## CHAPTER VI

might we but hear
The folded flocks penn'd in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
MILTON

In the morning Emily was relieved from her fears for Annette, who came at an early hour.

"Here were fine doings in the castle, last night, ma'amselle" said she as soon as she entered the room — "fine doings, indeed! Were you not frightened, ma'amselle, at not seeing me?"

"I was alarmed both on your account and on my own" replied Emily — "What detained you?"

"Aye, I said so, I told him so; but it would not do. It was not my fault, indeed, ma'amselle, for I could not get out. That rogue Ludovico locked me up again."

"Locked you up!" said Emily, with displeasure "Why do you permit Ludovico to lock you up?"

"Holy Saints!" exclaimed Annette "how can I help it! If he will lock the door, ma'amselle, and take away the key, how am I to get out, unless I jump through the window? But that I should not mind so much, if the casements here were not all so high; one can hardly scramble up to them on the inside, and one should break one's neck, I suppose, going down on the outside. But you know, I dare say, ma'am, what a hurly burly the castle was in last night; you must have heard some of the uproar."

"What, were they disputing, then?" said Emily.

"No, ma'amselle, nor fighting, but almost as good, for I believe there was not one of the Signors sober; and what is more, not one of those fine ladies sober, either. I thought, when I saw them first, that all those fine silks and fine veils — why, ma'amselle, their veils were worked with silver! And fine trimmings — boded no good — I guessed what they were!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Emily, "what will become of me!"

"Aye, ma'am, Ludovico said much the same thing of me. 'Good God!' said he, 'Annette, what is to become of you, if you are to go running about the castle among all these drunken Signors?'

"'O!' Aays I 'for that matter, I only want to go to my young lady's chamber, and I have only to go, you know, along the vaulted passage and across the great hall and up the marble staircase and along the north gallery and through the west wing of the castle and I am in the corridor in a minute.' 'Are you so?' Says he,'and what is to become of you, if you meet any of those noble cavaliers in the way?' 'Well' says I 'if you think there is danger, then, go with me, and guard me; I am never afraid when you are by.' 'What!' says he, 'when I am scarcely recovered of one wound, shall I put myself in the way of getting another? for if any of the cavaliers meet you, they will fall a-fighting with me directly. No, no,' says he, 'I will cut the way shorter, than through the vaulted passage and up the marble staircase, and along the north gallery and through the west wing of the castle, for you shall stay here, Annette; you shall not go out of this room, tonight.' So, with that I says —"

"Well, well," said Emily, impatiently, and anxious to enquire on another subject — "so he locked you up?"

"Yes, he did indeed, ma'amselle, notwithstanding all I could say to the contrary; and Caterina and I and he stayed there all night. And in a few minutes after I was not so vexed, for there came Signor Verezzi roaring along the passage, like a mad bull, and he mistook Ludovico's hall, for old Carlo's; so he tried to burst open the door, and called out for more wine, for that he had drunk all the flasks dry, and was dying of thirst. So we were all as still as night, that he might suppose there was nobody in the room; but the Signor was as cunning as the best of us, and kept calling out at the door. 'Come forth, my ancient hero!' said he 'here is no enemy at the gate, that you need hide yourself: come forth, my valorous Signor Steward!' Just then old Carlo opened his door, and he came with a flask in his hand; for, as soon as the Signor saw him, he was as tame as could be, and followed him away as naturally as a dog does a butcher with a piece of meat in his basket. All this I saw through the keyhole. 'Well, Annette,' said Ludovico, jeeringly 'shall I let you out now?' 'O no' says I, 'I would not— ' "

"I have some questions to ask you on another subject" interrupted Emily, quite wearied by this story. "Do you know whether there are any prisoners in the castle, and whether they are confined at this end of the edifice?"

"I was not in the way, ma'amselle" replied Annette, "when the first party came in from the mountains, and the last party is not come back yet, so I don't know, whether there are any prisoners; but it is expected back tonight, or tomorrow, and I shall know then, perhaps."

Emily enquired if she had ever heard the servants talk of prisoners.

"Ah ma'amselle!" said Annette archly "now I dare say you are thinking of Monsieur Valancourt, and that he may have come among the armies, which, they say, are come from our country, to fight against this state, and that he has met with some of *our* people, and is taken captive. O Lord! how glad I should be, if it was so!"

"Would you, indeed, be glad?" said Emily, in a tone of mournful reproach.

"To be sure I should, ma'am" replied Annette "and would not you be glad too, to see Signor Valancourt? I don't know any chevalier I like better, I have a very great regard for the Signor, truly."

"Your regard for him cannot be doubted," said Emily, "since you wish to see him a prisoner."

"Why no, ma'amselle, not a prisoner either; but one must be glad to see him, you know. And it was only the other night I dreamt — I dreamt I saw him drive into the castle yard all in a coach and six, and dressed out, with a laced coat and a sword, like a lord as he is."

Emily could not forbear smiling at Annette's ideas of Valancourt, and repeated her enquiry, whether she had heard the servants talk of prisoners.

"No, ma'amselle" replied she "never; and lately they have done nothing but talk of the apparition, that has been walking about of a night on the ramparts, and that frightened the sentinels into fits. It came among them like a flash of fire, they say, and they all fell down in a row, till they came to themselves again; and then it was gone, and nothing to be seen but the old castle walls; so they helped one another up again as fast as they could. You would not believe, ma'amselle, though I showed you the very cannon, where it used to appear."

"And are you, indeed, so simple, Annette" said Emily, smiling at this curious exaggeration of the circumstances she had witnessed, "as to credit these stories?"

"Credit them, ma'amselle! Why all the world could not persuade me out of them. Roberto and Sebastian and half a dozen more of them went into fits! To be sure, there was no occasion for that; I said, myself, there was no need of that, for, says I, when the enemy comes, what a pretty figure they will cut, if they are to fall down in fits, all of a row! The enemy won't be so civil, perhaps, as to walk off, like the ghost, and leave them to help one another up, but will fall to, cutting and slashing, till he makes them all rise up dead men. No, no, says I, there is reason in all things: though I might have fallen down in a fit that was no rule for them, being, because it is no business of mine to look gruff, and fight battles."

Emily endeavoured to correct the superstitious weakness of Annette, though she could not entirely subdue her own; to which the latter only replied, "Nay, ma'amselle, you will believe nothing; you are almost as bad as the Signor himself, who was in a great passion when they told of what had happened, and swore that the first man, who repeated such nonsense, should be thrown into the dungeon under the east turret. This was a hard punishment too, for only talking nonsense, as he called it, but I dare say he had other reasons for calling it so, than you have, ma'am."

Emily looked displeased, and made no reply. As she mused upon the recollected appearance, which had lately so much alarmed her, and considered the circumstances of the figure having stationed itself opposite to her casement, she was for a moment inclined to believe it was Valancourt, whom she had seen. Yet, if it was he, why did he not speak to her, when he had the opportunity of doing so — and, if he was a prisoner in the castle, and he could be here in no other character, how could he obtain the means of walking abroad on the rampart? Thus she was utterly unable to decide, whether the musician and the form she had observed, were the same, or, if they were, whether this was Valancourt. She, however, desired that Annette would endeavour to learn whether any prisoners were in the castle, and also their names.

"O dear, ma'amselle!" said Annette "I forget to tell you what you bade me ask about, the ladies, as they call themselves, who are lately come to Udolpho. Why that Signora Livona, that the Signor brought to see my late lady at Venice, is his mistress now, and was little better then, I dare say. And Ludovico says (but pray be secret, ma'am) that his *Excellenza* introduced her only to impose upon the world, that had begun to make free with her character. So when people saw my lady notice her, they thought what they had heard must be scandal. The other two are the mistresses of Signor Verezzi and Signor Bertolini; and Signor Montoni invited them all to the castle; and so, yesterday, he gave a great entertainment; and there they were, all drinking Tuscany wine and all sorts, and laughing and singing, till they made the castle ring again. But I thought they were dismal sounds, so soon after my poor lady's death too; and they brought to my mind what she would have thought, if she had heard them — but she cannot hear them now, poor soul! said I."

Emily turned away to conceal her emotion, and then desired Annette to go, and make enquiry, concerning the prisoners, that might be in the castle, but conjured her to do it with caution, and on no account to mention her name, or that of Monsieur Valancourt.

"Now I think of it, ma'amselle," said Annette, "I do believe there are prisoners, for I overheard one of the Signor's men, yesterday, in the servants hall, talking something about ransoms, and saying what a fine thing it was for his *Excellenza* to catch up men, and they were as good booty as any other, because of the ransoms. And the other man was grumbling, and saying it was fine enough for the Signor, but none so fine for his soldiers, because, said he, we don't go shares there."

This information heightened Emily's impatience to know more, and Annette immediately departed on her enquiry.

The late resolution of Emily to resign her estates to Montoni, now gave way to new considerations; the possibility, that Valancourt was near her, revived her fortitude, and she determined to brave the threatened vengeance, at least, till she could be assured whether he was really in the castle. She was in this temper of mind, when she received a message from Montoni, requiring her

attendance in the cedar parlour, which she obeyed with trembling, and, on her way thither, endeavoured to animate her fortitude with the idea of Valancourt.

Montoni was alone. “I sent for you” said he “to give you another opportunity of retracting your late mistaken assertions concerning the Languedoc estates. I will condescend to advise, where I may command. — If you are really deluded by an opinion, that you have any right to these estates, at least, do not persist in the error — an error, which you may perceive, too late, has been fatal to you. Dare my resentment no further, but sign the papers.”

“If I have no right in these estates, sir” said Emily “of what service can it be to you, that I should sign any papers, concerning them? If the lands are yours by law, you certainly may possess them, without my interference, or my consent.”

“I will have no more argument,” said Montoni, with a look that made her tremble. “What had I but trouble to expect, when I condescended to reason with a baby! But I will be trifled with no longer: let the recollection of your aunt’s sufferings, in consequence of her folly and obstinacy, teach you a lesson. — Sign the papers.”

Emily’s resolution was for a moment awed:— she shrunk at the recollections he revived, and from the vengeance he threatened; but then, the image of Valancourt, who so long had loved her, and who was now, perhaps, so near her, came to her heart, and, together with the strong feelings of indignation, with which she had always, from her infancy, regarded an act of injustice, inspired her with a noble, though imprudent, courage.

“Sign the papers,” said Montoni, more impatiently than before.

“Never, sir” replied Emily; “that request would have proved to me the injustice of your claim, had I even been ignorant of my right.”

Montoni turned pale with anger, while his quivering lip and lurking eye made her almost repent the boldness of her speech.

“Then all my vengeance falls upon you” he exclaimed, with a horrible oath. “And think not it shall be delayed. Neither the estates in Languedoc, nor Gascony, shall be yours; you have dared to question my right — now dare to question my power. I have a punishment which you think not of; it is terrible! This night — this very night —”

“This night!” repeated another voice.

Montoni paused, and turned half round, but, seeming to recollect himself, he proceeded in a lower tone.

“You have lately seen one terrible example of obstinacy and folly; yet this, it appears, has not been sufficient to deter you. — I could tell you of others — I could make you tremble at the bare recital.”

He was interrupted by a groan, which seemed to rise from underneath the chamber they were in; and, as he threw a glance round it, impatience and rage flashed from his eyes, yet something like a shade of fear passed over his countenance. Emily sat down in a chair, near the door, for the various emotions she had suffered, now almost overcame her; but Montoni paused scarcely an instant, and, commanding his features, resumed his discourse in a lower, yet sterner voice.

“I say, I could give you other instances of my power and of my character, which it seems you do not understand, or you would not defy me. — I could tell you, that, when once my resolution is taken — but I am talking to a baby. Let me, however, repeat, that terrible as are the examples I could recite, the recital could not now benefit you; for, though your repentance would put an immediate end to opposition, it would not now appease my indignation. — I will have vengeance as well as justice.”

Another groan filled the pause which Montoni made.

“Leave the room instantly!” said he, seeming not to notice this strange occurrence. Without power to implore his pity, she rose to go, but found that she could not support herself; awe and terror overcame her, and she sunk again into the chair.

“Quit my presence!” cried Montoni. “This affectation of fear ill becomes the heroine who has just dared to brave my indignation.”

“Did you hear nothing, Signor?” said Emily trembling, and still unable to leave the room.

“I heard my own voice,” rejoined Montoni, sternly.

“And nothing else?” said Emily, speaking with difficulty. — “There again! Do you hear nothing now?”

“Obey my order” repeated Montoni. “And for these fool’s tricks — I will soon discover by whom they are practised.”

Emily again rose, and exerted herself to the utmost to leave the room, while Montoni followed her; but, instead of calling aloud to his servants to search the chamber, as he had formerly done on a similar occurrence, passed to the ramparts.

As, in her way to the corridor, she rested for a moment at an open casement, Emily saw a party of Montoni’s troops winding down a distant mountain, whom she noticed no further than as they brought to her mind the wretched prisoners

they were, perhaps, bringing to the castle. At length, having reached her apartment, she threw herself upon the couch, overcome with the new horrors of her situation. Her thoughts lost in tumult and perplexity, she could neither repent of, nor approve, her late conduct; she could only remember, that she was in the power of a man, who had no principle of action — but his will; and the astonishment and terrors of superstition, which had, for a moment, so strongly assailed her, now yielded to those of reason.

She was, at length, roused from the reverie which engaged her, by a confusion of distant voices, and a clattering of hoofs, that seemed to come, on the wind, from the courts. A sudden hope, that some good was approaching, seized her mind, till she remembered the troops she had observed from the casement, and concluded this to be the party, which Annette had said were expected at Udolpho.

Soon after, she heard voices faintly from the halls, and the noise of horses' feet sunk away in the wind; silence ensued. Emily listened anxiously for Annette's step in the corridor, but a pause of total stillness continued, till again the castle seemed to be all tumult and confusion. She heard the echoes of many footsteps, passing to and fro in the halls and avenues below, and then busy tongues were loud on the rampart. Having hurried to her casement, she perceived Montoni, with some of his officers, leaning on the walls, and pointing from them; while several soldiers were employed at the further end of the rampart about some cannon; and she continued to observe them, careless of the passing time.

Annette at length appeared, but brought no intelligence of Valancourt. "For, ma'amselle" said she "all the people pretend to know nothing about any prisoners. But here is a fine piece of business! The rest of the party are just arrived, ma'am; they came scampering in, as if they would have broken their necks; one scarcely knew whether the man, or his horse would get within the gates first. And they have brought word — and such news! they have brought word, that a party of the enemy, as they call them, are coming towards the castle; so we shall have all the officers of justice, I suppose, besieging it! All those terrible looking fellows one used to see at Venice."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Emily fervently "there is yet a hope left for me, then!"

"What mean you, ma'amselle? Do you wish to fall into the hands of those sad looking men! Why I used to shudder as I passed them, and should have guessed what they were, if Ludovico had not told me."

"We cannot be in worse hands than at present," replied Emily, unguardedly; "but what reason have you to suppose these are officers of justice?"

"Why *our* people, ma'am, are all in such a fright, and a fuss; and I don't know anything but the fear of justice, that could make them so. I used to think nothing on earth could fluster them, unless, indeed, it was a ghost, or so; but now, some of them are for hiding down in the vaults under the castle; but you

must not tell the Signor this, ma'amselle, and I overheard two of them talking — Holy Mother! what makes you look so sad, ma'amselle? You don't hear what I say!"

"Yes, I do, Annette; pray proceed."

"Well, ma'amselle, all the castle is in such hurly burly. Some of the men are loading the cannon, and some are examining the great gates, and the walls all round, and are hammering and patching up, just as if all those repairs had never been made, that were so long about. But what is to become of me and you, ma'amselle, and Ludovico? O! when I hear the sound of the cannon, I shall die with fright. If I could but catch the great gate open for one minute, I would be even with it for shutting me within these walls so long! — It should never see me again."

Emily caught the latter words of Annette. "O! if you could find it open, but for one moment!" she exclaimed, "my peace might yet be saved!" The heavy groan she uttered, and the wildness of her look, terrified Annette, still more than her words; who entreated Emily to explain the meaning of them, to whom it suddenly occurred, that Ludovico might be of some service, if there should be a possibility of escape, and who repeated the substance of what had passed between Montoni and herself, but conjured her to mention this to no person except to Ludovico. "It may, perhaps, be in his power," she added, "to effect our escape. Go to him, Annette, tell him what I have to apprehend, and what I have already suffered; but entreat him to be secret, and to lose no time in attempting to release us. If he is willing to undertake this he shall be amply rewarded. I cannot speak with him myself, for we might be observed, and then effectual care would be taken to prevent our flight. But be quick, Annette, and, above all, be discreet — I will await your return in this apartment."

The girl, whose honest heart had been much affected by the recital, was now as eager to obey, as Emily was to employ her, and she immediately quitted the room.

Emily's surprise increased, as she reflected upon Annette's intelligence. "Alas!" said she, "what can the officers of justice do against an armed castle? these cannot be such." Upon further consideration, however, she concluded, that, Montoni's bands having plundered the country round, the inhabitants had taken arms, and were coming with the officers of police and a party of soldiers, to force their way into the castle. "But they know not" thought she "its strength, or the armed numbers within it. Alas! except from flight, I have nothing to hope!"

Montoni, though not precisely what Emily apprehended him to be — a captain of banditti — had employed his troops in enterprises not less daring, or less atrocious, than such a character would have undertaken. They had not only pillaged, whenever opportunity offered, the helpless traveller, but had attacked, and plundered the villas of several persons, which, being situated among the solitary recesses of the mountains, were totally unprepared for resistance. In these expeditions the commanders of the party did not appear,

and the men, partly disguised, had sometimes been mistaken for common robbers, and, at others, for bands of the foreign enemy, who, at that period, invaded the country. But, though they had already pillaged several mansions, and brought home considerable treasures, they had ventured to approach only one castle, in the attack of which they were assisted by other troops of their own order; from this, however, they were vigorously repulsed, and pursued by some of the foreign enemy, who were in league with the besieged. Montoni's troops fled precipitately towards Udolpho, but were so closely tracked over the mountains, that, when they reached one of the heights in the neighbourhood of the castle, and looked back upon the road, they perceived the enemy winding among the cliffs below, and at not more than a league distant. Upon this discovery, they hastened forward with increased speed, to prepare Montoni for the enemy; and it was their arrival, which had thrown the castle into such confusion and tumult.

As Emily awaited anxiously some information from below, she now saw from her casements a body of troops pour over the neighbouring heights; and, though Annette had been gone a very short time, and had a difficult and dangerous business to accomplish, her impatience for intelligence became painful: she listened; opened her door; and often went out upon the corridor to meet her.

At length, she heard a footstep approach her chamber; and, on opening the door, saw, not Annette, but old Carlo! New fears rushed upon her mind. He said he came from the Signor, who had ordered him to inform her, that she must be ready to depart from Udolpho immediately, for that the castle was about to be besieged; and that mules were preparing to convey her, with her guides, to a place of safety.

"Of safety!" exclaimed Emily, thoughtlessly; "has, then, the Signor so much consideration for me?"

Carlo looked upon the ground, and made no reply. A thousand opposite emotions agitated Emily, successively, as she listened to old Carlo; those of joy, grief, distrust and apprehension, appeared, and vanished from her mind, with the quickness of lightning. One moment, it seemed impossible, that Montoni could take this measure merely for her preservation; and so very strange was his sending her from the castle at all, that she could attribute it only to the design of carrying into execution the new scheme of vengeance, with which he had menaced her. In the next instant, it appeared so desirable to quit the castle, under any circumstances, that she could not but rejoice in the prospect, believing that change must be for the better, till she remembered the probability of Valancourt being detained in it, when sorrow and regret usurped her mind, and she wished, much more fervently than she had yet done, that it might not be his voice which she had heard.

Carlo having reminded her, that she had no time to lose, for that the enemy were within sight of the castle, Emily entreated him to inform her whither she was to go; and, after some hesitation, he said he had received no orders to tell;

but, on her repeating the question, replied, that he believed she was to be carried into Tuscany.

"To Tuscany!" exclaimed Emily — "and why thither?"

Carlo answered, that he knew nothing further, than that she was to be lodged in a cottage on the borders of Tuscany, at the feet of the Apennines — "Not a day's journey distant" said he.

Emily now dismissed him; and, with trembling hands, prepared the small package, that she meant to take with her; while she was employed about which Annette returned.

"O ma'amselle!" said she "nothing can be done! Ludovico says the new porter is more watchful even than Barnardine was, and we might as well throw ourselves in the way of a dragon, as in his. Ludovico is almost as broken hearted as you are, ma'am, on my account, he says, and I am sure I shall never live to hear the cannon fire twice!"

She now began to weep, but revived upon hearing of what had just occurred, and entreated Emily to take her with her.

"That I will do most willingly" replied Emily "if Signor Montoni permits it;" to which Annette made no reply, but ran out of the room, and immediately sought Montoni, who was on the terrace, surrounded by his officers, where she began her petition. He sharply bade her go into the castle, and absolutely refused her request. Annette, however, not only pleaded for herself, but for Ludovico; and Montoni had ordered some of his men to take her from his presence, before she would retire.

In an agony of disappointment, she returned to Emily, who foreboded little good towards herself, from this refusal to Annette, and who, soon after, received a summons to repair to the great court, where the mules, with her guides, were in waiting. Emily here tried in vain to sooth the weeping Annette, who persisted in saying, that she should never see her dear young lady again; a fear, which her mistress secretly thought too well justified, but which she endeavoured to restrain, while, with apparent composure, she bade this affectionate servant farewell. Annette, however, followed to the courts, which were now thronged with people, busy in preparation for the enemy; and, having seen her mount her mule and depart, with her attendants, through the portal, turned into the castle and wept again.

Emily, meanwhile, as she looked back upon the gloomy courts of the castle, no longer silent as when she had first entered them, but resounding with the noise of preparation for their defence, as well as crowded with soldiers and workmen, hurrying to and fro; and, when she passed once more under the huge portcullis, which had formerly struck her with terror and dismay, and, looking round, saw no walls to confine her steps — felt, in spite of anticipation, the sudden joy of a prisoner, who unexpectedly finds himself at liberty. This

emotion would not suffer her now to look impartially on the dangers that awaited her without; on mountains infested by hostile parties, who seized every opportunity for plunder; and on a journey commended under the guidance of men, whose countenances certainly did not speak favourably of their dispositions. In the present moments, she could only rejoice, that she was liberated from those walls, which she had entered with such dismal forebodings; and, remembering the superstitious presentiment, which had then seized her, she could now smile at the impression it had made upon her mind.

As she gazed, with these emotions, upon the turrets of the castle, rising high over the woods, among which she wound, the stranger, whom she believed to be confined there, returned to her remembrance, and anxiety and apprehension, lest he should be Valancourt, again passed like a cloud upon her joy. She recollected every circumstance, concerning this unknown person, since the night, when she had first heard him play the song of her native province; — circumstances, which she had so often recollected, and compared before, without extracting from them anything like conviction, and which still only prompted her to believe, that Valancourt was a prisoner at Udolpho. It was possible, however, that the men, who were her conductors, might afford her information, on this subject; but, fearing to question them immediately, lest they should be unwilling to discover any circumstance to her in the presence of each other, she watched for an opportunity of speaking with them separately.

Soon after, a trumpet echoed faintly from a distance; the guides stopped, and looked toward the quarter whence it came, but the thick woods, which surrounded them, excluding all view of the country beyond, one of the men rode on to the point of an eminence, that afforded a more extensive prospect, to observe how near the enemy, whose trumpet he guessed this to be, were advanced; the other, meanwhile, remained with Emily, and to him she put some questions, concerning the stranger at Udolpho. Ugo, for this was his name, said, that there were several prisoners in the castle, but he neither recollected their persons, nor the precise time of their arrival, and could therefore give her no information. There was a surliness in his manner, as he spoke, that made it probable he would not have satisfied her enquiries, even if he could have done so.

Having asked him what prisoners had been taken, about the time, as nearly as she could remember, when she had first heard the music, “All that week” said Ugo “I was out with a party, upon the mountains, and knew nothing of what was doing at the castle. We had enough upon our hands, we had warm work of it.”

Bertrand, the other man, being now returned, Emily enquired no further, and, when he had related to his companion what he had seen, they travelled on in deep silence; while Emily often caught, between the opening woods, partial glimpses of the castle above — the west towers, whose battlements were now crowded with archers, and the ramparts below, where soldiers were seen hurrying along, or busy upon the walls, preparing the cannon.

Having emerged from the woods, they wound along the valley in an opposite direction to that, from whence the enemy were approaching. Emily now had a full view of Udolpho, with its grey walls, towers and terraces, high over-topping the precipices and the dark woods, and glittering partially with the arms of the *Condottieri*, as the sun's rays, streaming through an autumnal cloud, glanced upon a part of the edifice, whose remaining features stood in darkened majesty. She continued to gaze, through her tears, upon walls that, perhaps, confined Valancourt, and which now, as the cloud floated away, were lighted up with sudden splendour, and then, as suddenly were shrouded in gloom; while the passing gleam fell on the wood-tops below, and heightened the first tints of autumn, that had begun to steal upon the foliage. The winding mountains, at length, shut Udolpho from her view, and she turned, with mournful reluctance, to other objects. The melancholy sighing of the wind among the pines, that waved high over the steeps, and the distant thunder of a torrent assisted her musings, and conspired with the wild scenery around, to diffuse over her mind emotions solemn, yet not unpleasing, but which were soon interrupted by the distant roar of cannon, echoing among the mountains. The sounds rolled along the wind, and were repeated in faint and fainter reverberation, till they sunk in sullen murmurs. This was a signal, that the enemy had reached the castle, and fear for Valancourt again tormented Emily. She turned her anxious eyes towards that part of the country, where the edifice stood, but the intervening heights concealed it from her view; still, however, she saw the tall head of a mountain, which immediately fronted her late chamber, and on this she fixed her gaze, as if it could have told her of all that was passing in the scene it overlooked. The guides twice reminded her, that she was losing time and that they had far to go, before she could turn from this interesting object, and, even when she again moved onward, she often sent a look back, till only its blue point, brightening in a gleam of sunshine, appeared peeping over other mountains.

The sound of the cannon affected Ugo, as the blast of the trumpet does the war horse; it called forth all the fire of his nature; he was impatient to be in the midst of the fight, and uttered frequent execrations against Montoni for having sent him to a distance. The feelings of his comrade seemed to be very opposite, and adapted rather to the cruelties, than to the dangers of war.

Emily asked frequent questions, concerning the place of her destination, but could only learn, that she was going to a cottage in Tuscany; and, whenever she mentioned the subject, she fancied she perceived, in the countenances of these men, an expression of malice and cunning, that alarmed her.

It was afternoon, when they had left the castle. During several hours, they travelled through regions of profound solitude, where no bleat of sheep, or bark of watchdog, broke on silence, and they were now too far off to hear even the faint thunder of the cannon. Towards evening, they wound down precipices, black with forests of cypress, pine and cedar, into a glen so savage and secluded, that, if Solitude ever had local habitation, this might have been "her place of dearest residence." To Emily it appeared a spot exactly suited for the retreat of banditti, and, in her imagination, she already saw them lurking under

the brow of some projecting rock, whence their shadows, lengthened by the setting sun, stretched across the road, and warned the traveller of his danger. She shuddered at the idea, and, looking at her conductors, to observe whether they were armed, thought she saw in them the banditti she dreaded!

It was in this glen, that they proposed to alight "For" said Ugo "night will come on presently, and then the wolves will make it dangerous to stop." This was a new subject of alarm to Emily, but inferior to what she suffered from the thought of being left in these wilds, at midnight, with two such men as her present conductors. Dark and dreadful hints of what might be Montoni's purpose in sending her hither, came to her mind. She endeavoured to dissuade the men from stopping, and enquired, with anxiety, how far they had yet to go.

"Many leagues yet" replied Bertrand. "As for you, Signora, you may do as you please about eating, but for us, we will make a hearty supper, while we can. We shall have need of it, I warrant, before we finish our journey. The sun's going down apace; let us alight under that rock, yonder."

His comrade assented, and, turning the mules out of the road, they advanced towards a cliff, overhung with cedars, Emily following in trembling silence. They lifted her from her mule, and, having seated themselves on the grass, at the foot of the rocks, drew some homely fare from a wallet, of which Emily tried to eat a little, the better to disguise her apprehensions.

The sun was now sunk behind the high mountains in the west, upon which a purple haze began to spread, and the gloom of twilight to draw over the surrounding objects. To the low and sullen murmur of the breeze, passing among the woods, she no longer listened with any degree of pleasure, for it conspired with the wildness of the scene and the evening hour, to depress her spirits.

Suspense had so much increased her anxiety, as to the prisoner at Udolpho, that, finding it impracticable to speak alone with Bertrand, on that subject, she renewed her questions in the presence of Ugo; but he either was, or pretended to be entirely ignorant, concerning the stranger. When he had dismissed the question, he talked with Ugo on some subject, which led to the mention of Signor Orsino and of the affair that had banished him from Venice; respecting which Emily had ventured to ask a few questions. Ugo appeared to be well acquainted with the circumstances of that tragical event, and related some minute particulars, that both shocked and surprised her; for it appeared very extraordinary how such particulars could be known to any, but to persons, present when the assassination was committed.

"He was of rank" said Bertrand "or the State would not have troubled itself to enquire after his assassins. The Signor has been lucky hitherto; this is not the first affair of the kind he has had upon his hands; and to be sure, when a gentleman has no other way of getting redress — why he must take this."

"Aye" said Ugo "and why is not this as good as another? This is the way to have justice done at once, without more ado. If you go to law, you must stay till the judges please, and may lose your cause, at last. Why the best way, then, is to make sure of your right, while you can, and execute justice yourself."

"Yes, yes" rejoined Bertrand, "if you wait till justice is done you — you may stay long enough. Why if I want a friend of mine properly served, how am I to get my revenge? Ten to one they will tell me he is in the right, and I am in the wrong. Or, if a fellow has got possession of property, which I think ought to be mine, why I may wait, till I starve, perhaps, before the law will give it me, and then, after all, the judge may say — the estate is his. What is to be done then? — Why the case is plain enough, I must take it at last."

Emily's horror at this conversation was heightened by a suspicion, that the latter part of it was pointed against herself, and that these men had been commissioned by Montoni to execute a similar kind of *justice*, in his cause.

"But I was speaking of Signor Orsino" resumed Bertrand "he is one of those, who love to do justice at once. I remember, about ten years ago, the Signor had a quarrel with a cavaliero of Milan. The story was told me then, and it is still fresh in my head. They quarrelled about a lady, that the Signor liked, and she was perverse enough to prefer the gentleman of Milan, and even carried her whim so far as to marry him. This provoked the Signor, as well it might, for he had tried to talk reason to her a long while, and used to send people to serenade her, under her windows, of a night; and used to make verses about her, and would swear she was the handsomest lady in Milan — But all would not do — nothing would bring her to reason; and, as I said, she went so far at last, as to marry this other cavaliero. This made the Signor wrath, with a vengeance; he resolved to be even with her though, and he watched his opportunity, and did not wait long, for, soon after the marriage, they set out for Padua, nothing doubting, I warrant, of what was preparing for them. The cavaliero thought, to be sure, he was to be called to no account, but was to go off triumphant; but he was soon made to know another sort of story."

"What then, the lady had promised to have Signor Orsino?" said Ugo.

"Promised! No" replied Bertrand "she had not wit enough even to tell him she liked him, as I heard, but the contrary, for she used to say, from the first, she never meant to have him. And this was what provoked the Signor, so, and with good reason, for, who likes to be told that he is disagreeable? and this was saying as good. It was enough to tell him this; she need not have gone, and married another."

"What, she married, then, on purpose to plague the Signor?" said Ugo.

"I don't know as for that" replied Bertrand "they said, indeed, that she had had a regard for the other gentleman a great while; but that is nothing to the purpose, she should not have married him, and then the Signor would not have been so much provoked. She might have expected what was to follow; it was

not to be supposed he would bear her ill usage tamely, and she might thank herself for what happened. But, as I said, they set out for Padua, she and her husband, and the road lay over some barren mountains like these. This suited the Signor's purpose well. He watched the time of their departure, and sent his men after them, with directions what to do. They kept their distance, till they saw their opportunity, and this did not happen, till the second day's journey, when, the gentleman having sent his servants forward to the next town, maybe to have horses in readiness, the Signor's men quickened their pace, and overtook the carriage, in a hollow, between two mountains, where the woods prevented the servants from seeing what passed, though they were then not far off. When we came up, we fired our tromboni, but missed."

Emily turned pale, at these words, and then hoped she had mistaken them; while Bertrand proceeded:

"The gentleman fired again, but he was soon made to alight, and it was as he turned to call his people, that he was struck. It was the most dexterous feat you ever saw — he was struck in the back with three stillettos at once. He fell, and was dispatched in a minute; but the lady escaped, for the servants had heard the firing, and came up before she could be taken care of. 'Bertrand' said the Signor, when his men returned —"

"Bertrand!" exclaimed Emily, pale with horror, on whom not a syllable of this narrative had been lost.

"Bertrand, did I say?" rejoined the man with some confusion — "No, Giovanni. But I have forgot where I was; — 'Bertrand,' said the Signor —

"Bertrand, again!" said Emily in a faltering voice "Why do you repeat that name?"

Bertrand swore. "What signifies it" he proceeded "what the man was called — Bertrand, or Giovanni — or Roberto? it's all one for that. You have put me out twice with that—question. Bertrand, or Giovanni — or what you will — 'Bertrand,' said the Signor, 'if your comrades had done their duty, as well as you, I should not have lost the lady. Go, my honest fellow, and be happy with this.' He gave him a purse of gold — and little enough too, considering the service he had done him."

"Aye, aye" said Ugo "little enough — little enough."

Emily now breathed with difficulty, and could scarcely support herself. When first she saw these men, their appearance and their connection with Montoni had been sufficient to impress her with distrust; but now, when one of them had betrayed himself to be a murderer, and she saw herself, at the approach of night, under his guidance, among wild and solitary mountains, and going she scarcely knew whither, the most agonizing terror seized her, which was the less supportable from the necessity she found herself under of concealing all symptoms of it from her companions. Reflecting on the character and the

menaces of Montoni, it appeared not improbable, that he had delivered her to them, for the purpose of having her murdered, and of thus securing to himself, without further opposition, or delay, the estates, for which he had so long and so desperately contended. Yet, if this was his design, there appeared no necessity for sending her to such a distance from the castle; for, if any dread of discovery had made him unwilling to perpetrate the deed there, a much nearer place might have sufficed for the purpose of concealment. These considerations, however, did not immediately occur to Emily, with whom so many circumstances conspired to rouse terror, that she had no power to oppose it, or to enquire coolly into its grounds; and, if she had done so, still there were many appearances which would too well have justified her most terrible apprehensions. She did not now dare to speak to her conductors, at the sound of whose voices she trembled; and when, now and then, she stole a glance at them, their countenances, seen imperfectly through the gloom of evening, served to confirm her fears.

The sun had now been set some time; heavy clouds, whose lower skirts were tinged with sulphureous crimson, lingered in the west, and threw a reddish tint upon the pine forests, which sent forth a solemn sound, as the breeze rolled over them. The hollow moan struck upon Emily's heart, and served to render more gloomy and terrific every object around her — the mountains, shaded in twilight — the gleaming torrent, hoarsely roaring — the black forests, and the deep glen, broken into rocky recesses, high overshadowed by cypress and sycamore and winding into long obscurity. To this glen, Emily, as she sent forth her anxious eye, thought there was no end; no hamlet, or even cottage, was seen, and still no distant bark of watchdog, or even faint, far off halloo came on the wind. In a tremulous voice, she now ventured to remind the guides, that it was growing late, and to ask again how far they had to go: but they were too much occupied by their own discourse to attend to her question, which she forbore to repeat, lest it should provoke a surly answer. Having, however, soon after, finished their supper, the men collected the fragments into their wallet, and proceeded along this winding glen, in gloomy silence; while Emily again mused upon her own situation, and concerning the motives of Montoni for involving her in it. That it was for some evil purpose towards herself, she could not doubt; and it seemed, that, if he did not intend to destroy her, with a view of immediately seizing her estates, he meant to reserve her a while in concealment, for some more terrible design, for one that might equally gratify his avarice and still more his deep revenge. At this moment, remembering Signor Brochio and his behaviour in the corridor, a few preceding nights, the latter supposition, horrible as it was, strengthened in her belief. Yet, why remove her from the castle, where deeds of darkness had, she feared, been often executed with secrecy? — from chambers, perhaps

With many a foul, and midnight murder stain'd.

The dread of what she might be going to encounter was now so excessive, that it sometimes threatened her senses; and, often as she went, she thought of her late father and of all he would have suffered, could he have foreseen the strange and dreadful events of her future life; and how anxiously he would have

avoided that fatal confidence, which committed his daughter to the care of a woman so weak as was Madame Montoni. So romantic and improbable, indeed, did her present situation appear to Emily herself, particularly when she compared it with the repose and beauty of her early days, that there were moments, when she could almost have believed herself the victim of frightful visions, glaring upon a disordered fancy.

Restrained by the presence of her guides from expressing her terrors, their acuteness was, at length, lost in gloomy despair. The dreadful view of what might await her hereafter rendered her almost indifferent to the surrounding dangers. She now looked, with little emotion, on the wild dingles, and the gloomy road and mountains, whose outlines were only distinguishable through the dusk; — objects, which but lately had affected her spirits so much, as to awaken horrid views of the future, and to tinge these with their own gloom.

It was now so nearly dark, that the travellers, who proceeded only by the slowest pace, could scarcely discern their way. The clouds, which seemed charged with thunder, passed slowly along the heavens, showing, at intervals, the trembling stars; while the groves of cypress and sycamore, that overhung the rocks, waved high in the breeze, as it swept over the glen, and then rushed among the distant woods. Emily shivered as it passed.

“Where is the torch?” said Ugo “It grows dark.”

“Not so dark yet” replied Bertrand “but we may find our way, and ’tis best not light the torch, before we can help, for it may betray us, if any straggling party of the enemy is abroad.”

Ugo muttered something, which Emily did not understand, and they proceeded in darkness, while she almost wished, that the enemy might discover them; for from change there was something to hope, since she could scarcely imagine any situation more dreadful than her present one.

As they moved slowly along, her attention was surprised by a thin tapering flame, that appeared, by fits, at the point of the pike, which Bertrand carried, resembling what she had observed on the lance of the sentinel, the night Madame Montoni died, and which he had said was an omen. The event immediately following it appeared to justify the assertion, and a superstitious impression had remained on Emily’s mind, which the present appearance confirmed. She thought it was an omen of her own fate, and watched it successively vanish and return, in gloomy silence, which was at length interrupted by Bertrand.

“Let us light the torch” said he “and get under shelter of the woods; — a storm is coming on — look at my lance.”

He held it forth, with the flame tapering at its point.

"Aye" said Ugo "you are not one of those, that believe in omens: we have left cowards at the castle, who would turn pale at such a sight. I have often seen it before a thunderstorm, it is an omen of that, and one is coming now, sure enough. The clouds flash fast already."

Emily was relieved by this conversation from some of the terrors of superstition, but those of reason increased, as, waiting while Ugo searched for a flint, to strike fire, she watched the pale lightning gleam over the woods they were about to enter, and illumine the harsh countenances of her companions. Ugo could not find a flint, and Bertrand became impatient, for the thunder sounded hollowly at a distance, and the lightning was more frequent. Sometimes, it revealed the nearer recesses of the woods, or, displaying some opening in their summits, illumined the ground beneath with partial splendour, the thick foliage of the trees preserving the surrounding scene in deep shadow.

At length, Ugo found a flint, and the torch was lighted. The men then dismounted, and, having assisted Emily, led the mules towards the woods, that skirted the glen, on the left, over broken ground, frequently interrupted with brushwood and wild plants, which she was often obliged to make a circuit to avoid.

She could not approach these woods, without experiencing keener sense of her danger. Their deep silence, except when the wind swept among their branches, and impenetrable glooms shown partially by the sudden flash, and then, by the red glare of the torch, which served only to make "darkness visible," were circumstances, that contributed to renew all her most terrible apprehensions; she thought, too, that, at this moment, the countenances of her conductors displayed more than their usual fierceness, mingled with a kind of lurking exultation, which they seemed endeavouring to disguise. To her affrighted fancy it occurred, that they were leading her into these woods to complete the will of Montoni by her murder. The horrid suggestion called a groan from her heart, which surprised her companions, who turned round quickly towards her, and she demanded why they led her thither, beseeching them to continue their way along the open glen, which she represented to be less dangerous than the woods, in a thunderstorm.

"No, no" said Bertrand "we know best where the danger lies. See how the clouds open over our heads. Besides, we can glide under cover of the woods with less hazard of being seen, should any of the enemy be wandering this way. By holy St. Peter and all the rest of them, I've as stout a heart as the best, as many a poor devil could tell, if he were alive again — but what can we do against numbers?"

"What are you whining about?" said Ugo contemptuously "who fears numbers! Let them come, though they were as many as the Signor's castle could hold; I would show the knaves what fighting is. For you — I would lay you quietly in a dry ditch, where you might peep out, and see me put the rogues to flight. — Who talks of fear!"

Bertrand replied, with a horrible oath, that he did not like such jesting, and a violent altercation ensued, which was, at length, silenced by the thunder, whose deep volley was heard afar, rolling onward till it burst over their heads in sounds, that seemed to shake the earth to its centre. The ruffians paused, and looked upon each other. Between the boles of the trees, the blue lightning flashed and quivered along the ground, while, as Emily looked under the boughs, the mountains beyond, frequently appeared to be clothed in livid flame. At this moment, perhaps, she felt less fear of the storm, than did either of her companions, for other terrors occupied her mind.

The men now rested under an enormous chesnut tree, and fixed their pikes in the ground, at some distance, on the iron points of which Emily repeatedly observed the lightning play, and then glide down them into the earth.

"I would we were well in the Signor's castle!" said Bertrand "I know not why he should send us on this business. Hark! how it rattles above, there! I could almost find in my heart to turn priest, and pray. Ugo, hast got a rosary?"

"No," replied Ugo, "I leave it to cowards like thee, to carry rosaries — I carry a sword."

"And much good may it do thee in fighting against the storm!" said Bertrand.

Another peal, which was reverberated in tremendous echoes among the mountains, silenced them for a moment. As it rolled away, Ugo proposed going on. "We are only losing time here" said he "for the thick boughs of the woods will shelter us as well as this chesnut tree."

They again led the mules forward, between the boles of the trees, and over pathless grass, that concealed their high knotted roots. The rising wind was now heard contending with the thunder, as it rushed furiously among the branches above, and brightened the red flame of the torch, which threw a stronger light forward among the woods, and showed their gloomy recesses to be suitable resorts for the wolves, of which Ugo had formerly spoken.

At length, the strength of the wind seemed to drive the storm before it, for the thunder rolled away into distance, and was only faintly heard. After travelling through the woods for nearly an hour, during which the elements seemed to have returned to repose, the travellers, gradually ascending from the glen, found themselves upon the open brow of a mountain, with a wide valley, extending in misty moonlight, at their feet, and above, the blue sky, trembling through the few thin clouds, that lingered after the storm, and were sinking slowly to the verge of the horizon.

Emily's spirits, now that she had quitted the woods, began to revive; for she considered, that, if these men had received an order to destroy her, they would probably have executed their barbarous purpose in the solitary wild, from whence they had just emerged, where the deed would have been shrouded from every human eye. Reassured by this reflection, and by the quiet demeanour of

her guides, Emily, as they proceeded silently, in a kind of sheep track, that wound along the skirts of the woods, which ascended on the right, could not survey the sleeping beauty of the vale, to which they were declining, without a momentary sensation of pleasure. It seemed varied with woods, pastures, and sloping grounds, and was screened to the north and the east by an amphitheatre of the Apennines, whose outline on the horizon was here broken into varied and elegant forms; to the west and the south, the landscape extended indistinctly into the lowlands of Tuscany.

"There is the sea yonder," said Bertrand, as if he had known that Emily was examining the twilight view, "yonder in the west, though we cannot see it."

Emily already perceived a change in the climate, from that of the wild and mountainous tract she had left; and, as she continued descending, the air became perfumed by the breath of a thousand nameless flowers among the grass, called forth by the late rain. So soothingly beautiful was the scene around her, and so strikingly contrasted to the gloomy grandeur of those, to which she had long been confined, and to the manners of the people, who moved among them, that she could almost have fancied herself again at La Vallée, and, wondering why Montoni had sent her hither, could scarcely believe, that he had selected so enchanting a spot for any cruel design. It was, however, probably not the spot, but the persons, who happened to inhabit it, and to whose care he could safely commit the execution of his plans, whatever they might be, that had determined his choice.

She now ventured again to enquire, whether they were near the place of their destination, and was answered by Ugo, that they had not far to go. "Only to the wood of chesnuts in the valley yonder" said he "there, by the brook, that sparkles with the moon; I wish I was once at rest there, with a flask of good wine, and a slice of Tuscany bacon."

Emily's spirits revived, when she heard, that the journey was so nearly concluded, and saw the wood of chesnuts in an open part of the vale, on the margin of the stream.

In a short time they reached the entrance of the wood, and perceived, between the twinkling leaves, a light, streaming from a distant cottage window. They proceeded along the edge of the brook to where the trees, crowding over it, excluded the moonbeams, but a long line of light, from the cottage above, was seen on its dark tremulous surface. Bertrand now stepped on first, and Emily heard him knock, and call loudly at the door. As she reached it, the small upper casement, where the light appeared, was unclosed by a man, who, having enquired what they wanted, immediately descended, let them into a neat rustic cot, and called up his wife to set refreshments before the travellers. As this man conversed, rather apart, with Bertrand, Emily anxiously surveyed him. He was a tall, but not robust, peasant, of a sallow complexion, and had a shrewd and cunning eye; his countenance was not of a character to win the ready confidence of youth, and there was nothing in his manner, that might conciliate a stranger.

Ugo called impatiently for supper, and in a tone as if he knew his authority here to be unquestionable. “I expected you an hour ago” said the peasant “for I have had Signor Montoni’s letter these three hours, and I and my wife had given you up, and gone to bed. How did you fare in the storm?”

“Ill enough” replied Ugo “ill enough and we are like to fare ill enough here, too, unless you will make more haste. Get us more wine, and let us see what you have to eat.”

The peasant placed before them all that his cottage afforded — ham, wine, figs, and grapes of such size and flavour, as Emily had seldom tasted.

After taking refreshment, she was shown by the peasant’s wife to her little bedchamber, where she asked some questions concerning Montoni, to which the woman, whose name was Dorina, gave reserved answers, pretending ignorance of his *Excellenza*’s intention in sending Emily hither, but acknowledging that her husband had been apprized of the circumstance. Perceiving that she could obtain no intelligence concerning her destination, Emily dismissed Dorina, and retired to repose; but all the busy scenes of her past and the anticipated ones of the future came to her anxious mind, and conspired with the sense of her new situation to banish sleep.