

CHAPTER IV

There is one within,
 Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
 Recounts most horrid sights, seen by the watch.
 JULIUS CÆSAR

In the morning, Emily found Madame Montoni nearly in the same condition, as on the preceding night; she had slept little, and that little had not refreshed her; she smiled on her niece, and seemed cheered by her presence, but spoke only a few words, and never named Montoni, who, however, soon after, entered the room. His wife, when she understood that he was there, appeared much agitated, but was entirely silent, till Emily rose from a chair at the bedside, when she begged, in a feeble voice, that she would not leave her.

The visit of Montoni was not to sooth his wife, whom he knew to be dying, or to console, or to ask her forgiveness, but to make a last effort to procure that signature, which would transfer her estates in Languedoc, after her death, to him rather than to Emily. This was a scene, that exhibited, on his part, his usual inhumanity, and, on that of Madame Montoni, a persevering spirit, contending with a feeble frame; while Emily repeatedly declared to him her willingness to resign all claim to those estates, rather than that the last hours of her aunt should be disturbed by contention. Montoni, however, did not leave the room, till his wife, exhausted by the obstinate dispute, had fainted, and she lay so long insensible, that Emily began to fear that the spark of life was extinguished. At length, she revived, and, looking feebly up at her niece, whose tears were falling over her, made an effort to speak, but her words were unintelligible, and Emily again apprehended she was dying. Afterwards, however, she recovered her speech, and, being somewhat restored by a cordial, conversed for a considerable time, on the subject of her estates in France, with clearness and precision. She directed her niece where to find some papers relative to them, which she had hitherto concealed from the search of Montoni, and earnestly charged her never to suffer these papers to escape her.

Soon after this conversation, Madame Montoni sunk into a dose, and continued slumbering, till evening, when she seemed better than she had been since her removal from the turret. Emily never left her, for a moment, till long after midnight, and even then would not have quitted the room, had not her aunt entreated, that she would retire to rest. She then obeyed, the more willingly, because her patient appeared somewhat recruited by sleep; and, giving Annette the same injunction, as on the preceding night, she withdrew to her own apartment. But her spirits were wakeful and agitated, and, finding it impossible to sleep, she determined to watch, once more, for the mysterious appearance, that had so much interested and alarmed her.

It was now the second watch of the night, and about the time when the figure had before appeared. Emily heard the passing steps of the sentinels, on the rampart, as they changed guard; and, when all was again silent, she took her

station at the casement, leaving her lamp in a remote part of the chamber, that she might escape notice from without. The moon gave a faint and uncertain light, for heavy vapours surrounded it, and, often rolling over the disc, left the scene below in total darkness. It was in one of these moments of obscurity, that she observed a small and lambent flame, moving at some distance on the terrace. While she gazed, it disappeared, and, the moon again emerging from the lurid and heavy thunder clouds, she turned her attention to the heavens, where the vivid lightnings darted from cloud to cloud, and flashed silently on the woods below. She loved to catch, in the momentary gleam, the gloomy landscape. Sometimes, a cloud opened its light upon a distant mountain, and, while the sudden splendour illumined all its recesses of rock and wood, the rest of the scene remained in deep shadow; at others, partial features of the castle were revealed by the glimpse — the ancient arch leading to the east rampart, the turret above, or the fortifications beyond; and then, perhaps, the whole edifice with all its towers, its dark massy walls and pointed casements would appear, and vanish in an instant.

Emily, looking again upon the rampart, perceived the flame she had seen before; it moved onward; and, soon after, she thought she heard a footstep. The light appeared and disappeared frequently, while, as she watched, it glided under her casements, and, at the same instant, she was certain, that a footstep passed, but the darkness did not permit her to distinguish any object except the flame. It moved away, and then, by a gleam of lightning, she perceived some person on the terrace. All the anxieties of the preceding night returned. This person advanced, and the playing flame alternately appeared and vanished. Emily wished to speak, to end her doubts, whether this figure were human or supernatural; but her courage failed as often as she attempted utterance, till the light moved again under the casement, and she faintly demanded, who passed.

“A friend,” replied a voice.

“What friend?” said Emily, somewhat encouraged “who are you, and what is that light you carry?”

“I am Antonio, one of the Signor’s soldiers,” replied the voice.

“And what is that tapering light you bear?” said Emily, “see how it darts upwards — and now it vanishes!”

“This light, lady,” said the soldier, “has appeared tonight as you see it, on the point of my lance, ever since I have been on watch; but what it means I cannot tell.”

“This is very strange!” said Emily.

“My fellow guard” continued the man, “has the same flame on his arms; he says he has sometimes seen it before. I never did; I am but lately come to the castle, for I have not been long a soldier.”

“How does your comrade account for it?” said Emily.

“He says it is an omen, lady, and bodes no good.”

“And what harm can it bode?” rejoined Emily.

“He knows not so much as that, lady.”

Whether Emily was alarmed by this omen, or not, she certainly was relieved from much terror by discovering this man to be only a soldier on duty, and it immediately occurred to her, that it might be he, who had occasioned so much alarm on the preceding night. There were, however, some circumstances, that still required explanation. As far as she could judge by the faint moonlight, that had assisted her observation, the figure she had seen did not resemble this man either in shape or size; besides, she was certain it had carried no arms. The silence of its steps, if steps it had, the moaning sounds, too, which it had uttered, and its strange disappearance, were circumstances of mysterious import, that did not apply, with probability, to a soldier engaged in the duty of his guard.

She now enquired of the sentinel, whether he had seen any person besides his fellow watch, walking on the terrace, about midnight; and then briefly related what she had herself observed.

“I was not on guard that night, lady” replied the man “but I heard of what happened. There are amongst us, who believe strange things. Strange stories, too, have long been told of this castle, but it is no business of mine to repeat them; and, for my part, I have no reason to complain; our Chief does nobly by us.”

“I commend your prudence” said Emily. “Good night, and accept this from me,” she added, throwing him a small piece of coin, and then closing the casement to put an end to the discourse.

When he was gone, she opened it again, listened with a gloomy pleasure to the distant thunder, that began to murmur among the mountains, and watched the arrowy lightnings, which broke over the remoter scene. The pealing thunder rolled onward, and then, reverbed by the mountains, other thunder seemed to answer from the opposite horizon; while the accumulating clouds, entirely concealing the moon, assumed a red sulphureous tinge, that foretold a violent storm.

Emily remained at her casement, till the vivid lightning, that now, every instant, revealed the wide horizon and the landscape below, made it no longer safe to do so, and she went to her couch; but, unable to compose her mind to sleep, still listened in silent awe to the tremendous sounds, that seemed to shake the castle to its foundation.

She had continued thus for a considerable time, when, amidst the uproar of the storm, she thought she heard a voice, and, raising herself to listen, saw the chamber door open, and Annette enter with a countenance of wild affright.

“She is dying, ma’amselle, my lady is dying!” said she.

Emily started up, and ran to Madame Montoni’s room. When she entered, her aunt appeared to have fainted, for she was quite still, and insensible; and Emily with a strength of mind, that refused to yield to grief, while any duty required her activity, applied every means that seemed likely to restore her. But the last struggle was over — she was gone for ever.

When Emily perceived, that all her efforts were ineffectual, she interrogated the terrified Annette, and learned, that Madame Montoni had fallen into a doze soon after Emily’s departure, in which she had continued, until a few minutes before her death.

“I wondered, ma’amselle” said Annette “what was the reason my lady did not seem frightened at the thunder, when I was so terrified, and I went often to the bed to speak to her, but she appeared to be asleep; till presently I heard a strange noise, and, on going to her, saw she was dying.”

Emily, at this recital, shed tears. She had no doubt but that the violent change in the air, which the tempest produced, had effected this fatal one, on the exhausted frame of Madame Montoni.

After some deliberation, she determined that Montoni should not be informed of this event till the morning, for she considered, that he might, perhaps, utter some inhuman expressions, such as in the present temper of her spirits she could not bear. With Annette alone, therefore, whom she encouraged by her own example, she performed some of the last solemn offices for the dead, and compelled herself to watch during the night, by the body of her deceased aunt. During this solemn period, rendered more awful by the tremendous storm that shook the air, she frequently addressed herself to Heaven for support and protection, and her pious prayers, we may believe, were accepted of the God, that giveth comfort.

CHAPTER V

The midnight clock has toll'd; and hark, the bell
 Of death beats slow! heard ye the note profound?
 It pauses now; and now with rising knell
 Flings to the hollow gale its sullen sound.

MASON

When Montoni was informed of the death of his wife, and considered that she had died without giving him the signature so necessary to the accomplishment of his wishes, no sense of decency restrained the expression of his resentment. Emily anxiously avoided his presence, and watched, during two days and two nights, with little intermission, by the corpse of her late aunt. Her mind deeply impressed with the unhappy fate of this object, she forgot all her faults, her unjust and imperious conduct to herself; and, remembering only her sufferings, thought of her only with tender compassion. Sometimes, however, she could not avoid musing upon the strange infatuation that had proved so fatal to her aunt, and had involved herself in a labyrinth of misfortune, from which she saw no means of escaping — the marriage with Montoni. But, when she considered this circumstance, it was “more in sorrow than in anger” — more for the purpose of indulging lamentation, than reproach.

In her pious cares she was not disturbed by Montoni, who not only avoided the chamber, where the remains of his wife were laid, but that part of the castle adjoining to it, as if he had apprehended a contagion in death. He seemed to have given no orders respecting the funeral, and Emily began to fear he meant to offer a new insult to the memory of Madame Montoni; but from this apprehension she was relieved, when, on the evening of the second day, Annette informed her, that the interment was to take place that night. She knew, that Montoni would not attend; and it was so very grievous to her to think that the remains of her unfortunate aunt would pass to the grave without one relative, or friend to pay them the last decent rites, that she determined to be deterred by no considerations for herself, from observing this duty. She would otherwise have shrunk from the circumstance of following them to the cold vault, to which they were to be carried by men whose air and countenances seemed to stamp them for murderers, at the midnight hour of silence and privacy, which Montoni had chosen for committing, if possible, to oblivion the reliques of a woman, whom his harsh conduct had, at least, contributed to destroy.

Emily, shuddering with emotions of horror and grief, assisted by Annette, prepared the corpse for interment; and, having wrapped it in cerements, and covered it with a winding sheet, they watched beside it, till past midnight, when they heard the approaching footsteps of the men, who were to lay it in its earthy bed. It was with difficulty that Emily overcame her emotion, when, the door of the chamber being thrown open, their gloomy countenances were seen by the glare of the torch they carried, and two of them, without speaking, lifted the body on their shoulders, while the third preceding them with the light,

descended through the castle towards the grave, which was in the lower vault of the chapel within the castle walls.

They had to cross two courts, towards the east wing of the castle, which, adjoining the chapel, was, like it, in ruins: but the silence and gloom of these courts had now little power over Emily's mind, occupied as it was, with more mournful ideas; and she scarcely heard the low and dismal hooting of the night birds, that roosted among the ivied battlements of the ruin, or perceived the still flittings of the bat, which frequently crossed her way. But, when, having entered the chapel, and passed between the mouldering pillars of the aisles, the bearers stopped at a flight of steps, that led down to a low arched door, and, their comrade having descended to unlock it, she saw imperfectly the gloomy abyss beyond; — saw the corpse of her aunt carried down these steps, and the ruffian like figure, that stood with a torch at the bottom to receive it — all her fortitude was lost in emotions of inexpressible grief and terror. She turned to lean upon Annette, who was cold and trembling like herself, and she lingered so long on the summit of the flight, that the gleam of the torch began to die away on the pillars of the chapel, and the men were almost beyond her view. Then, the gloom around her awakening other fears, and a sense of what she considered to be her duty overcoming her reluctance, she descended to the vaults, following the echo of footsteps and the faint ray, that pierced the darkness, till the harsh grating of a distant door, that was opened to receive the corpse, again appalled her.

After the pause of a moment, she went on, and, as she entered the vaults, saw between the arches, at some distance, the men lay down the body near the edge of an open grave, where stood another of Montoni's men and a priest, whom she did not observe, till he began the burial service; then, lifting her eyes from the ground, she saw the venerable figure of the friar, and heard him in a low voice, equally solemn and affecting, perform the service for the dead. At the moment, in which they let down the body into the earth, the scene was such as only the dark pencil of a Domenichino, perhaps, could have done justice to. The fierce features and wild dress of the *condottieri*, bending with their torches over the grave, into which the corpse was descending, were contrasted by the venerable figure of the monk, wrapped in long black garments, his cowl thrown back from his pale face, on which the light gleaming strongly showed the lines of affliction softened by piety, and the few grey locks, which time had spared on his temples: while, beside him, stood the softer form of Emily, who leaned for support upon Annette; her face half averted, and shaded by a thin veil, that fell over her figure; and her mild and beautiful countenance fixed in grief so solemn as admitted not of tears, while she thus saw committed untimely to the earth her last relative and friend. The gleams, thrown between the arches of the vaults, where, here and there, the broken ground marked the spots in which other bodies had been recently interred, and the general obscurity beyond were circumstances, that alone would have led on the imagination of a spectator to scenes more horrible than even that which was pictured at the grave of the misguided and unfortunate Madame Montoni.

When the service was over, the friar regarded Emily with attention and surprise, and looked as if he wished to speak to her, but was restrained by the presence of the *condottieri*, who, as they now led the way to the courts, amused themselves with jokes upon his holy order, which he endured in silence, demanding only to be conducted safely to his convent, and to which Emily listened with concern and even horror. When they reached the court, the monk gave her his blessing, and, after a lingering look of pity, turned away to the portal, whither one of the men carried a torch; while Annette, lighting another, preceded Emily to her apartment. The appearance of the friar and the expression of tender compassion, with which he had regarded her, had interested Emily, who, though it was at her earnest supplication, that Montoni had consented to allow a priest to perform the last rites for his deceased wife, knew nothing concerning this person, till Annette now informed her, that he belonged to a monastery, situated among the mountains at a few miles distance. The Superior, who regarded Montoni and his associates, not only with aversion, but with terror, had probably feared to offend him by refusing his request, and had, therefore, ordered a monk to officiate at the funeral, who, with the meek spirit of a christian, had overcome his reluctance to enter the walls of such a castle, by the wish of performing what he considered to be his duty, and, as the chapel was built on consecrated ground, had not objected to commit to it the remains of the late unhappy Madame Montoni.

Several days passed with Emily in total seclusion, and in a state of mind partaking both of terror for herself, and grief for the departed. She, at length, determined to make other efforts to persuade Montoni to permit her return to France. Why he should wish to detain her, she could scarcely dare to conjecture; but it was too certain that he did so, and the absolute refusal he had formerly given to her departure allowed her little hope, that he would now consent to it. But the horror, which his presence inspired, made her defer, from day to day, the mention of this subject; and at last she was awakened from her inactivity only by a message from him, desiring her attendance at a certain hour. She began to hope he meant to resign, now that her aunt was no more, the authority he had usurped over her; till she recollected, that the estates, which had occasioned so much contention, were now hers, and she then feared Montoni was about to employ some stratagem for obtaining them, and that he would detain her his prisoner, till he succeeded. This thought, instead of overcoming her with despondency, roused all the latent powers of her fortitude into action; and the property, which she would willingly have resigned to secure the peace of her aunt, she resolved, that no common sufferings of her own should ever compel her to give to Montoni. For Valancourt's sake also she determined to preserve these estates, since they would afford that competency, by which she hoped to secure the comfort of their future lives. As she thought of this, she indulged the tenderness of tears, and anticipated the delight of that moment, when, with affectionate generosity, she might tell him they were his own. She saw the smile, that lighted up his features — the affectionate regard, which spoke at once his joy and thanks; and, at this instant, she believed she could brave any suffering, which the evil spirit of Montoni might be preparing for her. Remembering then, for the first time since her aunt's death, the papers

relative to the estates in question, she determined to search for them, as soon as her interview with Montoni was over.

With these resolutions she met him at the appointed time, and waited to hear his intention before she renewed her request. With him were Orsino and another officer, and both were standing near a table, covered with papers, which he appeared to be examining.

“I sent for you, Emily” said Montoni, raising his head, “that you might be a witness in some business, which I am transacting with my friend Orsino. All that is required of you will be to sign your name to this paper.” he then took one up, hurried unintelligibly over some lines, and, laying it before her on the table, offered her a pen. She took it, and was going to write — when the design of Montoni came upon her mind like a flash of lightning; she trembled, let the pen fall, and refused to sign what she had not read. Montoni affected to laugh at her scruples, and, taking up the paper, again pretended to read; but Emily, who still trembled on perceiving her danger, and was astonished, that her own credulity had so nearly betrayed her, positively refused to sign any paper whatever. Montoni, for some time, persevered in affecting to ridicule this refusal; but, when he perceived by her steady perseverance, that she understood his design, he changed his manner, and bade her follow him to another room. There he told her, that he had been willing to spare himself and her the trouble of useless contest, in an affair, where his will was justice, and where she should find it law; and had, therefore, endeavoured to persuade, rather than to compel, her to the practice of her duty.

“I, as the husband of the late Signora Montoni,” he added, “am the heir of all she possessed; the estates, therefore, which she refused to me in her lifetime, can no longer be withheld, and, for your own sake, I would undeceive you, respecting a foolish assertion she once made to you in my hearing — that these estates would be yours, if she died without resigning them to me. She knew at that moment, she had no power to withhold them from me, after her decease; and I think you have more sense, than to provoke my resentment by advancing an unjust claim. I am not in the habit of flattering, and you will, therefore, receive, as sincere, the praise I bestow, when I say, that you possess an understanding superior to that of your sex; and that you have none of those contemptible foibles, that frequently mark the female character — such as avarice and the love of power, which latter makes women delight to contradict and to tease, when they cannot conquer. If I understand your disposition and your mind, you hold in sovereign contempt these common failings of your sex.”

Montoni paused; and Emily remained silent and expecting; for she knew him too well, to believe he would condescend to such flattery, unless he thought it would promote his own interest; and, though he had forborne to name vanity among the foibles of women, it was evident, that he considered it to be a predominant one, since he designed to sacrifice to hers the character and understanding of her whole sex.

“Judging as I do” resumed Montoni “I cannot believe you will oppose, where you know you cannot conquer, or, indeed, that you would wish to conquer, or be avaricious of any property, when you have not justice on your side. I think it proper, however, to acquaint you with the alternative. If you have a just opinion of the subject in question, you shall be allowed a safe conveyance to France, within a short period; but, if you are so unhappy as to be misled by the late assertion of the Signora, you shall remain my prisoner, till you are convinced of your error.”

Emily calmly said,

“I am not so ignorant, Signor, of the laws on this subject, as to be misled by the assertion of any person. The law, in the present instance, gives me the estates in question, and my own hand shall never betray my right.”

“I have been mistaken in my opinion of you, it appears” rejoined Montoni, sternly. “You speak boldly, and presumptuously, upon a subject, which you do not understand. For once, I am willing to pardon the conceit of ignorance; the weakness of your sex, too, from which, it seems, you are not exempt, claims some allowance; but, if you persist in this strain — you have everything to fear from my justice.”

“From your justice, Signor,” rejoined Emily, “I have nothing to fear — I have only to hope.”

Montoni looked at her with vexation, and seemed considering what to say. “I find that you are weak enough,” he resumed, “to credit the idle assertion I alluded to! For your own sake I lament this; as to me, it is of little consequence. Your credulity can punish only yourself; and I must pity the weakness of mind, which leads you to so much suffering as you are compelling me to prepare for you.”

“You may find, perhaps, Signor” said Emily with mild dignity “that the strength of my mind is equal to the justice of my cause; and that I can endure with fortitude, when it is in resistance of oppression.”

“You speak like a heroine” said Montoni, contemptuously; “we shall see whether you can suffer like one.”

Emily was silent, and he left the room.

Recollecting, that it was for Valancourt’s sake she had thus resisted, she now smiled complacently upon the threatened sufferings, and retired to the spot, which her aunt had pointed out as the repository of the papers, relative to the estates, where she found them as described; and, since she knew of no better place of concealment, than this, returned them, without examining their contents, being fearful of discovery, while she should attempt a perusal.

To her own solitary chamber she once more returned, and there thought again of the late conversation with Montoni, and of the evil she might expect from opposition to his will. But his power did not appear so terrible to her imagination, as it was wont to do: a sacred pride was in her heart, that taught it to swell against the pressure of injustice, and almost to glory in the quiet sufferance of ills, in a cause, which had also the interest of Valancourt for its object. For the first time, she felt the full extent of her own superiority to Montoni, and despised the authority, which, till now, she had only feared.

As she sat musing, a peal of laughter rose from the terrace, and, on going to the casement, she saw, with inexpressible surprise, three ladies, dressed in the gala habit of Venice, walking with several gentlemen below. She gazed in an astonishment that made her remain at the window, regardless of being observed, till the group passed under it; and, one of the strangers looking up, she perceived the features of Signora Livona, with whose manners she had been so much charmed, the day after her arrival at Venice, and who had been there introduced at the table of Montoni. This discovery occasioned her an emotion of doubtful joy; for it was matter of joy and comfort to know, that a person, of a mind so gentle, as that of Signora Livona seemed to be, was near her; yet there was something so extraordinary in her being at this castle, circumstanced as it now was, and evidently, by the gaiety of her air, with her own consent, that a very painful surmise arose, concerning her character. But the thought was so shocking to Emily, whose affection the fascinating manners of the Signora had won, and appeared so improbable, when she remembered these manners, that she dismissed it almost instantly.

On Annette's appearance, however, she enquired, concerning these strangers; and the former was as eager to tell, as Emily was to learn.

"They are just come, ma'amselle" said Annette "with two Signors from Venice, and I was glad to see such Christian faces once again. — But what can they mean by coming here? They must surely be stark mad to come freely to such a place as this! Yet they do come freely, for they seem merry enough, I am sure."

"They were taken prisoners, perhaps?" said Emily.

"Taken prisoners!" exclaimed Annette; "no, indeed, ma'amselle, not they. I remember one of them very well at Venice: she came two or three times, to the Signor's you know, ma'amselle, and it was said, but I did not believe a word of it — it was said, that the Signor liked her better than he should do. Then why, says I, bring her to my lady? Very true, said Ludovico; but he looked as if he knew more, too."

Emily desired Annette would endeavour to learn who these ladies were, as well as all she could concerning them; and she then changed the subject, and spoke of distant France.

"Ah, ma'amselle! we shall never see it more!" said Annette, almost weeping. — "I must come on my travels, forsooth!"

Emily tried to sooth and to cheer her, with a hope, in which she scarcely herself indulged.

“How — how, ma’amselle, could you leave France, and leave Mons. Valancourt, too?” said Annette, sobbing. “I — I — am sure, if Ludovico had been in France, I would never have left it.”

“Why do you lament quitting France, then?” said Emily, trying to smile, “since, if you had remained there, you would not have found Ludovico.”

“Ah, ma’amselle! I only wish I was out of this frightful castle, serving you in France, and I would care about nothing else!”

“Thank you, my good Annette, for your affectionate regard; the time will come, I hope, when you may remember the expression of that wish with pleasure.”

Annette departed on her business, and Emily sought to lose the sense of her own cares, in the visionary scenes of the poet; but she had again to lament the irresistible force of circumstances over the taste and powers of the mind; and that it requires a spirit at ease to be sensible even to the abstract pleasures of pure intellect. The enthusiasm of genius, with all its pictured scenes, now appeared cold, and dim. As she mused upon the book before her, she involuntarily exclaimed “Are these, indeed, the passages, that have so often given me exquisite delight? Where did the charm exist? — Was it in my mind, or in the imagination of the poet? It lived in each” said she, pausing. “But the fire of the poet is vain, if the mind of his reader is not tempered like his own, however it may be inferior to his in power.”

Emily would have pursued this train of thinking, because it relieved her from more painful reflection, but she found again, that thought cannot always be controlled by will; and hers returned to the consideration of her own situation.

In the evening, not choosing to venture down to the ramparts, where she would be exposed to the rude gaze of Montoni’s associates, she walked for air in the gallery, adjoining her chamber; on reaching the further end of which she heard distant sounds of merriment and laughter. It was the wild uproar of riot, not the cheering gaiety of tempered mirth; and seemed to come from that part of the castle, where Montoni usually was. Such sounds, at this time, when her aunt had been so few days dead, particularly shocked her, consistent as they were with the late conduct of Montoni.

As she listened, she thought she distinguished female voices mingling with the laughter, and this confirmed her worst surmise, concerning the character of Signora Livona and her companions. It was evident, that they had not been brought hither by compulsion; and she beheld herself in the remote wilds of the Apennine, surrounded by men, whom she considered to be little less than ruffians, and their worst associates, amid scenes of vice, from which her soul recoiled in horror. It was at this moment, when the scenes of the present and

the future opened to her imagination, that the image of Valancourt failed in its influence, and her resolution shook with dread. She thought she understood all the horrors, which Montoni was preparing for her, and shrunk from an encounter with such remorseless vengeance, as he could inflict. The disputed estates she now almost determined to yield at once, whenever he should again call upon her, that she might regain safety and freedom; but then, the remembrance of Valancourt would steal to her heart, and plunge her into the distractions of doubt.

She continued walking in the gallery, till evening threw its melancholy twilight through the painted casements, and deepened the gloom of the oak wainscoting around her; while the distant perspective of the corridor was so much obscured, as to be discernible only by the glimmering window, that terminated it.

Along the vaulted halls and passages below, peals of laughter echoed faintly, at intervals, to this remote part of the castle, and seemed to render the succeeding stillness more dreary. Emily, however, unwilling to return to her more forlorn chamber, whither Annette was not yet come, still paced the gallery. As she passed the door of the apartment, where she had once dared to lift the veil, which discovered to her a spectacle so horrible, that she had never after remembered it, but with emotions of indescribable awe, this remembrance suddenly recurred. It now brought with it reflections more terrible, than it had yet done, which the late conduct of Montoni occasioned; and, hastening to quit the gallery, while she had power to do so, she heard a sudden step behind her. — It might be that of Annette; but, turning fearfully to look, she saw, through the gloom, a tall figure following her, and all the horrors of that chamber rushed upon her mind. In the next moment, she found herself clasped in the arms of some person, and heard a deep voice murmur in her ear.

When she had power to speak, or to distinguish articulated sounds, she demanded who detained her.

“It is I” replied the voice — “Why are you thus alarmed?”

She looked on the face of the person who spoke, but the feeble light, that gleamed through the high casement at the end of the gallery, did not permit her to distinguish the features.

“Whoever you are,” said Emily, in a trembling voice, “for heaven’s sake let me go!”

“My charming Emily” said the man, “why will you shut yourself up in this obscure place, when there is so much gaiety below? Return with me to the cedar parlour, where you will be the fairest ornament of the party; — you shall not repent the exchange.”

Emily disdained to reply, and still endeavoured to liberate herself.

“Promise, that you will come” he continued “and I will release you immediately; but first give me a reward for so doing.”

“Who are you?” demanded Emily, in a tone of mingled terror and indignation, while she still struggled for liberty — “who are you, that have the cruelty thus to insult me?”

“Why call me cruel?” said the man “I would remove you from this dreary solitude to a merry party below. Do you not know me?”

Emily now faintly remembered, that he was one of the officers who were with Montoni when she attended him in the morning. “I thank you for the kindness of your intention,” she replied, without appearing to understand him, “but I wish for nothing so much as that you would leave me.”

“Charming Emily!” said he “give up this foolish whim for solitude, and come with me to the company, and eclipse the beauties who make part of it; you, only, are worthy of my love.” He attempted to kiss her hand, but the strong impulse of her indignation gave her power to liberate herself, and she fled towards the chamber. She closed the door, before he reached it, having secured which, she sunk in a chair, overcome by terror and by the exertion she had made, while she heard his voice, and his attempts to open the door, without having the power to raise herself. At length, she perceived him depart, and had remained, listening, for a considerable time, and was somewhat revived by not hearing any sound, when suddenly she remembered the door of the private staircase, and that he might enter that way, since it was fastened only on the other side. She then employed herself in endeavouring to secure it, in the manner she had formerly done. It appeared to her, that Montoni had already commenced his scheme of vengeance, by withdrawing from her his protection, and she repented of the rashness, that had made her brave the power of such a man. To retain the estates seemed to be now utterly impossible, and to preserve her life, perhaps her honour, she resolved, if she should escape the horrors of this night, to give up all claims to the estates, on the morrow, provided Montoni would suffer her to depart from Udolpho.

When she had come to this decision, her mind became more composed, though she still anxiously listened, and often started at ideal sounds, that appeared to issue from the staircase.

Having sat in darkness for some hours, during all which time Annette did not appear, she began to have serious apprehensions for her; but, not daring to venture down into the castle, was compelled to remain in uncertainty, as to the cause of this unusual absence.

Emily often stole to the staircase door to listen if any step approached, but still no sound alarmed her: determining, however, to watch, during the night, she once more rested on her dark and desolate couch, and bathed the pillow with innocent tears. She thought of her deceased parents and then of the absent

Valancourt, and frequently called upon their names; for the profound stillness, that now reigned, was propitious to the musing sorrow of her mind.

While she thus remained, her ear suddenly caught the notes of distant music, to which she listened attentively, and, soon perceiving this to be the instrument she had formerly heard at midnight, she rose, and stepped softly to the casement, to which the sounds appeared to come from a lower room.

In a few moments, their soft melody was accompanied by a voice so full of pathos, that it evidently sang not of imaginary sorrows. Its sweet and peculiar tones she thought she had somewhere heard before; yet, if this was not fancy, it was, at most, a very faint recollection. It stole over her mind, amidst the anguish of her present suffering, like a celestial strain, soothing, and reassuring her; — “Pleasant as the gale of spring, that sighs on the hunter’s ear, when he awakens from dreams of joy, and has heard the music of the spirits of the hill.”

But her emotion can scarcely be imagined, when she heard sung, with the taste and simplicity of true feeling, one of the popular airs of her native province, to which she had so often listened with delight, when a child, and which she had so often heard her father repeat! To this well known song, never, till now, heard but in her native country, her heart melted, while the memory of past times returned. The pleasant, peaceful scenes of Gascony, the tenderness and goodness of her parents, the taste and simplicity of her former life — all rose to her fancy, and formed a picture, so sweet and glowing, so strikingly contrasted with the scenes, the characters and the dangers, which now surrounded her — that her mind could not bear to pause upon the retrospect, and shrunk at the acuteness of its own sufferings.

Her sighs were deep and convulsed; she could no longer listen to the strain, that had so often charmed her to tranquillity, and she withdrew from the casement to a remote part of the chamber. But she was not yet beyond the reach of the music; she heard the measure change, and the succeeding air called her again to the window, for she immediately recollected it to be the same she had formerly heard in the fishing house in Gascony. Assisted, perhaps, by the mystery, which had then accompanied this strain, it had made so deep an impression on her memory, that she had never since entirely forgotten it; and the manner, in which it was now sung, convinced her, however unaccountable the circumstances appeared, that this was the same voice she had then heard. Surprise soon yielded to other emotions; a thought darted, like lightning, upon her mind, which discovered a train of hopes, that revived all her spirits. Yet these hopes were so new, so unexpected, so astonishing, that she did not dare to trust, though she could not resolve to discourage them. She sat down by the casement, breathless, and overcome with the alternate emotions of hope and fear; then rose again, leaned from the window, that she might catch a nearer sound, listened, now doubting and then believing, softly exclaimed the name of Valancourt, and then sunk again into the chair. Yes, it was possible, that Valancourt was near her, and she recollected circumstances, which induced her to believe it was his voice she had just heard. She remembered he had more than once said that the fishing house, where she had formerly listened to this

voice and air, and where she had seen pencilled sonnets, addressed to herself, had been his favourite haunt, before he had been made known to her; there, too, she had herself unexpectedly met him. It appeared, from these circumstances, more than probable, that he was the musician, who had formerly charmed her attention, and the author of the lines, which had expressed such tender admiration; — who else, indeed, could it be? She was unable, at that time, to form a conjecture, as to the writer, but, since her acquaintance with Valancourt, whenever he had mentioned the fishing house to have been known to him, she had not scrupled to believe that he was the author of the sonnets.

As these considerations passed over her mind, joy, fear and tenderness contended at her heart; she leaned again from the casement to catch the sounds, which might confirm, or destroy her hope, though she did not recollect to have ever heard him sing; but the voice, and the instrument, now ceased.

She considered for a moment whether she should venture to speak: then, not choosing, lest it should be he, to mention his name, and yet too much interested to neglect the opportunity of enquiring, she called from the casement “Is that song from Gascony?” Her anxious attention was not cheered by any reply; everything remained silent. Her impatience increasing with her fears, she repeated the question; but still no sound was heard, except the sighings of the wind among the battlements above; and she endeavoured to console herself with a belief, that the stranger, whoever he was, had retired, before she had spoken, beyond the reach of her voice, which, it appeared certain, had Valancourt heard and recognised, he would instantly have replied to. Presently, however, she considered, that a motive of prudence, and not an accidental removal, might occasion his silence; but the surmise that led to this reflection, suddenly changed her hope and joy to terror and grief; for, if Valancourt were in the castle, it was too probable that he was here a prisoner, taken with some of his countrymen, many of whom were at that time engaged in the wars of Italy, or intercepted in some attempt to reach her. Had he even recollected Emily’s voice, he would have feared, in these circumstances, to reply to it, in the presence of the men, who guarded his prison.

What so lately she had eagerly hoped she now believed she dreaded; — dreaded to know, that Valancourt was near her; and, while she was anxious to be relieved from her apprehension for his safety, she still was unconscious, that a hope of soon seeing him, struggled with the fear.

She remained listening at the casement, till the air began to freshen, and one high mountain in the east to glimmer with the morning; when, wearied with anxiety, she retired to her couch, where she found it utterly impossible to sleep, for joy, tenderness, doubt and apprehension, distracted her during the whole night. Now she rose from the couch, and opened the casement to listen; then she would pace the room with impatient steps, and, at length, return with despondence to her pillow. Never did hours appear to move so heavily, as those of this anxious night; after which she hoped that Annette might appear, and conclude her present state of torturing suspense.