might reproach her with unpardonable negligence of her maternal authority.

“In this night of distress, she was often tempted to call on her son for advice and assistance; but the recollection of his violent passions deterred her, and she sat in passive despair till day. Then, with an unaccountable impulse, she rose from her seat, and hurried to her daughter's apartment, as if she imagined that the events of the preceding night were only a fearful and false illusion that would be dispersed by the approach of day.

“It seemed, indeed, as if they were, for on the bed lay Isidora in a profound sleep, with the same pure and placid smile as when she was lulled into slumber by the melodies of nature, and the sound was prolonged in her dream by the whispered songs of the spirits of the Indian Ocean. Donna

Clara uttered a shriek of surprise, that had the singular effect of rousing Fra Jose from a deep sleep into which he had fallen at the approach of day. Starting at the sound, the good-natured, pampered priest, tottered into the room, and saw, with incredulity that slowly yielded to frequent application to his obstinate and adhesive eye-lids, the form of Isidora extended in profound slumber.

“Oh what an exquisite enjoyment!” said the yawning priest, as he looked on the sleeping beauty without another emotion than that of the delight of an uninterrupted repose.—“Pray, don’t disturb her,” he said, yawning himself out of the room—“after such a night as we all have had, sleep must be a very refreshing and laudable exercise; and so I commend you to the protection of the holy saints!”—“Oh reverend Father!—Oh holy Father!” cried Donna Clara clinging to him, “desert me not in this extremity—this has been the work of magic—of infernal spirits. See how profoundly she sleeps, though we are speaking, and it is now day-light.”—“Daughter, you are much mistaken,” answered the drowsy priest; “people can sleep soundly even in the day-time; and for proof send me, as I am now retiring to rest, a bottle of Foncarral or Valdepenas—not that I value the richest vintage of Spain from the Chacoli of Biscay to the Mataro of Catalonia,⁽¹²⁾ but I would never have it said that I slept in the day-time, but for sufficient reason.”——“Holy Father!” answered Donna Clara, “do you not think my daughter’s disappearance and intense slumber are the result of preternatural causes?”—“Daughter,” answered the priest, contracting his brows, “let me have some wine to slake the intolerable thirst caused by my anxiety for the welfare of your family, and let me meditate some hours afterwards on the measures best to be adopted, and then—when I awake, I will give you my opinion.”——“Holy Father, you shall judge for me in every thing.”—“It were not amiss, daughter,” said the priest retiring, “if a few slices of ham, or some poignant sausages, accompanied the wine—it might, as it were, abate the deleterious effects of that abominable liquor, which I never drink but on emergencies like these.”—“Holy Father, they shall be ordered,” said the anxious mother—“but do you not think my daughter’s sleep is supernatural?”—“Follow me to mine apartment, daughter,” answered the priest, exchanging his cowl for a night-cap, which one of the numerous household obsequiously presented him, “and you will soon see that sleep is

a natural effect of a natural cause. Your daughter has doubtless passed a very fatiguing night, and so have you, and so have I, though perhaps from very different causes; but all those causes dispose us to a profound repose.—I have no doubt of mine—fetch up the wine and sausages—I am very weary—Oh I am weak and worn with fasts and watching, and the labours of exhortation. My tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth, and my jaws cling together,—perhaps a draught or two might dissolve their parching adhesion. But I do so hate wine——why the devil don't you fetch up the bottle?"

"The attendant domestic, terrified by the tone of wrath in which the last words were uttered, hurried on with submissive expedition, and Fra Jose sat down at length in his apartment to ruminate on the calamities and perplexities of the family, till he was actually overcome by the subject, and exclaimed in a tone of despair, "Both bottles empty! Then it is useless to meditate further on this subject." * * * * *

"He was roused at an earlier hour than he wished, by a message from Donna Clara, who, in the distress of a weak mind, accustomed always to factitious and external support, now felt as if every step she took without it, must lead to actual and instant perdition. Her fear of her husband, next to her superstitious fears, held the strongest power over her mind, and that morning she called Fra Jose to an early consultation of terror and inquietude.—Her great object was to conceal, if possible, the absence of her daughter on that eventful night; and finding that none of the domestics appeared conscious of it, and that amid the numerous household, only *one aged servant was absent*, of whose absence no one took notice amid the superfluous multitude of a Spanish establishment, her courage began to revive. It was raised still higher by a letter from Aliaga, announcing the necessity of his visiting a distant part of Spain, and of the marriage of his daughter with Montilla being deferred for some months——this sounded like reprieve in the ears of Donna Clara—she consulted with the priest, who answered in words of comfort, that if Donna Isidora's short absence were known, it was but a slight evil, and if it were not known, it was none at all,—and he recommended to her, to ensure the secrecy of the servants by means that he swore by his habit were infallible, as he had known them operate effectively among the servants of a far more powerful and extensive establishment.—"Reverend Father," said Donna Clara, "I know of no

establishment among the grandees of Spain more splendid than ours.”—“But I do, daughter,” said the priest, “and the head of that establishment is—the Pope;—but go now, and awake your daughter, who deserves to sleep till dooms-day, as she seems totally to have forgotten the hour of breakfast. It is not for myself I speak, daughter, but I cannot bear to see the regularity of a magnificent household thus interrupted; for myself, a basin of chocolate, and a cluster of grapes, will be sufficient; and to allay the crudity of the grapes, a glass of Malaga.—Your glasses, by the bye, are the shallowest I ever drank out of—could you not find some means to get from Ildefonso(13) glasses of the right make, with short shanks and ample bodies? Yours resemble those of Quichotte, all limbs and no trunk. I like one that resembles his squire, a spacious body and a shank that may be measured by my little finger.”—“I will send to St Ildefonso this day,” answered Donna Clara.—“Go and awake your daughter first,” said the priest.

“As he spoke, Isidora entered the room—the mother and the priest both stood amazed. Her countenance was as serene, her step as equal, and her mein as composed, as if she were totally unconscious of the terror and distress her disappearance the preceding night had caused. To the first short silence of amazement, succeeded a storm of interrogations from Donna Clara and Fra Jose in concert—why—where—wherefore—and what, and with whom and how—that was all they could articulate. They might as well have spared themselves the trouble, for neither that day nor many following, could the remonstrances, intreaties, or menaces of her mother, aided by the spiritual authority and more powerful anxiety of the priest, extort from her a word of explanation on the cause of her absence that awful night. When closely and sternly pressed, Isidora’s mind seemed to assume something of the wild but potent spirit of independence, which her early habits and feelings might have communicated to her. She had been her own teacher and mistress for seventeen years, and though naturally gentle and tractable, when imperious mediocrity attempted to tyrannize over her, she felt a sense of disdain which she expressed only by profound silence.

“Fra Jose, incensed at her obstinacy, and trembling for the loss of his power over the family, threatened to exclude her from confession, unless she disclosed to him the secret of that night—“Then I will confess to God!”

said Isidora. Her mother's importunity she found it more difficult to resist, for her feminine heart loved all that was feminine even in its most unattractive shape, and the persecution from that quarter was alike monotonous and unremitting.

"There was a weak but harassing tenacity about Donna Clara, that is the general adjunct to the female character when it combines intellectual mediocrity with rigid principle. When she laid siege to a secret, the garrison might as well capitulate at once.—What she wanted in vigour and ability, she supplied by a minute and gnawing assiduity. She never ventured to carry the fort by storm, but her obstinacy blockaded it till it was forced to surrender. But here even *her* importunity failed.—Isidora remained respectfully, but resolutely silent; finding matters thus desperate, Donna Clara, who had a fine talent for keeping as well as discovering a secret, agreed with Fra Jose not to utter a syllable of the business to her father and brother.—"We will show," said Donna Clara, with a sagacious and self-approving nod, "that we can keep a secret as well as she."—"Right, daughter," said Fra Jose, "imitate her in the only point in which you can flatter yourself with the hope of resemblance. * * * * *

"The secret was, however, soon disclosed. Some months had elapsed, and the visits of her husband began to give an habitual calm and confidence to the mind of Isidora. He imperceptibly was exchanging his ferocious misanthropy for a kind of pensive gloom.—It was like the dark, cold, but unterrific and comparatively soothing night, that succeeds to a day of storm and earthquake. The sufferers remember the terrors of the day, and the still darkness of the night feels to them like a shelter. Isidora gazed on her espoused with delight, when she saw no longer his withering frown, or more withering smile; and she felt the hope that the calm purity of female hearts always suggests, that its influence will one day float over the formless and the void, like the spirit that moved upon the face of the waters; and that the unbelieving husband may yet be saved by the believing wife.

"These thoughts were her comfort, and it was well she had thoughts to comfort her, for facts are miserable allies when imagination fights its battle with despair. On one of those nights that she expected Melmoth, he found her employed in her usual hymn to the Virgin, which she accompanied on her lute. "Is it not rather late to sing your vesper hymn to the Virgin after

midnight?” said Melmoth with a ghastly smile. “Her ear is open at all times, I have been told,” answered Isidora.—“If it is, then, love,” said Melmoth, vaulting as usual through the casement, “add a stanza to your hymn in favour of me.”—“Alas!” said Isidora, dropping her lute, “you do not believe, love, in what the Holy Church requires.”—“Yes, I do believe, when I listen to you.”—“And only then?”—“Sing again your hymn to the Virgin.”

“Isidora complied, and watched the effect on the listener. He seemed affected—he motioned to her to repeat it. “My love,” said Isidora, “is not this more like the repetition of a theatrical song called for by an audience, than a hymn which he who listens to loves his wife better for, because she loves her God.”—“It is a shrewd question,” said Melmoth, “but why am I in your imagination excluded from the love of God?”—“Do you ever visit the church,” answered the anxious Isidora. A profound silence.—“Do you ever receive the Holy Sacrament?”—Melmoth did not utter a word.—“Have you ever, at my earnest solicitation, enabled me to announce to my anxious family the tie that united us?”—No answer.—“And now—that—perhaps—I dare not utter what I feel! Oh! how shall I appear before eyes that watch me even now so closely?—what shall I say?—a wife without a husband—a mother without a father for her child, or one whom a fearful oath has bound her never to declare! Oh! Melmoth, pity me,—deliver me from this life of constraint, falsehood, and dissimulation. Claim me as your wedded wife in the face of my family, and in the face of ruin your wedded wife will follow—will cling to—will perish with you!” Her arms clung round him, her cold but heart-wrung tears fell fast on his cheek, and the imploring arms of woman supplicating for deliverance in her hour of shame and terror, seldom are twined round us in vain. Melmoth felt the appeal—it was but for a moment. He caught the white arms extended towards him—he fixed an eager and fearful look of inquiry on his victim-consort, as he asked—“And is it so?” The pale and shuddering wife shrunk from his arms at the question—her silence answered him. The agonies of nature throbbed audibly in his heart. He said to himself—it is mine—the fruit of affection—the first-born of the heart and of nature—mine—mine,—and whatever becomes of me, there shall yet be a human being on earth who traces me in its external form, and who will be taught to pray for its father, even when its prayer

falls parched and hissing on the fires that burn for ever, like a wandering drop of dew on the burning sands of the desert! * * * * *

“From the period of this communication, Melmoth’s tenderness for his wife visibly increased.

“Heaven only knows the source of that wild fondness with which he contemplated her, and in which was still mingled something of ferocity. His warm look seemed like the glow of a sultry summer day, whose heat announces a storm, and compels us by its burning oppression, to look to the storm almost for relief.

“It is not impossible that he looked to some future object of his fearful experiment—and a being so perfectly in his power as his own child, might have appeared to him fatally fitted for his purpose—the quantum of misery, too, necessary to qualify the probationer, it was always in his own power to inflict. Whatever was his motive, he assumed as much tenderness as it was possible for him to assume, and spoke of the approaching event with the anxious interest of a human father.

“Soothed by his altered manner, Isidora bore with silent sufferance the burden of her situation, with all its painful accompaniments of indisposition and dejection, aggravated by hourly fear and mysterious secresy. She hoped he would at length reward her by an open and honourable declaration, but this hope was expressed only in her patient smiles. The hour approached fast, and fearful and indefinite apprehensions began to overshadow her mind, relative to the fate of the infant about to be born under circumstances so mysterious.

“At his next nightly visit, Melmoth found her in tears.

“Alas!” said she in answer to his abrupt inquiry, and brief attempt at consolation, “How many causes have I for tears—and how few have I shed? If you would have them wiped away, be assured it is only your hand can do it. I feel,” she added, “that this event will be fatal to me—I know I shall not live to see my child—I demand from you the only promise that can support me even under this conviction”—Melmoth interrupted her by the assurance, that these apprehensions were the inseparable concomitants of her situation, and that many mothers, surrounded by a numerous offspring, smiled as they recollected their fears that the birth of each would be fatal to them.

“Isidora shook her head. “The presages,” said she, “that visit me, are such as never visited mortality in vain. I have always believed, that as we approach the invisible world, its voice becomes more audible to us, and grief and pain are very eloquent interpreters between us and eternity—quite distinct from all corporeal suffering, even from all mental terror, is that deep and unutterable impression which is alike incommunicable and ineffaceable—it is as if heaven spoke to us alone, and told us to keep its secret, or divulge it on the condition of never being believed. Oh! Melmoth, do not give that fearful smile when I speak of heaven—soon I may be your only intercessor there.” “My dear saint,” said Melmoth, laughing and kneeling to her in mockery, “let me make early interest for your mediation—how many ducats will it cost me to get you canonized?—you will furnish me, I hope, with an authentic account of legitimate miracles—one is ashamed of the nonsense that is sent monthly to the Vatican.” “*Let your conversion be the first miracle on the list,*” said Isidora, with an energy that made Melmoth tremble—it was dark—but she felt that he trembled—she pursued her imagined triumph—“Melmoth,” she exclaimed, “I have a right to demand one promise from you—for you I have sacrificed every thing—never was woman more devoted—never did woman give proofs of devotion like mine. I might have been the noble, honoured wife of one who would have laid his wealth and titles at my feet. In this my hour of danger and suffering, the first families in Spain would have been waiting round my door. Alone, unaided, unsustained, unconsolated, I must undergo the terrible struggle of nature—terrible to those whose beds are smoothed by the hands of affection, whose agonies are soothed by the presence of a mother—who hears the first feeble cry of her infant echoed by the joy of exulting noble relatives. Oh Melmoth! what must be mine! I must suffer in secrecy and in silence! I must see my babe torn from me before I have even kissed it,—and the chrisom-mantle will be one of that mysterious darkness which your fingers have woven! Yet grant me one thing—one thing!” continued the suppliant, growing earnest in her prayer even to agony; “swear to me that my child shall be baptised according to the forms of the Catholic church,—that it shall be a Christian as far as those forms can make it,—and I shall feel that, if all my fearful presages are fulfilled, I shall leave behind me one who will pray for his father, and whose prayer may be accepted. Promise me,—swear to me,” she added, in intenser agony, “that my child shall be a

Christian! Alas! if my voice be not worthy to be heard in heaven, that of a cherub may! Christ himself suffered children to come unto him while on earth, and will he repel them in heaven?—Oh! no,—no! he will not repel *yours!*”

“Melmoth listened to her with feelings that it is better to suppress than explain or expatiate on. Thus solemnly adjured, however, he promised that the child should be baptised; and added, with an expression which Isidora’s delight at this concession did not give her time to understand, that it should be a Christian as far as the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic church could make it one. While he added many a bitter hint of the inefficacy of any external rites—and the impotentiality of any hierarchy—and of the deadly and desperate impositions of priests under every dispensation—and exposed them with a spirit at once ludicrous and Satanic,—a spirit that mingled ridicule with horror, and seemed like a Harlequin in the infernal regions, flirting with the furies, Isidora still repeated her solemn request that her child, if it survived her, should be baptised. To this he assented; and added, with a sarcastic and appalling levity,—“And a Mahometan, if you should change your mind,—or any other mythology you please to adopt;—only send me word,—priests are easily obtained, and ceremonies cheaply purchased! Only let me know your future intentions,—when you know them yourself.”—“I shall not be here to tell you,” said Isidora, replying with profound conviction to this withering levity, like a cold winter day to the glow of a capricious summer one, that blends the sunshine and the lightning;—“Melmoth, I shall not be here then!” And this energy of despair in a creature so young, so inexperienced, except in the vicissitudes of the heart, formed a strong contrast to the stony apathy of one who had traversed life from Dan to Beersheba, and found all barren, or—made it so.

“At this moment, while Isidora wept the cold tears of despair, without daring to ask the hand of him she loved to dry them, the bells of a neighbouring convent, where they were performing a mass for the soul of a departed brother, suddenly rung out. Isidora seized that moment, when the very air was eloquent with the voice of religion, to impress its power on that mysterious being whose presence inspired her equally with terror and with love. “Listen,—listen!” she cried. The sounds came slowly and stilly on, as if it was an involuntary expression of that profound sentiment that night

always inspires,—the reverberating watch-word from sentinel to sentinel, when wakeful and reflecting minds have become the “watchers of the night⁽¹⁴⁾.” The effect of these sounds was increased, by their catching from time to time the deep and thrilling chorus of the voices,—these voices more than harmonized, they were coincident with the toll of the bell, and seemed like them set in involuntary motion,—music played by invisible hands.

“Listen,” repeated Isidora, “is there no truth in the voice that speaks to you in tones like these? Alas! if there be no truth in religion, there is none on earth! Passion itself evanishes into an illusion, unless it is hallowed by the consciousness of a God and of futurity. That sterility of the heart that forbids the growth of divine feeling, must be hostile also to every tender and generous sentiment. *He who is without a God must be without a heart!* Oh, my love, will you not, as you bend over my grave, wish my last slumbers to have been soothed by sounds like these,—wish that they may whisper peace to your own? Promise me, at least, that you will lead your child to my tomb-stone,—that you will suffer it to read the inscription that tells I died in the faith of Christ, and the hope of immortality. Its tears will be powerful pleaders to you not to deny it the consolation that faith has given me in hours of suffering, and the hopes with which it will illuminate my parting hour. Oh promise me this at least, that you will suffer your child to visit my grave—that is all. Do not interrupt or distract the impression by sophistry or levity, or by that wild and withering eloquence that flashes from your lips, not to enlighten but to blast. You will not weep, but you will be silent,—leave Heaven and nature free to their work. The voice of God will speak to its heart, and my spirit, as it witnesses the conflict, will tremble though in paradise,—and, even in heaven, will feel an added joy, when it beholds the victory won. Promise me, then,—swear to me!” she added, with agonizing energy of tone and gesture. “Your child shall be a Christian!” said Melmoth.

CHAPTER XXXV.

—————Oh, spare me, Grimbald!
I will tempt hermits for thee in their cells,
And virgins in their dreams.

DRYDEN'S KING ARTHUR.

IT is a singular, but well-attested fact, that women who are compelled to undergo all the inconveniences and uneasiness of clandestine pregnancy, often fare better than those whose situation is watched over by tender and anxious relatives; and that concealed or illegitimate births are actually attended with less danger and suffering than those which have all the aid that skill and affection can give. So it appeared likely to fare with Isidora. The retirement in which her family lived—the temper of Donna Clara, as slow to suspect from want of penetration, as she was eager in pursuing an object once discovered, from the natural cupidity of a vacant mind—these circumstances, combined with the dress of the day, the enormous and enveloping fardingale, gave safety to her secret, at least till the arrival of its crisis. As this crisis approached, one may easily imagine the secret and trembling preparation—the important nurse, proud of the trust reposed in her—the confidential maid—the faithful and discreet medical attendant—to obtain all these Melmoth supplied her amply with money—a circumstance that would have surprised Isidora, as his appearance was always remarkably plain and private, if, at this moment of anxiety, any thought but that of *the hour* could have found room in her mind. * * * * *

“On the evening supposed to be that preceding the dreaded event, Melmoth had thrown an unusual degree of tenderness into his manner—he

gazed on her frequently with anxious and silent fondness—he seemed to have something to communicate which he had not courage to disclose. Isidora, well versed in the language of the countenance, which is often, more than that of words, the language of the heart, intreated him to tell her what he *looked*. “Your father is returning,” said Melmoth reluctantly. “He will certainly be here in a few days, perhaps in a few hours.” Isidora heard him in silent horror. “My father!” she cried—“I have never seen my father.—Oh, how shall I meet him now! And is my mother ignorant of this?—would she not have apprized me?”—“She is ignorant at present; but she will not long be so.”—“And from whence could *you* have obtained intelligence that she is ignorant of?” Melmoth paused some time,—his features assumed a more contracted and gloomy character than they had done laterally—he answered with slow and stern reluctance—“Never again ask me that question—the intelligence that I can give you must be of more importance to you than the means by which I obtain it—enough for you that it is true.”—“Pardon me, love,” said Isidora; “it is probable that I may never again offend you—will you not, then, forgive my *last* offence?”

“Melmoth seemed too intently occupied with his own thoughts to answer even her tears. He added, after a short and sullen pause, “Your betrothed bridegroom is coming with your father—Montilla’s father is dead—the arrangements are all concluded for your nuptials—your bridegroom is coming to wed the wife of another—with him comes your fiery, foolish brother, who has set out to meet his father and his future relative. There will be a feast prepared in the house on the occasion of your future nuptials—you may hear of a strange guest appearing at your festival—I will be there!”

“Isidora stood stupified with horror. “Festival!” she repeated—“a bridal festival!—and I already wedded to you, and about to become a mother!”

* * * *

“At this moment the trampling of many horsemen was heard as they approached the villa—the tumult of the domestics hurrying to admit and receive them, resounded through the apartments—and Melmoth, with a gesture that seemed to Isidora rather like a menace than a farewell, instantly disappeared; and within an hour, Isidora knelt to the father she had never till then beheld—suffered herself to be saluted by Montilla—and accepted the

embrace of her brother, who, in the petulance of his spirit, half rejected the chill and altered form that advanced to greet him.

* * * *

“Every thing at the family meeting was conducted in true Spanish formality. Aliaga kissed the cold hand of his withered wife—the numerous domestics exhibited a grave joy at the return of their master—Fra Jose assumed increased importance, and called for dinner in a louder tone. Montilla, the lover, a cold and quiet character, took things as they occurred.

“Every thing lay hushed under a brief and treacherous calm. Isidora, who trembled at the approaching danger, felt her terrors on a sudden suspended. It was not so very near as she apprehended—and she bore with tolerable patience the daily mention of her approaching nuptials, while she was momentarily harassed by her confidential servants with hints of the impossibility of the event of which they were in expectation, being much longer delayed. Isidora heard, felt, endured all with courage—the grave congratulation of her father and mother—the self-complacent attentions of Montilla, sure of the bride and of her dower—the sullen compliance of the brother, who, unable to refuse his consent, was for ever hinting that *his* sister might have formed a higher connection. All these passed over her mind like a dream—the reality of her existence seemed internal, and she said to herself,—“Were I at the altar, were my hand locked in that of Montilla, Melmoth would rend me from him.” A wild but deeply-fixed conviction—a wandering image of preternatural power, overshadowed her mind while she thought of Melmoth;—and this image, which had caused her so much terror and inquietude in her early hours of love, now formed her only resource against the hour of inconceivable suffering; as those unfortunate females in the Eastern Tales, whose beauty has attracted the fearful passion of some evil genie, are supposed to depend, at their nuptial hour, on the presence of the seducing spirit, to tear from the arms of the agonised parent, and the distracted bridegroom, the victim whom he has reserved for himself, and whose wild devotion to him gives a dignity to the union so unhallowed and unnatural(15). * * * * *

“Aliaga’s heart expanded amid the approaching completion of the felicitous plans he had formed, and with his heart, his purse, which was its depository, opened also, and he resolved to give a splendid fete in honour of

his daughter's nuptials. Isidora remembered Melmoth's prediction of a fatal festival; and his words, "I will be there," gave her for a time a kind of trembling confidence. But as the preparations were carried on under her very eye,—as she was hourly consulted about the disposal of the ornaments, and the decorations of the apartments,—her resolution failed, and while she uttered a few incoherent words, her eye was glazed with horror.

"The entertainment was to be a masked ball; and Isidora, who imagined that this might suggest to Melmoth some auspicious expedient for her escape, watched in vain for some hint of hope,—some allusion to the probability of this event facilitating her extrication from those snares of death that seemed compassing her about. He never uttered a word, and her dependence on him was at one moment confirmed, at another shaken to its foundation, by this terrible silence. In one of these latter moments, the anguish of which was increased beyond expression by a conviction that her hour of danger was not far distant, she exclaimed to Melmoth—"Take me—take me from this place! My existence is nothing—it is a vapour that soon must be exhaled—but my reason is threatened every moment! I cannot sustain the horrors to which I am exposed! All this day I have been dragged through rooms decorated for my impossible nuptials!—Oh, Melmoth, if you no longer love me, at least commiserate me! Save me from a situation of horror unspeakable!—have mercy on your child, if not on me! I have hung on your looks,—I have watched for a word of hope—you have not uttered a sound—you have not cast a glance of hope on me! I am wild!—I am reckless of all but the imminent and *present* horrors of to-morrow—you have talked of your power to approach, to enter these walls without suspicion or discovery—you boasted of that cloud of mystery in which you could envelope yourself. Oh! in this last moment of my extremity, wrap me in its tremendous folds, and let me escape in them, though they prove my shroud!—Think of the terrible night of our marriage! I followed you then in fear and confidence—your touch dissolved every earthly barrier—your steps trod an unknown path, yet I followed you!—Oh! If you really possess that mysterious and inscrutable power, which I dare not either question or believe, exert it for me in this terrible emergency—aid my escape—and though I feel I shall never live to thank you, the *silent suppliant* will remind you by its smiles of the tears that I now shed; and if they are shed in vain,

its smile will have a bitter eloquence as it plays with the flowers on its mother's grave!"

"Melmoth, as she spoke, was profoundly silent, and deeply attentive. He said at last, "Do you then resign yourself to me?"—"Alas! have I not?"—"A question is not an answer. Will you, renouncing all other engagements, all other hopes, depend on me solely for your extrication from this fearful emergency?"—"I will—I do!"—"Will you promise, that if I render you the service you require, if I employ the power you say I have alluded to, you will be *mine*?"—"Yours!—Alas! am I not yours already?"—"You embrace *my* protection, then? You voluntarily seek the shelter of that power which I can promise? You yourself will me to employ that power in effecting your escape?—Speak—do I interpret your sentiments aright?—I am unable to exercise those powers you invest me with, unless you yourself require me to do so. I have waited—I have watched for the demand—it has been made—would that it never had!" An expression of the fiercest agony corrugated his stern features as he spoke.—"But it may yet be withdrawn—reflect!"—"And you will not then save me from shame and danger? Is this the proof of your love—is this the boast of your power?" said Isidora, half frantic at this delay. "If I adjure you to pause—if I myself hesitate and tremble—it is to give time for the salutary whisper of your better angel."—"Oh! save me, and you shall be my angel!" said Isidora, falling at his feet. Melmoth shook through his whole frame as he heard these words. He raised and soothed her, however, with promises of safety, though in a voice that seemed to announce despair—and then turning from her, burst into a passionate soliloquy.—"Immortal Heaven! what is man?—A being with the ignorance, but not the instinct, of the feeblest animals!—They are like birds—when thy hand, O Thou whom I dare not call Father, is on them, they scream and quiver, though the gentle pressure is intended only to convey the wanderer back to his cage—while, to shun the light fear that scares their senses, they rush into the snare that is spread in their sight, and where their captivity is hopeless!" As he spoke, hastily traversing the room, his foot struck against a chair on which a gorgeous dress was spread. "What is this?" he exclaimed—"What idiot trumpery, what May-queen foolery is this?"—"It is the habit I am to wear at the feast to-night," said Isidora—"My attendants are coming—I hear them

at the door—oh, with what a throbbing heart I shall put on this glittering mockery!—But you will not desert me then?” she added, with wild and breathless anxiety. “Fear not,” said Melmoth, solemnly—“You have demanded my aid, and it shall be accorded. May your heart tremble no more when you throw off that habit, than now when you are about to put it on!”

“The hour approached, and the guests were arriving. Isidora, arrayed in a splendid and fanciful garb, and rejoicing in the shelter which her mask afforded to the expression of her pale features, mingled among the groupe. She walked one measure with Montilla, and then declined dancing on the pretence of assisting her mother in receiving and entertaining her guests.

“After a sumptuous banquet, dancing was renewed in the spacious hall, and Isidora followed the company thither with a beating heart. Twelve was the hour at which Melmoth had promised to meet her, and by the clock, which was placed over the door of the hall, she saw it wanted but a quarter to twelve. The hand moved on—it arrived at the hour—the clock struck! Isidora, whose eyes had been rivetted on its movements, now withdrew them in despair. At that moment she felt her arm gently touched, and one of the maskers, bending towards her, whispered, “I am here!” and he added the sign which Melmoth and she had agreed on as the signal of their meeting. Isidora, unable to reply, could only return the sign. “Make haste,” he added—“All is arranged for your flight—there is not a moment to be lost—I will leave you now, but meet me in a few moments in the western portico—the lamps are extinguished there, and the servants have neglected to relight them—be silent and be swift!” He disappeared as he spoke, and Isidora, after a few moments, followed him. Though the portico was dark, a faint gleam from the splendidly illuminated rooms disclosed to her the figure of Melmoth. He drew her arm under his in silence, and proceeded to hurry her from the spot. “Stop, villain, stop!” exclaimed the voice of her brother, who, followed by Montilla, sprung from the balcony—“Where do you drag my sister?—and you, degraded wretch, where are you about to fly, and with whom?” Melmoth attempted to pass him, supporting Isidora with one arm, while the other was extended to repel his approach; but Fernan, drawing his sword, placed himself directly in their way, at the same time calling on Montilla to raise the household, and tear Isidora from his arms. “Off, fool—

off!” exclaimed Melmoth—“Rush not on destruction!—I seek not your life—one victim of your house is enough—let us pass ere you perish!”—“Boaster, prove your words!” said Fernan, making a desperate thrust at him, which Melmoth coolly put by with his hand. “Draw, coward!” cried Fernan, rendered furious by this action—“My next will be more successful!” Melmoth slowly drew his sword. “Boy!” said he in an awful voice—“If I turn this point against you, your life is not worth a moment’s purchase—be wise and let us pass.” Fernan made no answer but by a fierce attack, which was instantly met by his antagonist.

“The shrieks of Isidora had now reached the ears of the revellers, who rushed in crowds to the garden—the servants followed them with flambeaux snatched from the walls adorned for this ill-omened festival, and the scene of the combat was in a moment as light as day, and surrounded by a hundred spectators.

“Part them—part them—save them!” shrieked Isidora, writhing at the feet of her father and mother, who, with the rest, were gazing in stupid horror at the scene—“Save my brother—save my husband!” The whole dreadful truth rushed on Donna Clara’s mind at these words, and casting a conscious look at the terrified priest, she fell to the ground. The combat was short as it was unequal,—in two moments Melmoth passed his sword twice through the body of Fernan, who sunk beside Isidora, and expired! There was a universal pause of horror for some moments—at length a cry of —“Seize the murderer!” burst from every lip, and the crowd began to close around Melmoth. He attempted no defence. He retreated a few paces, and sheathing his sword, waved them back only with his arm; and this movement, that seemed to announce an internal power above all physical force, had the effect of nailing every spectator to the spot where he stood.

“The light of the torches, which the trembling servants held up to gaze on him, fell full on his countenance, and the voices of a few shuddering speakers exclaimed, “MELMOTH THE WANDERER!”—“I am—I am!” said that unfortunate being—“and who now will oppose my passing—who will become my companion?—I seek not to injure now—but I will not be detained. Would that breathless fool had yielded to my bidding, not to my sword—there was but one human chord that vibrated in my heart—it is broken to-night, and for ever! I will never tempt woman more! Why should

the whirlwind, that can shake mountains, and overwhelm cities with its breath, descend to scatter the leaves of the rose-bud?" As he spoke, his eyes fell on the form of Isidora, which lay at his feet extended beside that of Fernan. He bent over it for a moment—a pulsation like returning life agitated her frame. He bent nearer—he whispered, unheard by the rest,—“Isidora, will you fly with me—this is the moment—every arm is paralyzed—every mind is frozen to its centre!—Isidora, rise and fly with me—this is your hour of safety!” Isidora, who recognized the voice but not the speaker, raised herself for a moment—looked on Melmoth—cast a glance on the bleeding bosom of Fernan, and fell on it dyed in that blood. Melmoth started up—there was a slight movement of hostility among some of the guests—he turned one brief and withering glance on them—they stood every man his hand on his sword, without the power to draw them, and the very domestics held up the torches in their trembling hands, as if with involuntary awe they were lighting him out. So he passed on unmolested amid the groupe, till he reached the spot where Aliaga, stupified with horror, stood beside the bodies of his son and daughter. “Wretched old man!” he exclaimed, looking on him as the unhappy father strained his glazing and dilated eyes to see who spoke to him, and at length with difficulty recognized the form of *the stranger*—the companion of his fearful journey some months past—“Wretched old man—you were warned—but you neglected the warning—I adjured you to save your daughter—I *best* knew her danger—you saved your gold—now estimate the value of the dross you grasped, and the precious ore you dropt! *I stood between myself and her*—I warned—I menaced—it was not for me to intreat. Wretched old man—see the result!”—and he turned slowly to depart. An involuntary sound of execration and horror, half a howl and half a hiss, pursued his parting steps, and the priest, with a dignity that more became his profession than his character, exclaimed aloud, “Depart accursed, and trouble us not—go, cursing and to curse.”—“I go conquering and to conquer,” answered Melmoth with wild and fierce triumph—“wretches! your vices, your passions, and your weaknesses, make you my victims. Upbraid yourselves, and not me. Heroes in your guilt, but cowards in your despair, you would kneel at my feet for the terrible immunity with which I pass through you at this moment.—I go accursed of every human heart, yet untouched by one human hand!”—As he retired slowly, the murmur of suppressed but

instinctive and irrepressible horror and hatred burst from the groupe. He past on scowling at them like a lion on a pack of bayed hounds, and departed unmolested—unassayed—no weapon was drawn—no arm was lifted—the mark was on his brow,—and those who could read it knew that all human power was alike forceless and needless,—and those who could not succumbed in passive horror. Every sword was in its sheath as Melmoth quitted the garden. “Leave him to God!”—was the universal exclamation. “You could not leave him in worse hands,” exclaimed Fra Jose—“He will certainly be damned—and—that is some comfort to this afflicted family.”

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Nunc animum pietas, et materna nomina frangunt.

“**I**N less than half an hour, the superb apartments, the illuminated gardens of Aliaga, did not echo a footstep; all were gone, except a few who lingered, some from curiosity, some from humanity, to witness or condole with the sufferings of the wretched parents. The sumptuously decorated garden now presented a sight horrid from the contrasted figures and scenery. The domestics stood like statues, holding the torches still in their hands—Isidora lay beside the bloody corse of her brother, till an attempt was made to remove it, and then she clung to it with a strength that required strength to tear her from it—Aliaga, who had not uttered a word, and scarcely drawn a breath, sunk on his knees to curse his half-lifeless daughter—Donna Clara, who still retained a woman’s heart, lost all fear of her husband in this dreadful emergency, and, kneeling beside him, held his uplifted hands, and struggled hard for the suspension of the malediction—Fra Jose, the only one of the groupe who appeared to possess any power of recollection or of mental sanity, addressed repeatedly to Isidora the question, “Are you married,—and married to that fearful being?”—“I am married!” answered the victim, rising from beside the corse of her brother. “I am married!” she added, glancing a look at her splendid habit, and displaying it with a frantic laugh. A loud knocking at the garden gate was heard at this moment. “I *am* married!” shrieked Isidora, “and here comes the witness of my nuptials!”

“As she spoke, some peasants from the neighbourhood, assisted by the domestics of Don Aliaga, brought in a corse, so altered from the fearful change that passes on the mortal frame, that the nearest relative could not

have known it. Isidora recognized it in a moment for the body of the old domestic who had disappeared so mysteriously on the night of her frightful nuptials. The body had been discovered but that evening by the peasants; it was lacerated as by a fall from rocks, and so disfigured and decayed as to retain no resemblance to humanity. It was recognizable only by the livery of Aliaga, which, though much defaced, was still distinguishable by some peculiarities in the dress, that announced that those defaced garments covered the mortal remains of the old domestic. "There!" cried Isidora with delirious energy—"There is the witness of my fatal marriage!"

"Fra Jose hung over the illegible fragments of that whereon nature had once written—'This is a human being,' and, turning his eyes on Isidora, with involuntary horror he exclaimed, "Your witness is dumb!" As the wretched Isidora was dragged away by those who surrounded her, she felt the first throes of maternal suffering, and exclaimed, "Oh! there will be a living witness—if you permit it to live!" Her words were soon realized; she was conveyed to her apartment, and in a few hours after, scarcely assisted and wholly unpitied by her attendants, gave birth to a daughter.

"This event excited a sentiment in the family at once ludicrous and horrible. Aliaga, who had remained in a state of stupefaction since his son's death, uttered but one exclamation—"Let the wife of the sorcerer, and their accursed offspring, be delivered into the hands of the merciful and holy tribunal, the Inquisition." He afterwards muttered something about his property being confiscated, but to this nobody paid attention. Donna Clara was almost distracted between compassion for her wretched daughter, and being grandmother to an infant demon, for such she deemed the child of "Melmoth the Wanderer" must be—and Fra Jose, while he baptized the infant with trembling hands, almost expected a fearful sponsor to appear and blast the rite with his horrible negative to the appeal made in the name of all that is holy among Christians. The baptismal ceremony was performed, however, with an omission which the good-natured priest overlooked—there was no sponsor—the lowest domestic in the house declined with horror the proposal of being sponsor for the child of that terrible union. The wretched mother heard them from her bed of pain, and loved her infant better for its utter destitution. * * * * *

“A few hours put an end to the consternation of the family, on the score of religion at least. The officers of the Inquisition arrived, armed with all the powers of their tribunal, and strongly excited by the report, that the Wanderer of whom they had been long in search, had lately perpetrated an act that brought him within the sphere of their jurisdiction, by involving the life of the only being his solitary existence held alliance with. “We hold him by the cords of a man,” said the chief inquisitor, speaking more from what he read than what he felt—“if he burst these cords he is more than man. He has a wife and child, and if there be human elements in him, if there be any thing mortal clinging to his heart, we shall wind round the roots of it, and extract it.” * * * * *

“It was not till after some weeks, that Isidora recovered her perfect recollection. When she did, she was in a prison, a pallet of straw was her bed, a crucifix and a death’s head the only furniture of her cell; the light struggled through a narrow grate, and struggled in vain, to cast one gleam on the squalid apartment that it visited and shrunk from. Isidora looked round her—she had light enough to see her child—she clasped it to her bosom, from which it had unconsciously drawn its feverish nourishment, and wept in extasy. “It is my own,” she sobbed, “and only mine! It has no father—he is at the ends of the earth—he has left me alone—but I am not alone while you are left to me!”

“She was left in solitary confinement for many days, undisturbed and unvisited. The persons in whose hands she was had strong reasons for this mode of treatment. They were desirous that she should recover perfect sanity of intellect previous to her examination, and they also wished to give her time to form that profound attachment to the innocent companion of her solitude, that might be a powerful engine in their hands in discovering those circumstances relative to Melmoth that had hitherto baffled all the power and penetration of the Inquisition itself. All reports agreed that the Wanderer had never before been known to make a woman the object of his temptation, or to entrust her with the terrible secret of his destiny⁽¹⁶⁾; and the Inquisitors were heard to say to each other, “Now that we have got the Delilah in our hands, we shall soon have the Sampson.”

“It was on the night previous to her examination, (of which she was unapprized), that Isidora saw the door of her cell opened, and a figure

appear at it, whom, amid the dreary obscurity that surrounded her, she recognized in a moment,—it was Fra Jose. After a long pause of mutual horror, she knelt in silence to receive his benediction, which he gave with feeling solemnity; and then the good monk, whose propensities, though somewhat “earthly and sensual,” were never “devilish,” after vainly drawing his cowl over his face to stifle his sobs, lifted up his voice and “wept bitterly.”

“Isidora was silent, but her silence was not that of sullen apathy, or of conscience-seared impenitence. At length Fra Jose seated himself on the foot of the pallet, at some distance from the prisoner, who was also sitting, and bending her cheek, down which a cold tear slowly flowed, over her infant. “Daughter,” said the monk, collecting himself, “it is to the indulgence of the holy office I owe this permission to visit you.”—“I thank them,” said Isidora, and her tears flowed fast and relievingly. “I am permitted also to tell you that your examination will take place to-morrow,—to adjure you to prepare for it,—and, if there be any thing which”—— “My examination!” repeated Isidora with surprise, but evidently without terror, “on what subject am I then to be examined?”—“On that of your inconceivable union with a being devoted and accursed.” His voice was choaked with horror, and he added, “Daughter, are you then indeed the wife of—of—that being, whose name makes the flesh creep, and the hair stand on end?”—“I am.”—“Who were the witnesses of your marriage, and what hand dared to bind yours with that unholy and unnatural bond?”—“There were no witnesses—we were wedded in darkness. I saw no form, but I thought I heard words uttered—I know I felt a hand place mine in Melmoth’s—its touch was as cold as that of the dead.”—“Oh complicated and mysterious horror!” said the priest, turning pale, and crossing himself with marks of unfeigned terror; he bowed his head on his arm for some time, and remained silent from unutterable emotion. “Father,” said Isidora at length, “you knew the hermit who lived amid the ruins of the monastery near our house,—he was a priest also,—he was a holy man, it was he who united us!” Her voice trembled.—— “Wretched victim!” groaned the priest, without raising his head, “you know not what you utter—that holy man is known to have died the very night preceding that of your dreadful union.”

“Another pause of mute horror followed, which the priest at length broke.—“Unhappy daughter,” said he in a composed and solemn voice, “I am indulged with permission to give you the benefit of the sacrament of confession, previous to your examination. I adjure you to unburden your soul to me,—will you?”—“I will, my father.”—“Will you answer me, as you would answer at the tribunal of God?”—“Yes,—as I would answer at the tribunal of God.” As she spake, she prostrated herself before the priest in the attitude of confession. * * * * *

“And you have now disclosed the whole burden of your spirit?”—“I have, my father.” The priest sat thoughtfully for a considerable time. He then put to her several singular questions relative to Melmoth, which she was wholly unable to answer. They seemed chiefly the result of those impressions of supernatural power and terror, which were every where associated with his image. “My father,” said Isidora, when he had ceased, in a faltering voice, “My father, may I inquire about my unhappy parents?” The priest shook his head, and remained silent. At length, affected by the agony with which she urged her inquiry, he reluctantly said she might guess the effect which the death of their son, and the imprisonment of their daughter in the Inquisition, must have on parents, who were no less eminent for their zeal for the Catholic faith, than for their parental affection. “Are they alive?” said Isidora.—“Spare yourself the pain of further inquiries, daughter,” said the priest, “and be assured, that if the answer was such as could give you comfort, it would not be withheld.”

“At this moment a bell was heard to sound in a distant part of the structure. “That bell,” said the priest, “announces that the hour of your examination approaches—farewell, and may the saints be with you.”—“Stay, father,—stay one moment,—but one moment!” cried Isidora, rushing frantically between him and the door. Fra Jose paused. Isidora sunk before him, and, hiding her face with her hands, exclaimed in a voice choaked with agony, “Father, do you think—that I am—lost for ever?”—“Daughter,” said the priest in heavy accents, and in a troubled and doubting spirit, “Daughter,—I have given you what comfort I could—press for no more, lest what I have given (with many struggles of conscience) may be withdrawn. Perhaps you are in a state on which I can form no judgment, and pronounce no sentence. May God be merciful to you, and

may the holy tribunal judge you in its mercy also.”—“Yet stay, father—stay one moment—only one moment—only one question more.” As she spoke, she caught her pale and innocent companion from the pallet where it slept, and held it up to the priest. “Father, tell me, *can* this be the child of a demon?—can it be, this creature that smiles on me—that smiles on you, while you are mustering curses against it?—Oh, holy drops have sprinkled it from your own hand!—Father, you have spoke holy words over it. Father, let them tear me with their pincers, let them roast me on their flames, but will not my child escape—my innocent child, that smiles on you?—Holy father, dear father, look back on my child.” And she crawled after him on her knees, holding up the miserable infant in her arms, whose weak cry and wasted frame, pleaded against the dungeon-life to which its infancy had been doomed.

“Fra Jose melted at the appeal, and he was about to bestow many a kiss and many a prayer on the wretched babe, when the bell again was sounded, and hasting away, he had but time to exclaim, “My daughter, may God protect you!”—“God protect me,” said Isidora, clasping her infant to her bosom. The bell sounded again, and Isidora knew that the hour of her trial approached.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Fear not now the fever's fire,
Fear not now the death-bed groan;
Pangs that torture, pains that tire
Bed-rid age with feeble moan.

MASON.

“THE first examination of Isidora was conducted with the circumspective formality that has always been known to mark the proceedings of that tribunal. The second and the third were alike strict, penetrating and inoperative, and the holy office began to feel its highest functionaries were no match for the extraordinary prisoner who stood before them, who, combining the extremes of simplicity and magnanimity, uttered every thing that might criminate herself, but evaded with skill that baffled all the arts of inquisitorial examination, every question that referred to Melmoth.

“In the course of the first examination, they hinted at the torture. Isidora, with something of the free and nature-taught dignity of her early existence, smiled as they spoke of it. An official whispered one of the inquisitors, as he observed the peculiar expression of her countenance, and the torture was mentioned no more.

“A second—a third examination followed at long intervals—but it was observed, that every time the mode of examination was less severe, and the treatment of the prisoner more and more indulgent—her youth, her beauty, her profound simplicity of character and language, developed strongly on this singular emergency, and the affecting circumstance of her always

appearing with her child in her arms, whose feeble cries she tried to hush, while she bent forward to hear and answer the questions addressed to her—all these seemed to have wrought powerfully on the minds of men not accustomed to yield to external impressions. There was also a docility, a submission, about this beautiful and unfortunate being—a contrite and bending spirit—a sense of wretchedness for the misfortunes of her family—a consciousness of her own, that touched the hearts even of inquisitors.

“After repeated examinations, when nothing could be extorted from the prisoner, a skilful and profound artist in the school of mental anatomy, whispered to the inquisitor something about the infant whom she held in her arms. “She has defied the rack,” was the answer. “Try her on *that rack*,” was rejoined, and the hint was taken.

“After the usual formalities were gone through, Isidora’s sentence was read to her. She was condemned, as a suspected heretic, to perpetual confinement in the prison of the Inquisition—her child was to be taken from her, and brought up in a convent, in order to——

“Here the reading of the sentence was interrupted by the prisoner, who, uttering one dreadful shriek of maternal agony, louder than any other mode of torture had ever before extorted, fell prostrate on the floor. When she was restored to sensation, no authority or terror of the place or the judges, could prevent her pouring forth those wild and piercing supplications, which, from the energy with which they are uttered, appear to the speaker himself like commands,—that the latter part of her sentence might be remitted—the former appeared to make not the least impression on her—eternal solitude, passed in eternal darkness, seemed to give her neither fear or pain, but she wept, and pleaded, and raved, that she might not be separated from her infant.

“The judges listened with fortified hearts, and in unbroken silence. When she found all was over, she rose from her posture of humiliation and agony—and there was something even of dignity about her as she demanded, in a calm and altered voice, that her child might not be removed from her till the following day. She had also self-possession enough to enforce her petition by the remark, that its life might be the sacrifice if it was too suddenly deprived of the nourishment it was accustomed to receive

from her. To this request the judges acceded, and she was remanded to her cell. * * * * *

“The time elapsed. The person who brought her food departed without uttering a word; nor did she utter a word to him. It was about midnight that the door of her cell was unlocked, and two persons in official habits appeared at it. They seemed to pause, like the heralds at the tent of Achilles, and then, like them, forced themselves to enter. These men had haggard and livid faces—their attitudes were perfectly stony and automaton-like—their movements appeared the result of mere mechanism—yet these men were touched. The miserable light within hardly shewed the pallet on which the prisoner was seated; but a strong red light from the torch the attendant held, flared broadly on the arch of the door under which the figures appeared. They approached with a motion that seemed simultaneous and involuntary—and uttered together, in accents that seemed to issue from one mouth, “Deliver your child to us.” In a voice as hoarse, dry, and natureless, the prisoner answered, “Take it!”

“The men looked about the cell—it seemed as if they knew not where to find the offspring of humanity amid the cells of the Inquisition. The prisoner was silent and motionless during their search. It was not long—the narrow apartment, the scanty furniture, afforded little room for the investigation. When it was concluded, however, the prisoner, bursting into a wild laugh, exclaimed, “Where would you search for a child but in its mother’s bosom? Here—here it is—take it—take it!” And she put it into their hands. “Oh what fools ye were to seek my child any where but on its mother’s bosom! It is your’s now!” she shrieked in a voice that froze the officials.—“Take it—take it from me!”

“The agents of the holy office advanced; and the technicality of their movements was somewhat suspended when Isidora placed in their hands the corse of her infant daughter. Around the throat of the miserable infant, born amid agony, and nursed in a dungeon, there was a black mark, which the officials made their use of in representing this extraordinary circumstance to the holy office. By some it was deemed as the sign impressed by the evil one at its birth—by others as the fearful effect of maternal despair.

“It was determined that the prisoner should appear before them within four-and-twenty hours, and account for the death of her child. * * * * *

“Within less than half that number of hours, a mightier arm than that of the Inquisition was dealing with the prisoner—an arm that seemed to menace, but was indeed stretched out to save, and before whose touch the barriers of the dreaded Inquisition itself were as frail as the fortress of the spider who hung her web on its walls. Isidora was dying of a disease not the less mortal because it makes no appearance in an obituary—she was dying of that internal and incurable wound—a broken heart.

“When the inquisitors were at last convinced that there was nothing more to be obtained by torture, bodily or mental torture, they suffered her to die unmolested, and granted her last request, that Fra Jose might be permitted to visit her. * * * * *

“It was midnight, but its approach was unknown in that place, where day and night are the same. A dim lamp was substituted for that weak and struggling beam that counterfeited day-light. The penitent was stretched on her bed of rest—the humane priest sat beside her; and if his presence gave no dignity to the scene, it at least softened it by the touches of humanity. * * * * *

“My father,” said the dying Isidora, “you pronounced me forgiven.”—“Yes, my daughter,” said the priest, “you have assured me you are innocent of the death of your infant.”—“You never could have believed me guilty,” said Isidora, raising herself on her pallet at the appeal—“the consciousness of *its* existence alone would have kept me alive, even in my prison. Oh, my father, how was it possible it could live, buried with me in this dreadful place almost as soon as it respired? Even the morbid nourishment it received from me was dried up when my sentence was read. It moaned all night—towards morning its moans grew fainter, and I was glad—at last they ceased, and I was very—happy!” But, as she talked of this fearful happiness, she wept.

“My daughter, is your heart disengaged from that awful and disastrous tie that bound it to misfortune here, and to perdition hereafter?” It was long before she could answer; at length she said in a broken voice, “My father, I

have not now strength to search or to struggle with my heart. Death must very soon break every tie that was twined with it, and it is useless to anticipate my liberation; the effort would be agony—fruitless agony, for, while I live, I must love my destroyer! Alas! in being the enemy of mankind, was not his hostility to me inevitable and fatal? In rejecting his last terrible temptation—in resigning him to his destiny, and preferring submission to my own, I feel my triumph complete, and my salvation assured.”—“Daughter, I do not comprehend you.”—“Melmoth,” said Isidora, with a strong effort, “Melmoth was here last night—within the walls of the Inquisition—within this very cell!” The priest crossed himself with marks of the profoundest horror, and, as the wind swept hollowly through the long passage, almost expected the shaken door would burst open, and disclose the figure of the Wanderer. * * * * *

“My father, I have had many dreams,” answered the penitent, shaking her head at a suggestion of the priest’s, “many—many wanderings, but this was no dream. I have dreamed of the garden-land where I beheld him first—I have dreamed of the nights when he stood at my casement, and trembled in sleep at the sound of my mother’s step—and I have had holy and hopeful visions, in which celestial forms appeared to me, and promised me his conversion—but this was no dream—I saw him last night. Father, he was here the whole night—he promised—he assured me—he adjured me to accept of liberation and safety, of life and of felicity. He told me, nor could I doubt him, that, by whatever means he effected his entrance, he could also effect my escape. He offered to live with me in that Indian isle—that paradise of ocean, far from human resort or human persecution. He offered to love me alone, and for ever—and then I listened to him. Oh, my father, I am very young, and life and love sounded sweetly in my ears, when I looked at my dungeon, and thought of dying on this floor of stone! But—when he whispered the terrible condition on which the fulfilment of his promise depended—when he told me that”——

“Her voice failed with her failing strength, and she could utter no more. “Daughter,” said the priest, bending over her bed, “daughter, I adjure you, by the image represented on this cross I hold to your dying lips—by your hopes of that salvation which depends on the truth you utter to me, your priest and your friend—the conditions proposed by your tempter!”

“Promise me absolution for repeating the words, for I should wish that my last breath might not be exhaled in uttering—what I must.”—“*Te absolvo*,” &c. said the priest, and bent his ear to catch the sounds. The moment they were uttered, he started as from the sting of a serpent, and, seating himself at the extremity of the cell, rocked in dumb horror. “My father, you promised me absolution,” said the penitent. “*Jam tibi dedi, moribunda*,” answered the priest, in the confusion of thoughts using the language appropriated to the service of religion. “Moribunda indeed!” said the sufferer, falling back on her pallet, “Father, let me feel a human hand in mine as I part!”—“Call upon God, daughter!” said the priest, applying the crucifix to her cold lips. “I loved his religion,” said the penitent, kissing it devoutly, “I loved it before I knew it, and God must have been my teacher, for I had no other! Oh!” she exclaimed, with that deep conviction that must thrill every dying heart, and whose echo (would God) might pierce every living one—“Oh that I had loved none but God—how profound would have been my peace—how glorious my departure—*now—his* image pursues me even to the brink of the grave, into which I plunge to escape it!”

“My daughter,” said the priest, while the tears rolled fast down his cheeks—“my daughter, you are passing to bliss—the conflict was fierce and short, but the victory is sure—harps are tuned to a new song, even a song of welcome, and wreaths of palm are weaving for you in paradise!”

“Paradise!” uttered Isidora, with her last breath—“*Will he be there!*”

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Loud tolled the bell, the priests prayed well,
The tapers they all burned bright,
The monk her son, and her daughter the nun,
They told their beads all night!

* * * *

The second night———

* * * *

The monk and the nun they told their beads
As fast as they could tell,
And aye the louder grew the noise,
The faster went the bell!

* * * *

The third night came———

* * * *

The monk and the nun forgot their beads,
They fell to the ground dismayed,
There was not a single saint in heaven
Whom they did not call to their aid!

SOUTHEY.

MONÇADA here concluded the tale of the Indian,—the victim of Melmoth's passion, no less than of his destiny, both alike unhallowed and unutterable. And he announced his intention of disclosing to him the fates of the other victims, whose skeletons were preserved in the vault of the Jew Adonijah in Madrid. He added, that the circumstances relating to them, were of a character still darker and more awful than those he had recited, as they were the result of impressions made on masculine minds, without any excitement but that of looking into futurity. He mentioned, too, that the circumstances of his residence in the house of the Jew, his escape from it, and the reasons of his subsequent arrival in Ireland, were scarcely less extraordinary than any thing he had hitherto related. Young Melmoth, (whose name perhaps the reader has forgot), did "seriously incline" to the purpose of having his dangerous curiosity further gratified, nor was he perhaps altogether without the wild hope of seeing the original of that portrait he had destroyed, burst from the walls and take up the fearful tale himself.

The narrative of the Spaniard had occupied many days; at their termination, young Melmoth signified to his guest that he was prepared to hear the sequel.

A night was fixed for the continuation of the recital. Young Melmoth and his guest met in the usual apartment—it was a dreary, stormy night—the rain that had fallen all day, seemed now to have yielded to the wind, that came in strong and sudden bursts, suddenly hushed, as if collecting strength for the tempest of the night. Monçada and Melmoth drew their chairs closer to the fire, looking at each other with the aspect of men who wish to inspire each other with courage to listen, and to tell, and are the more eager to inspire it, because neither feels it himself.

At length Monçada collected his voice and resolution to proceed, but as he went on, he perceived he could not fix his hearer's attention, and he paused.

"I thought," said Melmoth, answering his silence, "I thought I heard a noise—as of a person walking in the passage." "Hush! and listen," said Monçada, "I would not wish to be overheard." They paused and held their breath—the sound was renewed—it was evidently that of steps approaching

the door, and then retiring from it. "We are watched," said Melmoth, half-rising from his chair, but at that moment the door opened, and a figure appeared at it, which Monçada recognized for the subject of his narrative, and his mysterious visitor in the prison of the Inquisition, and Melmoth for the original of the picture, and the being whose unaccountable appearance had filled him with consternation, as he sat beside his dying uncle's bed.

The figure stood at the door for some time, and then advancing slowly till it gained the centre of the room, it remained there fixed for some time, but without looking at them. It then approached the table where they sat, in a slow but distinctly heard step, and stood before them as a living being. The profound horror that was equally felt by both, was differently expressed by each. Monçada crossed himself repeatedly, and attempted to utter many prayers. Melmoth, nailed to his chair, fixed his sightless eyes on the form that stood before him—it was indeed Melmoth the Wanderer—the same as he was in the past century—the same as he may be in centuries to come, should the fearful terms of his existence be renewed. His "natural force was not abated," but "his eye was dim,"—that appalling and supernatural lustre of the visual organ, that beacon lit by an infernal fire, to tempt or to warn the adventurers of despair from that coast on which many struck, and some sunk—that portentous light was no longer visible—the form and figure were those of a living man, of the age indicated in the portrait which the young Melmoth had destroyed, but the eyes were as the eyes of the dead. *

* * * * *

As the Wanderer advanced still nearer till his figure touched the table, Monçada and Melmoth started up in irrepressible horror, and stood in attitudes of defence, though conscious at the moment that all defence was hopeless against a being that withered and mocked at human power. The Wanderer waved his arm with an action that spoke defiance without hostility—and the strange and solemn accents of the only human voice that had respired mortal air beyond the period of mortal life, and never spoken but to the ear of guilt or suffering, and never uttered to that ear aught but despair, rolled slowly on their hearing like a peal of distant thunder.

"Mortals—you are here to talk of my destiny, and of the events which it has involved. That destiny is accomplished, I believe, and with it terminate those events that have stimulated your wild and wretched curiosity. I am

here to tell you of both!—I—I—of whom you speak, am here!—Who can tell so well of Melmoth the Wanderer as himself, now that he is about to resign that existence which has been the object of terror and wonder to the world?—Melmoth, you behold your ancestor—the being on whose portrait is inscribed the date of a century and a half, is before you.—Monçada, you see an acquaintance of a later date.”—(A grim smile of recognition wandered over his features as he spoke).—“Fear nothing,” he added, observing the agony and terror of his involuntary hearers—“What have you to fear?” he continued, while a flash of derisive malignity once more lit up the sockets of his dead eyes—“You, Senhor, are armed with your beads—and you, Melmoth, are fortified by that vain and desperate inquisitiveness, which might, at a former period, have made you my victim,”—(and his features underwent a short but horrible convulsion)—“but now makes you only my mockery.

* * * *

“Have you aught to quench my thirst?” he added, seating himself. The senses of Monçada and his companion reeled in delirious terror, and the former, in a kind of wild confidence, filled a glass of water, and offered it to the Wanderer with a hand as steady, but somewhat colder, as he would have presented it to one who sat beside him in human companionship. The Wanderer raised it to his lips, and tasted a few drops, then replacing it on the table, said with a laugh, wild indeed, but no longer ferocious—“Have you seen,” said he to Monçada and Melmoth, who gazed with dim and troubled sight on this vision, and wist not what to think—“Have you seen the fate of Don Juan, not as he is pantomimed on your paltry stage, but as he is represented in the real horrors of his destiny by the Spanish writer⁽¹⁷⁾? There the spectre returns the hospitality of his inviter, and summons him in turn to a feast.—The banquet-hall is a church—he arrives—it is illuminated with a mysterious light—invisible hands hold lamps fed by no earthly substance, to light the apostate to his doom!—He enters the church, and is greeted by a numerous company—the spirits of those whom he has wronged and murdered, uprisen from their charnel, and swathed in shrouds, stand there to welcome him!—As he passes among them, they call on him in hollow sounds to pledge them in goblets of blood which they present to him—and beneath the altar, by which stands the spirit of him whom the

parricide has murdered, the gulph of perdition is yawning to receive him! — Through such a band I must soon prepare to pass!—Isidora! thy form will be the last I must encounter—and—the most terrible! Now for the last drop I must taste of earth's produce—the last that shall wet my mortal lips!" He slowly finished the draught of water. Neither of his companions had the power to speak. He sat down in a posture of heavy musing, and neither ventured to interrupt him.

They kept silence till the morning was dawning, and a faint light streamed through the closed shutters. Then the Wanderer raised his heavy eyes, and fixed them on Melmoth. "Your ancestor has come home," he said; "his wanderings are over!—What has been told or believed of me is now of light avail to me. The secret of my destiny rests with myself. If all that fear has invented, and credulity believed of me be true, to what does it amount? That if my crimes have exceeded those of mortality, so will my punishment. I have been on earth a terror, but not an evil to its inhabitants. None can participate in my destiny but with his own consent—*none have consented*—none can be involved in its tremendous penalties, but by participation. I alone must sustain the penalty. If I have put forth my hand, and eaten of the fruit of the interdicted tree, am I not driven from the presence of God and the region of paradise, and sent to wander amid worlds of barrenness and curse for ever and ever?

"It has been reported of me, that I obtained from the enemy of souls a range of existence beyond the period allotted to mortality—a power to pass over space without disturbance or delay, and visit remote regions with the swiftness of thought—to encounter tempests without the *hope* of their blasting me, and penetrate into dungeons, whose bolts were as flax and tow at my touch. It has been said that this power was accorded to me, that I might be enabled to tempt wretches in their fearful hour of extremity, with the promise of deliverance and immunity, on condition of their exchanging situations with me. If this be true, it bears attestation to a truth uttered by the lips of one I may not name, and echoed by every human heart in the habitable world.

"No one has ever exchanged destinies with Melmoth the Wanderer. *I have traversed the world in the search, and no one, to gain that world, would lose his own soul!*—Not Stanton in his cell—nor you, Monçada, in

the prison of the Inquisition—nor Walberg, who saw his children perishing with want—nor—another”—

He paused, and though on the verge of his dark and doubtful voyage, he seemed to cast one look of bitter and retrospective anguish on the receding shore of life, and see, through the mists of memory, one form that stood there to bid him farewell. He rose—“Let me, if possible, obtain an hour’s repose. Aye, repose—sleep!” he repeated, answering the silent astonishment of his hearers’ looks, “my existence is still human!”—and a ghastly and derisive smile wandered over his features for the last time, as he spoke. How often had that smile frozen the blood of his victims! Melmoth and Monçada quitted the apartment; and the Wanderer, sinking back in his chair, slept profoundly. He slept, but what were the visions of his last earthly slumber?

The Wanderer's Dream.

HE dreamed that he stood on the summit of a precipice, whose downward height no eye could have measured, but for the fearful waves of a fiery ocean that lashed, and blazed, and roared at its bottom, sending its burning spray far up, so as to drench the dreamer with its sulphurous rain. The whole glowing ocean below was alive—every billow bore an agonizing soul, that rose like a wreck or a putrid corse on the waves of earth's oceans—uttered a shriek as it burst against that adamantine precipice—sunk—and rose again to repeat the tremendous experiment! Every billow of fire was thus instinct with immortal and agonizing existence,—each was freighted with a soul, that rose on the burning wave in torturing hope, burst on the rock in despair, added its eternal shriek to the roar of that fiery ocean, and sunk to rise again—in vain, and—for ever!

Suddenly the Wanderer felt himself flung half-way down the precipice. He stood, in his dream, tottering on a crag midway down the precipice—he looked upward, but the upper air (for there was no heaven) showed only blackness unshadowed and impenetrable—but, blacker than that blackness, he could distinguish a gigantic outstretched arm, that held him as in sport on the ridge of that infernal precipice, while another, that seemed in its motions to hold fearful and invisible conjunction with the arm that grasped him, as if both belonged to some being too vast and horrible even for the imagery of a dream to shape, pointed upwards to a dial-plate fixed on the top of that precipice, and which the flashes of that ocean of fire made fearfully conspicuous. He saw the mysterious single hand revolve—he saw it reach the appointed period of 150 years—for in this mystic plate centuries were marked, not hours—he shrieked in his dream, and, with that strong impulse often felt in sleep, burst from the arm that held him, to arrest the motion of the hand.

In the effort he fell, and falling grasped at aught that might save him. His fall seemed perpendicular—there was nought to save him—the rock was as smooth as ice—the ocean of fire broke at its foot! Suddenly a groupe of figures appeared, ascending as he fell. He grasped at them successively;—first Stanton—then Walberg—Elinor Mortimer—Isidora—Monçada—all

passed him,—to each he seemed in his slumber to cling in order to break his fall—all ascended the precipice. He caught at each in his downward flight, but all forsook him and ascended.

His last despairing reverted glance was fixed on the clock of eternity—the upraised black arm seemed to push forward the hand—it arrived at its period—he fell—he sunk—he blazed—he shrieked! The burning waves boomed over his sinking head, and the clock of eternity rung out its awful chime—“Room for the soul of the Wanderer!”—and the waves of the burning ocean answered, as they lashed the adamantine rock—“There is room for more!”——The Wanderer awoke.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

And in he came with eyes of flame,
The fiend to fetch the dead.

SOUTHEY'S *Old Woman of Berkeley*.

MELMOTH and Monçada did not dare to approach the door till about noon. They then knocked gently at the door, and finding the summons unanswered, they entered slowly and irresolutely. The apartment was in the same state in which they had left it the preceding night, or rather morning; it was dusky and silent, the shutters had not been opened, and the Wanderer still seemed sleeping in his chair.

At the sound of their approach he half-started up, and demanded what was the hour. They told him. "My hour is come," said the Wanderer, "it is an hour you must neither partake or witness—the clock of eternity is about to strike, but its knell must be unheard by mortal ears!" As he spoke they approached nearer, and saw with horror the change the last few hours had wrought on him. The fearful lustre of his eyes had been deadened before their late interview, but now the lines of extreme age were visible in every feature. His hairs were as white as snow, his mouth had fallen in, the muscles of his face were relaxed and withered—he was the very image of hoary decrepid debility. He started himself at the impression which his appearance visibly made on the intruders. "You see what I feel," he exclaimed, "the hour then is come. I am summoned, and I must obey the summons—my master has other work for me! When a meteor blazes in your atmosphere—when a comet pursues its burning path towards the sun

—look up, and perhaps you may think of the spirit condemned to guide the blazing and erratic orb.”

The spirits, that had risen to a kind of wild elation, as suddenly subsided, and he added, “Leave me, I must be alone for the few last hours of my mortal existence—if indeed they are to be the last.” He spoke this with an inward shuddering, that was felt by his hearers. “In this apartment,” he continued, “I first drew breath, in this I must perhaps resign it,—would—would I had never been born! * * * * *

“Men—retire—leave me alone. Whatever noises you hear in the course of the awful night that is approaching, come not near this apartment, at peril of your lives. Remember,” raising his voice, which still retained all its powers, “remember your lives will be the forfeit of your desperate curiosity. For the same stake I risked more than life—and lost it!—Be warned—retire!”

They retired, and passed the remainder of that day without even thinking of food, from that intense and burning anxiety that seemed to prey on their very vitals. At night they retired, and though each lay down, it was without a thought of repose. Repose indeed would have been impossible. The sounds that soon after midnight began to issue from the apartment of the Wanderer, were at first of a description not to alarm, but they were soon exchanged for others of such indescribable horror, that Melmoth, though he had taken the precaution of dismissing the servants to sleep in the adjacent offices, began to fear that those sounds might reach them, and, restless himself from insupportable inquietude, rose and walked up and down the passage that led to that room of horror. As he was thus occupied, he thought he saw a figure at the lower end of the passage. So disturbed was his vision, that he did not at first recognize Monçada. Neither asked the other the reason of his being there—they walked up and down together silently.

In a short time the sounds became so terrible, that scarcely had the awful warning of the Wanderer power to withhold them from attempting to burst into the room. These noises were of the most mixed and indescribable kind. They could not distinguish whether they were the shrieks of supplication, or the yell of blasphemy—they hoped inwardly they might be the former.

Towards morning the sounds suddenly ceased—they were stilled as in a moment. The silence that succeeded seemed to them for a few moments more terrible than all that preceded. After consulting each other by a glance, they hastened together to the apartment. They entered—it was empty—not a vestige of its last inhabitant was to be traced within.

After looking around in fruitless amazement, they perceived a small door opposite to that by which they had entered. It communicated with a back staircase, and was open. As they approached it, they discovered the traces of footsteps that appeared to be those of a person who had been walking in damp sand or clay. These traces were exceedingly plain—they followed them to a door that opened on the garden—that door was open also. They traced the foot-marks distinctly through the narrow gravel walk, which was terminated by a broken fence, and opened on a heathy field which spread half-way up a rock whose summit overlooked the sea. The weather had been rainy, and they could trace the steps distinctly through that heathy field. They ascended the rock together.

Early as it was, the cottagers, who were poor fishermen residing on the shore, were all up, and assuring Melmoth and his companion that they had been disturbed and terrified the preceding night by sounds which they could not describe. It was singular that these men, accustomed by nature and habit alike to exaggeration and superstition, used not the language of either on this occasion.

There is an overwhelming mass of conviction that falls on the mind, that annihilates idiom and peculiarities, and crushes out truth from the heart. Melmoth waved back all who offered to accompany him to the precipice which over-hung the sea. Monçada alone followed him.

Through the furze that clothed this rock, almost to its summit, there was a kind of tract as if a person had dragged, or been dragged, his way through it—a down-trodden track, over which no footsteps but those of one impelled by force had ever passed. Melmoth and Monçada gained at last the summit of the rock. The ocean was beneath—the wide, waste, engulfing ocean! On a crag beneath them, something hung as floating to the blast. Melmoth clambered down and caught it. It was the handkerchief which the Wanderer had worn about his neck the preceding night—that was the last trace of the Wanderer!

Melmoth and Monçada exchanged looks of silent and unutterable horror, and returned slowly home.

FINIS.

JOHN PILLANS, Printer, Edinburgh.

(1) Here Monçada expressed his surprise at this passage, (as savouring more of Christianity than Judaism), considering it occurred in the manuscript of a Jew.

(2) Fact,—it occurred in a French family not many years ago.

(3) Vide Cervantes, apud Don Quixote de Collibus Ubedæ.

(4) Vide Jonson's play, in which is introduced a Puritan preacher, a *Banbury man*, named Zeal-of-the-land Busy.

(5) I have been an inmate in this castle for many months—it is still inhabited by the venerable descendant of that ancient family. His son is now High-Sheriff of the King's county. Half the castle was battered down by Oliver Cromwell's forces, and rebuilt in the reign of Charles the Second. The remains of the *castle* are a tower of about forty feet square, and five stories high, with a single spacious apartment on each floor, and a narrow staircase communicating with each, and reaching to the bartizan. A beautiful ash-plant, which I have often admired, is now displaying its foliage between the stones of the bartizan,—and how it got or grew there, heaven only knows. There it is, however; and it is better to see it there than to feel the discharge of hot water or molten lead from the apertures.

(6) See a comedy of Wycherly's, entitled, "Love in a Wood, or St James's Park," where the company are represented going there at night in masks, and with torches.

(7) Taylor's Book of Martyrs.

(8) Anachronism—n'importe.

(9) In Cowley's "Cutter of Coleman Street," Mrs Tabitha, a rigid Puritan, tells her husband she had danced the Canaries in her youth. And in Rushworth's Collections, if I remember right, Prynne vindicates himself from the charge of a general denunciation against dancing, and even speaks of the "Measures," a stately, solemn dance, with some approbation.

(10) As this whole scene is taken from fact, I subjoin the notes whose modulation is so simple, and whose effect was so profound.

Music

(11) Ireland,—forsan.

(12) Vide Dillon's travels through Spain.

(13) The celebrated manufactory for glass in Spain.

(14) He called unto me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night?—Watchman, what of the night?—ISAIAH.

(15) Vide the beautiful tale of Auheta the Princess of Egypt, and Maugraby the Sorcerer, in the Arabian Tales.

(16) From this it should seem that they were unacquainted with the story of Elinor Mortimer.

(17) Vide the original play, of which there is a curious and very obsolete translation.

Transcriber's Note:

The following is a list of corrections made to the original. The first passage is the original passage, the second the corrected one.

Page 1:

CHAPTER XXI.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Page 14:

et senie confectus,”—or finally, the

et senio confectus,”—or finally, the

Page 22:

CHAPTER XXII.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Page 24:

of steps pursuing her.”

of steps pursuing her.

Page 42:

As they approached, in spite of the

“As they approached, in spite of the

Page 48:

darknesss so profound, that Isidora did

darkness so profound, that Isidora did

Page 49:

nor what she said. All was mist and darkness

not what she said. All was mist and darkness

Page 50:

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHAPTER XXV.

Page 50:

Τηλε μείργουσι ψυχαι, ειδοωλα καμοντων.

HOMER.

Τηλε μ' ειργουσι ψυχαι, ειδωλα καμοντων.

HOMER.

Page 50:

W_E have now to retrace a short period

“W_E have now to retrace a short period

Page 56:

may be, could not aviod giving him his

may be, could not avoid giving him his

Page 57:

knowledge.

knowledge.”

Page 61:

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Page 73:

This night he perhaps began to feel the

“This night he perhaps began to feel the

Page 73:

The weather was gloomy and cold that

“The weather was gloomy and cold that

Page 79:

“Father,” said Walberg, is not Everhard

“Father,” said Walberg, “is not Everhard

Page 84:

CHAPTER XXV.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Page 99:

The priest was as good as his word,—the

“The priest was as good as his word,—the

Page 109:

CHAPTER XXVI.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Page 110:

among them—“and felt too.” The worthy

among them—and felt too.” The worthy

Page 119:

The mother, with the forced smile of a
“The mother, with the forced smile of a

Page 145:

do they moan for?” “Hunger I believe,’
do they moan for?” “Hunger I believe,”

Page 153:

must drag me from it yourselves.
must drag me from it yourselves.”

Page 177:

CHAPTER XXVII.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Page 177:

Χαλεπον δέ το φιλησαι·
χαλεπον το μη φιλησαι·
χαλεπωτερον δε παντων
αποτυγχανειν φιλουντα.

Χαλεπον δε το φιλησαι·
χαλεπον το μη φιλησαι·
χαλεπωτερον δε παντων
αποτυγχανειν φιλουντα.

Page 180:

tremble, les he was pursued by banditti at
tremble, lest he was pursued by banditti at

Page 188:

have had dealings with Shewsbury merchants,”
have had dealings with Shrewsbury merchants,”

Page 200:

by the name of—“Thou-art-not-worthy-to-unloose-the-latchets-of-his-shoes,—Sandal.
by the name of—“Thou-art-not-worthy-to-unloose-the-latchets-of-his-shoes,—Sandal.”

Page 206:

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHAPTER XXX.

Page 217:

natics, after robbing a church of all its silver-plate,

fanatics, after robbing a church of all its silver-plate,

Page 241:

Such was the state of Elinor, when the

“Such was the state of Elinor, when the

Page 263:

doomed by many a thristy eye to be often

doomed by many a thirsty eye to be often

Page 274:

where the non-comformist ministers,

where the non-conformist ministers,

Page 286:

On a dim autumnal evening, when Mrs

“On a dim autumnal evening, when Mrs

Page 307:

CHAPTER XXIX.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Page 307:

T_{HE} increasing decline of Elinor’s health

“T_{HE} increasing decline of Elinor’s health

Page 317:

CHAPTER XXX.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Page 338:

I had not seen Melmoth for some years.

“I had not seen Melmoth for some years.

Page 346:

CHAPTER XXXI.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Page 355:

CHAPTER XXXII.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Page 365:

will show,“ said Donna

will show,” said Donna

Page 367:

at all simes, I have been told,” answered

at all times, I have been told,” answered

Page 380:

CHAPTER XXXII.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Page 402:

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Page 414:

one moment!’ cried Isidora,

one moment!” cried Isidora,

Page 415:

Fra Jose melted at the appeal, and he

“Fra Jose melted at the appeal, and he

Page 417:

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Page 428:

“Daughter, said the priest, bending over

“Daughter,” said the priest, bending over

Page 431:

CHAPTER XXXV.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Page 446:

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MELMOTH THE
WANDERER, VOL. 4 ***

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