

CHAPTER IX

Thus on the chill Lapponian's dreary land,
 For many a long month lost in snow profound,
 When Sol from Cancer sends the seasons bland,
 And in their northern cave the storms hath bound;
 From silent mountains, straight, with startling sound,
 Torrents are hurl'd, green hills emerge, and lo,
 The trees with foliage, cliffs with flowers are crown'd;
 Pure rills through vales of verdure warbling go;
 And wonder, love, and joy, the peasant's heart o'erflow.

BEATTIE

Several of her succeeding days passed in suspense, for Ludovico could only learn from the soldiers, that there was a prisoner in the apartment, described to him by Emily, and that he was a Frenchman, whom they had taken in one of their skirmishes, with a party of his countrymen. During this interval, Emily escaped the persecutions of Bertolini, and Verezzi, by confining herself to her apartment; except that sometimes, in an evening, she ventured to walk in the adjoining corridor. Montoni appeared to respect his last promise, though he had profaned his first; for to his protection only could she attribute her present repose; and in this she was now so secure, that she did not wish to leave the castle, till she could obtain some certainty concerning Valancourt; for which she waited, indeed, without any sacrifice of her own comfort, since no circumstance had occurred to make her escape probable.

On the fourth day, Ludovico informed her, that he had hopes of being admitted to the presence of the prisoner; it being the turn of a soldier, with whom he had been for some time familiar, to attend him on the following night. He was not deceived in his hope; for, under pretence of carrying in a pitcher of water, he entered the prison, though, his prudence having prevented him from telling the sentinel the real motive of his visit, he was obliged to make his conference with the prisoner a very short one.

Emily awaited the result in her own apartment, Ludovico having promised to accompany Annette to the corridor, in the evening; where, after several hours impatiently counted, he arrived. Emily, having then uttered the name of Valancourt, could articulate no more, but hesitated in trembling expectation. "The Chevalier would not entrust me with his name, Signora" replied Ludovico; "but, when I just mentioned yours, he seemed overwhelmed with joy, though he was not so much surprised as I expected." "Does he then remember me?" she exclaimed.

"O! it is Mons. Valancourt," said Annette, and looked impatiently at Ludovico, who understood her look, and replied to Emily: "Yes, lady, the Chevalier does, indeed, remember you, and, I am sure, has a very great regard for you, and I made bold to say you had for him. He then enquired how you came to know he was in the castle, and whether you ordered me to speak to him. The first

question I could not answer, but the second I did; and then he went off into his ecstasies again. I was afraid his joy would have betrayed him to the sentinel at the door."

"But how does he look, Ludovico?" interrupted Emily: "is he not melancholy and ill with this long confinement?" —

"Why, as to melancholy, I saw no symptom of that, lady, while I was with him, for he seemed in the finest spirits I ever saw anybody in, in all my life. His countenance was all joy, and, if one may judge from that, he was very well; but I did not ask him."

"Did he send me no message?" said Emily.

"O yes, Signora, and something besides" replied Ludovico, who searched his pockets. "Surely, I have not lost it," added he. "The Chevalier said, he would have written, madam, if he had had pen and ink, and was going to have sent a very long message, when the sentinel entered the room, but not before he had give me this." Ludovico then drew forth a miniature from his bosom, which Emily received with a trembling hand, and perceived to be a portrait of herself — the very picture, which her mother had lost so strangely in the fishing house at La Vallée.

Tears of mingled joy and tenderness flowed to her eyes, while Ludovico proceeded — "Tell your lady" said the Chevalier, as he gave me the picture, "that this has been my companion, and only solace in all my misfortunes. Tell her, that I have worn it next my heart, and that I sent it her as the pledge of an affection, which can never die; that I would not part with it, but to her, for the wealth of worlds, and that I now part with it, only in the hope of soon receiving it from her hands. Tell her —" Just then, Signora, the sentinel came in, and the Chevalier said no more; but he had before asked me to contrive an interview for him with you; and when I told him, how little hope I had of prevailing with the guard to assist me, he said, that was not, perhaps, of so much consequence as I imagined, and bade me contrive to bring back your answer, and he would inform me of more than he chose to do then. So this, I think, lady, is the whole of what passed."

"How, Ludovico, shall I reward you for your zeal?" said Emily: "but, indeed, I do not now possess the means. When can you see the Chevalier again?"

"That is uncertain, Signora" replied he. "It depends upon who stands guard next: there are not more than one or two among them, from whom I would dare to ask admittance to the prison chamber."

"I need not bid you remember, Ludovico" resumed Emily "how very much interested I am in your seeing the Chevalier soon; and, when you do so, tell him, that I have received the picture, and, with the sentiments he wished. Tell him I have suffered much, and still suffer —" She paused.

“But shall I tell him you will see him, lady?” said Ludovico.

“Most certainly I will,” replied Emily.

“But when, Signora, and where?”

“That must depend upon circumstances” returned Emily. “The place, and the hour, must be regulated by his opportunities.”

“As to the place, mademoiselle” said Annette “there is no other place in the castle, besides this corridor, where *we* can see him in safety, you know; and, as for the hour — it must be when all the Signors are asleep, if that ever happens!”

“You may mention these circumstances to the Chevalier, Ludovico” said she, checking the flippancy of Annette, “and leave them to his judgment and opportunity. Tell him, my heart is unchanged. But, above all, let him see you again as soon as possible; and, Ludovico, I think it is needless to tell you I shall very anxiously look for you.” Having then wished her good night, Ludovico descended the staircase, and Emily retired to rest, but not to sleep, for joy now rendered her as wakeful, as she had ever been from grief. Montoni and his castle had all vanished from her mind, like the frightful vision of a necromancer, and she wandered, once more, in fairy scenes of unfading happiness:

As when, beneath the beam
Of summer moons, the distant woods among,
Or by some flood, all silver'd with the gleam,
The soft embodied Fays thro' airy portals stream.

A week elapsed, before Ludovico again visited the prison; for the sentinels, during that period, were men, in whom he could not confide, and he feared to awaken curiosity, by asking to see their prisoner. In this interval, he communicated to Emily terrific reports of what was passing in the castle; of riots, quarrels, and of carousals more alarming than either; while from some circumstances, which he mentioned, she not only doubted, whether Montoni meant ever to release her, but greatly feared, that he had designs, concerning her — such as she had formerly dreaded. Her name was frequently mentioned in the conversations, which Bertolini and Verezzi held together, and, at those times, they were frequently in contention. Montoni had lost large sums to Verezzi, so that there was a dreadful possibility of his designing her to be a substitute for the debt; but, as she was ignorant, that he had formerly encouraged the hopes of Bertolini also, concerning herself, after the latter had done him some signal service, she knew not how to account for these contentions between Bertolini and Verezzi. The cause of them, however, appeared to be of little consequence, for she thought she saw destruction approaching in many forms, and her entreaties to Ludovico to contrive an escape and to see the prisoner again, were more urgent than ever.

At length, he informed her, that he had again visited the Chevalier, who had directed him to confide in the guard of the prison, from whom he had already received some instances of kindness, and who had promised to permit his going into the castle for half an hour, on the ensuing night, when Montoni and his companions should be engaged at their carousals. "This was kind, to be sure" added Ludovico: "but Sebastian knows he runs no risk in letting the Chevalier out, for, if he can get beyond the bars and iron doors of the castle, he must be cunning indeed. But the Chevalier desired me, Signora, to go to you immediately, and to beg you would allow him to visit you, this night, if it was only for a moment, for that he could no longer live under the same roof, without seeing you; the hour, he said, he could not mention, for it must depend on circumstances (just as you said, Signora); and the place he desired you would appoint, as knowing which was best for your own safety."

Emily was now so much agitated by the near prospect of meeting Valancourt, that it was some time, before she could give any answer to Ludovico, or consider of the place of meeting; when she did, she saw none, that promised so much security, as the corridor, near her own apartment, which she was checked from leaving, by the apprehension of meeting any of Montoni's guests, on their way to their rooms; and she dismissed the scruples, which delicacy opposed, now that a serious danger was to be avoided by encountering them. It was settled, therefore, that the Chevalier should meet her in the corridor, at that hour of the night, which Ludovico, who was to be upon the watch, should judge safest: and Emily, as may be imagined, passed this interval in a tumult of hope and joy, anxiety and impatience. Never, since her residence in the castle, had she watched, with so much pleasure, the sun set behind the mountains, and twilight shade, and darkness veil the scene, as on this evening. She counted the notes of the great clock, and listened to the steps of the sentinels, as they changed the watch, only to rejoice, that another hour was gone. "O, Valancourt!" said she "after all I have suffered; after our long, long separation, when I thought I should never — never see you more — we are still to meet again! O! I have endured grief, and anxiety, and terror, and let me, then, not sink beneath this joy!" These were moments, when it was impossible for her to feel emotions of regret, or melancholy, for any ordinary interests; — even the reflection, that she had resigned the estates, which would have been a provision for herself and Valancourt for life, threw only a light and transient shade upon her spirits. The idea of Valancourt, and that she should see him so soon, alone occupied her heart.

At length the clock struck twelve; she opened the door to listen, if any noise was in the castle, and heard only distant shouts of riot and laughter, echoed feebly along the gallery. She guessed, that the Signor and his guests were at the banquet. "They are now engaged for the night" said she; "and Valancourt will soon be here." Having softly closed the door, she paced the room with impatient steps, and often went to the casement to listen for the lute; but all was silent, and, her agitation every moment increasing, she was at length unable to support herself, and sat down by the window. Annette, whom she detained, was, in the meantime, as loquacious as usual; but Emily heard scarcely anything she said, and having at length risen to the casement, she

distinguished the chords of the lute, struck with an expressive hand, and then the voice, she had formerly listened to, accompanied it.

Now rising love they fann'd, now pleasing dole
 They breath'd in tender musings through the heart;
 And now a graver, sacred strain they stole,
 As when seraphic hands a hymn impart!

Emily wept in doubtful joy and tenderness; and, when the strain ceased, she considered it as a signal, that Valancourt was about to leave the prison. Soon after, she heard steps in the corridor; — they were the light, quick steps of hope; she could scarcely support herself, as they approached, but opening the door of the apartment, she advanced to meet Valancourt, and, in the next moment, sunk in the arms of a stranger. His voice — his countenance instantly convinced her, and she fainted away.

On reviving, she found herself supported by the stranger, who was watching over her recovery, with a countenance of ineffable tenderness and anxiety. She had no spirits for reply, or enquiry; she asked no questions, but burst into tears, and disengaged herself from his arms; when the expression of his countenance changed to surprise and disappointment, and he turned to Ludovico, for an explanation; Annette soon gave the information, which Ludovico could not. “O, sir!” said she, in a voice, interrupted with sobs; “O, sir! You are not the other Chevalier. We expected Monsieur Valancourt, but you are not he! O Ludovico! how could you deceive us so? My poor lady will never recover it — never!” The stranger, who now appeared much agitated, attempted to speak, but his words faltered; and then striking his hand against his forehead, as if in sudden despair, he walked abruptly to the other end of the corridor.

Suddenly, Annette dried her tears, and spoke to Ludovico. “But, perhaps” said she “after all, the other Chevalier is not this: perhaps the Chevalier Valancourt is still below.” Emily raised her head.

“No” replied Ludovico “Monsieur Valancourt never was below, if this gentleman is not he. If you, sir” said Ludovico, addressing the stranger “would but have had the goodness to trust me with your name, this mistake had been avoided.”

“Most true” replied the stranger, speaking in broken Italian, “but it was of the utmost consequence to me, that my name should be concealed from Montoni. Madam” added he then, addressing Emily in French “will you permit me to apologise for the pain I have occasioned you, and to explain to you alone my name, and the circumstance, which has led me into this error? I am of France; — I am your countryman — we are met in a foreign land.” Emily tried to compose her spirits; yet she hesitated to grant his request. At length, desiring, that Ludovico would wait on the staircase, and detaining Annette, she told the stranger, that her woman understood very little Italian, and begged he would communicate what he wished to say, in that language. — Having withdrawn to

a distant part of the corridor, he said, with a long-drawn sigh, "You, madam, are no stranger to me, though I am so unhappy as to be unknown to you. — My name is Du Pont; I am of France, of Gascony, your native province, and have long admired — and, why should I affect to disguise it? — have long loved you." He paused, but, in the next moment, proceeded. "My family, madam, is probably not unknown to you, for we lived within a few miles of La Vallée, and I have, sometimes, had the happiness of meeting you, on visits in the neighbourhood. I will not offend you by repeating how much you interested me; how much I loved to wander in the scenes you frequented; how often I visited your favourite fishing house, and lamented the circumstance, which, at that time, forbade me to reveal my passion. I will not explain how I surrendered to temptation, and became possessed of a treasure, which was to me inestimable; a treasure, which I committed to your messenger, a few days ago, with expectations very different from my present ones. I will say nothing of these circumstances, for I know they will avail me little; let me only supplicate from you forgiveness, and the picture, which I so unwarily returned. Your generosity will pardon the theft, and restore the prize. My crime has been my punishment; for the portrait I stole has contributed to nourish a passion, which must still be my torment."

Emily now interrupted him. "I think, sir, I may leave it to your integrity to determine, whether, after what has just appeared, concerning Mons. Valancourt, I ought to return the picture. I think you will acknowledge, that this would not be generosity; and you will allow me to add, that it would be doing myself an injustice. I must consider myself honoured by your good opinion, but" — and she hesitated — "the mistake of this evening makes it unnecessary for me to say more."

"It does, madam — alas! It does!" said the stranger, who, after a long pause, proceeded. — "But you will allow me to show my disinterestedness, though not my love, and will accept the services I offer. Yet, alas! What services can I offer? I am myself a prisoner, a sufferer, like you. But, dear as liberty is to me, I would not seek it through half the hazards I would encounter to deliver you from this recess of vice. Accept the offered services of a friend; do not refuse me the reward of having, at least, attempted to deserve your thanks."

"You deserve them already, sir" said Emily; "the wish deserves my warmest thanks. But you will excuse me for reminding you of the danger you incur by prolonging this interview. It will be a great consolation to me to remember, whether your friendly attempts to release me succeed or not, that I have a countryman, who would so generously protect me." — Monsieur Du Pont took her hand, which she but feebly attempted to withdraw, and pressed it respectfully to his lips. "Allow me to breathe another fervent sigh for your happiness" said he "and to applaud myself for an affection, which I cannot conquer."

As he said this, Emily heard a noise from her apartment, and, turning round, saw the door from the staircase open, and a man rush into her chamber. "I will teach you to conquer it," cried he, as he advanced into the corridor, and drew a

stiletto, which he aimed at Du Pont, who was unarmed, but who, stepping back, avoided the blow, and then sprung upon Verezzi, from whom he wrenched the stiletto. While they struggled in each other's grasp, Emily, followed by Annette, ran further into the corridor, calling on Ludovico, who was, however, gone from the staircase, and, as she advanced, terrified and uncertain what to do, a distant noise, that seemed to arise from the hall, reminded her of the danger she was incurring; and, sending Annette forward in search of Ludovico, she returned to the spot where Du Pont and Verezzi were still struggling for victory. It was her own cause which was to be decided with that of the former, whose conduct, independently of this circumstance, would, however, have interested her in his success, even had she not disliked and dreaded Verezzi. She threw herself in a chair, and supplicated them to desist from further violence, till, at length, Du Pont forced Verezzi to the floor, where he lay stunned by the violence of his fall; and she then entreated Du Pont to escape from the room, before Montoni, or his party, should appear; but he still refused to leave her unprotected; and, while Emily, now more terrified for him, than for herself, enforced the entreaty, they heard steps ascending the private staircase.

“O you are lost!” cried she “These are Montoni's people.” Du Pont made no reply, but supported Emily, while, with a steady, though eager, countenance, he awaited their appearance, and, in the next moment, Ludovico, alone, mounted the landing-place. Throwing a hasty glance round the chamber, “Follow me,” said he, “as you value your lives; we have not an instant to lose!”

Emily enquired what had occurred, and whither they were to go?

“I cannot stay to tell you now, Signora.” replied Ludovico: “Fly! Fly!”

She immediately followed him, accompanied by Mons. Du Pont, down the staircase, and along a vaulted passage, when suddenly she recollected Annette, and enquired for her. “She awaits us further on, Signora” said Ludovico, almost breathless with haste; “the gates were open, a moment since, to a party just come in from the mountains: they will be shut, I fear, before we can reach them! Through this door, Signora” added Ludovico, holding down the lamp, “take care, here are two steps.”

Emily followed, trembling still more, than before she had understood, that her escape from the castle, depended upon the present moment; while Du Pont supported her, and endeavoured, as they passed along, to cheer her spirits.

“Speak low, Signor” said Ludovico “these passages send echoes all round the castle.”

“Take care of the light” cried Emily “you go so fast, that the air will extinguish it.”

Ludovico now opened another door, where they found Annette, and the party then descended a short flight of steps into a passage, which, Ludovico said, led round the inner court of the castle, and opened into the outer one. As they

advanced, confused and tumultuous sounds, that seemed to come from the inner court, alarmed Emily. "Nay, Signora" said Ludovico "our only hope is in that tumult; while the Signor's people are busied about the men, who are just arrived, we may, perhaps, pass unnoticed through the gates. But hush!" he added, as they approached the small door, that opened into the outer court, "if you will remain here a moment, I will go to see whether the gates are open, and anybody is in the way. Pray extinguish the light, Signor, if you hear me talking," continued Ludovico, delivering the lamp to Du Pont, "and remain quite still."

Saying this, he stepped out upon the court, and they closed the door, listening anxiously to his departing steps. No voice, however, was heard in the court, which he was crossing, though a confusion of many voices yet issued from the inner one. "We shall soon be beyond the walls," said Du Pont softly to Emily, "support yourself a little longer, Madam, and all will be well."

But soon they heard Ludovico speaking loud, and the voice also of some other person, and Du Pont immediately extinguished the lamp. "Ah! it is too late!" exclaimed Emily "what is to become of us?" They listened again, and then perceived, that Ludovico was talking with a sentinel, whose voices were heard also by Emily's favourite dog, that had followed her from the chamber, and now barked loudly. "This dog will betray us!" said Du Pont "I will hold him."

"I fear he has already betrayed us!" replied Emily.

Du Pont, however, caught him up, and, again listening to what was going on without, they heard Ludovico say "I'll watch the gates the while."

"Stay a minute" replied the sentinel "and you need not have the trouble, for the horses will be sent round to the outer stables, then the gates will be shut, and I can leave my post."

"I don't mind the trouble, comrade" said Ludovico "you will do such another good turn for me, some time. Go — go, and fetch the wine; the rogues, that are just come in, will drink it all else."

The soldier hesitated, and then called aloud to the people in the second court, to know why they did not send out the horses, that the gates might be shut; but they were too much engaged, to attend to him, even if they had heard his voice.

"Aye — aye" said Ludovico "they know better than that; they are sharing it all among them; if you wait till the horses come out, you must wait till the wine is drunk. I have had my share already, but, since you do not care about yours, I see no reason why I should not have that too."

"Hold, hold, not so fast" cried the sentinel "do watch then, for a moment: I'll be with you presently."

“Don’t hurry yourself” said Ludovico, coolly “I have kept guard before now. But you may leave me your trombone, that, if the castle should be attacked, you know, I may be able to defend the pass, like a hero.”

“There, my good fellow” returned the soldier “there, take it — it has seen service, though it could do little in defending the castle. I’ll tell you a good story, though, about this same trombone.”

“You’ll tell it better when you have had the wine” said Ludovico. “There! they are coming out from the court already.”

“I’ll have the wine, though” said the sentinel, running off. “I won’t keep you a minute.”

“Take your time, I am in no haste,” replied Ludovico, who was already hurrying across the court, when the soldier came back.

“Whither so fast, friend — whither so fast?” said the latter. “What! is this the way you keep watch! I must stand to my post myself, I see.”

“Aye, well” replied Ludovico “you have saved me the trouble of following you further, for I wanted to tell you, if you have a mind to drink the Tuscany wine, you must go to Sebastian, he is dealing it out; the other that Federico has, is not worth having. But you are not likely to have any, I see, for they are all coming out.”

“By St. Peter! so they are” said the soldier, and again ran off, while Ludovico, once more at liberty, hastened to the door of the passage, where Emily was sinking under the anxiety this long discourse had occasioned; but, on his telling them the court was clear, they followed him to the gates, without waiting another instant, yet not before he had seized two horses, that had strayed from the second court, and were picking a scanty meal among the grass, which grew between the pavement of the first.

They passed, without interruption, the dreadful gates, and took the road that led down among the woods, Emily, Monsieur Du Pont and Annette on foot, and Ludovico, who was mounted on one horse, leading the other. Having reached them, they stopped, while Emily and Annette were placed on horseback with their two protectors, when, Ludovico leading the way, they set off as fast as the broken road, and the feeble light, which a rising moon threw among the foliage, would permit.

Emily was so much astonished by this sudden departure, that she scarcely dared to believe herself awake; and she yet much doubted whether this adventure would terminate in escape — a doubt, which had too much probability to justify it; for, before they quitted the woods, they heard shouts in the wind, and, on emerging from them, saw lights moving quickly near the castle above. Du Pont whipped his horse, and with some difficulty compelled him to go faster.

“Ah! poor beast” said Ludovico “he is weary enough; — he has been out all day; but, Signor, we must fly for it, now; for yonder are lights coming this way.”

Having given his own horse a lash, they now both set off on a full gallop; and, when they again looked back, the lights were so distant as scarcely to be discerned, and the voices were sunk into silence. The travellers then abated their pace, and, consulting whither they should direct their course, it was determined they should descend into Tuscany, and endeavour to reach the Mediterranean, where they could readily embark for France. Thither Du Pont meant to attend Emily, if he should learn, that the regiment he had accompanied into Italy, was returned to his native country.

They were now in the road, which Emily had travelled with Ugo and Bertrand; but Ludovico, who was the only one of the party, acquainted with the passes of these mountains, said, that, a little further on, a by-road, branching from this, would lead them down into Tuscany with very little difficulty; and that, at a few leagues distance, was a small town, where necessaries could be procured for their journey.

“But, I hope” added he “we shall meet with no straggling parties of banditti; some of them are abroad, I know. However, I have got a good trombone, which will be of some service, if we should encounter any of those brave spirits. You have no arms, Signor?”

“Yes” replied Du Pont “I have the villain’s stiletto, who would have stabbed me — but let us rejoice in our escape from Udolpho, nor torment ourselves with looking out for dangers, that may never arrive.”

The moon was now risen high over the woods, that hung upon the sides of the narrow glen, through which they wandered, and afforded them light sufficient to distinguish their way, and to avoid the loose and broken stones, that frequently crossed it. They now travelled leisurely, and in profound silence; for they had scarcely yet recovered from the astonishment, into which this sudden escape had thrown them. — Emily’s mind, especially, was sunk, after the various emotions it had suffered, into a kind of musing stillness, which the reposing beauty of the surrounding scene and the creeping murmur of the night-breeze among the foliage above contributed to prolong. She thought of Valancourt and of France, with hope, and she would have thought of them with joy, had not the first events of this evening harassed her spirits too much, to permit her now to feel so lively a sensation. Meanwhile, Emily was alone the object of Du Pont’s melancholy consideration; yet, with the despondency he suffered, as he mused on his recent disappointment, was mingled a sweet pleasure, occasioned by her presence, though they did not now exchange a single word. Annette thought of this wonderful escape, of the bustle in which Montoni and his people must be, now that their flight was discovered; of her native country, whither she hoped she was returning, and of her marriage with Ludovico, to which there no longer appeared any impediment, for poverty she did not consider such. Ludovico, on his part, congratulated himself, on having

rescued his Annette and Signora Emily from the danger, that had surrounded them; on his own liberation from people, whose manners he had long detested; on the freedom he had given to Monsieur Du Pont; on his prospect of happiness with the object of his affections, and not a little on the address, with which he had deceived the sentinel, and conducted the whole of this affair.

Thus variously engaged in thought, the travellers passed on silently, for above an hour, a question only being, now and then, asked by Du Pont, concerning the road, or a remark uttered by Annette, respecting objects, seen imperfectly in the twilight. At length, lights were perceived twinkling on the side of a mountain, and Ludovico had no doubt, that they proceeded from the town he had mentioned, while his companions, satisfied by this assurance, sunk again into silence. Annette was the first who interrupted this. "Holy Peter!" said she "What shall we do for money on our journey? for I know neither I, nor my lady, have a single sequin; the Signor took care of that!"

This remark produced a serious enquiry, which ended in as serious an embarrassment, for Du Pont had been rifled of nearly all his money, when he was taken prisoner; the remainder he had given to the sentinel, who had enabled him occasionally to leave his prison-chamber; and Ludovico, who had for some time found a difficulty, in procuring any part of the wages due to him, had now scarcely cash sufficient to procure necessary refreshment at the first town, in which they should arrive.

Their poverty was the more distressing, since it would detain them among the mountains, where, even in a town, they could scarcely consider themselves safe from Montoni. The travellers, however, had only to proceed and dare the future; and they continued their way through lonely wilds and dusky valleys, where the overhanging foliage now admitted, and then excluded the moonlight; wilds so desolate, that they appeared, on the first glance, as if no human being had ever trod them before. Even the road, in which the party were, did but slightly contradict this error, for the high grass and other luxuriant vegetation, with which it was overgrown, told how very seldom the foot of a traveller had passed it.

At length, from a distance, was heard the faint tinkling of a sheep-bell; and, soon after, the bleat of flocks, and the party then knew, that they were near some human habitation, for the light, which Ludovico had fancied to proceed from a town, had long been concealed by intervening mountains. Cheered by this hope, they quickened their pace along the narrow pass they were winding, and it opened upon one of those pastoral valleys of the Apennines, which might be painted for a scene of Arcadia, and whose beauty and simplicity are finely contrasted by the grandeur of the snowtopped mountains above.

The morning light, now glimmering in the horizon, showed faintly, at a little distance, upon the brow of a hill, which seemed to peep from "under the opening eyelids of the morn," the town they were in search of, and which they soon after reached. It was not without some difficulty, that they there found a house, which could afford shelter for themselves and their horses; and Emily desired

they might not rest longer than was necessary for refreshment. Her appearance excited some surprise, for she was without a hat, having had time only to throw on her veil before she left the castle, a circumstance, that compelled her to regret again the want of money, without which it was impossible to procure this necessary article of dress.

Ludovico, on examining his purse, found it even insufficient to supply present refreshment, and Du Pont, at length, ventured to inform the landlord, whose countenance was simple and honest, of their exact situation, and requested, that he would assist them to pursue their journey; a purpose, which he promised to comply with, as far as he was able, when he learned that they were prisoners escaping from Montoni, whom he had too much reason to hate. But, though he consented to lend them fresh horses to carry them to the next town, he was too poor himself to trust them with money, and they were again lamenting their poverty, when Ludovico, who had been with his tired horses to the hovel, which served for a stable, entered the room, half frantic with joy, in which his auditors soon participated. On removing the saddle from one of the horses, he had found beneath it a small bag, containing, no doubt, the booty of one of the *Condottieri*, who had returned from a plundering excursion, just before Ludovico left the castle, and whose horse having strayed from the inner court, while his master was engaged in drinking, had brought away the treasure, which the ruffian had considered the reward of his exploit.

On counting over this, Du Pont found, that it would be more than sufficient to carry them all to France, where he now determined to accompany Emily, whether he should obtain intelligence of his regiment, or not; for, though he had as much confidence in the integrity of Ludovico, as his small knowledge of him allowed, he could not endure the thought of committing her to his care for the voyage; nor, perhaps, had he resolution enough to deny himself the dangerous pleasure, which he might derive from her presence.

He now consulted them, concerning the seaport, to which they should direct their way, and Ludovico, better informed of the geography of the country, said, that Leghorn was the nearest port of consequence, which Du Pont knew also to be the most likely of any in Italy to assist their plan, since from thence vessels of all nations were continually departing. Thither, therefore, it was determined, that they should proceed.

Emily, having purchased a little straw hat, such as was worn by the peasant girls of Tuscany, and some other little necessary equipments for the journey, and the travellers, having exchanged their tired horses for others better able to carry them, recommenced their joyous way, as the sun was rising over the mountains, and, after travelling through this romantic country, for several hours, began to descend into the vale of Arno. And here Emily beheld all the charms of sylvan and pastoral landscape united, adorned with the elegant villas of the Florentine nobles, and diversified with the various riches of cultivation. How vivid the shrubs that embowered the slopes, with the woods, that stretched amphitheatrically along the mountains! and, above all, how elegant the outline of these waving Apennines, now softening from the wildness, which their

interior regions exhibited! At a distance, in the east, Emily discovered Florence, with its towers rising on the brilliant horizon, and its luxuriant plain, spreading to the feet of the Apennines, speckled with gardens and magnificent villas, or coloured with groves of orange and lemon, with vines, corn, and plantations of olives and mulberry; while, to the west, the vale opened to the waters of the Mediterranean, so distant, that they were known only by a bluish line, that appeared upon the horizon, and by the light marine vapour, which just stained the æther above.

With a full heart, Emily hailed the waves, that were to bear her back to her native country, the remembrance of which, however, brought with it a pang; for she had there no home to receive, no parents to welcome her, but was going, like a forlorn pilgrim, to weep over the sad spot, where he, who *was* her father, lay interred. Nor were her spirits cheered, when she considered how long it would probably be before she should see Valancourt, who might be stationed with his regiment in a distant part of France, and that, when they did meet, it would be only to lament the successful villany of Montoni; yet, still she would have felt inexpressible delight at the thought of being once more in the same country with Valancourt, had it even been certain, that she could not see him.

The intense heat, for it was now noon, obliged the travellers to look out for a shady recess, where they might rest, for a few hours, and the neighbouring thickets, abounding with wild grapes, raspberries, and figs, promised them grateful refreshment. Soon after, they turned from the road into a grove, whose thick foliage entirely excluded the sunbeams, and where a spring, gushing from the rock, gave coolness to the air; and, having alighted and turned the horses to graze, Annette and Ludovico ran to gather fruit from the surrounding thickets, of which they soon returned with an abundance. The travellers, seated under the shade of a pine and cypress grove and on turf, enriched with such a profusion of fragrant flowers, as Emily had scarcely ever seen, even among the Pyrenees, took their simple repast, and viewed, with new delight, beneath the dark umbrage of gigantic pines, the glowing landscape stretching to the sea.

Emily and Du Pont gradually became thoughtful and silent; but Annette was all joy and loquacity, and Ludovico was gay, without forgetting the respectful distance, which was due to his companions. The repast being over, Du Pont recommended Emily to endeavour to sleep, during these sultry hours, and, desiring the servants would do the same, said he would watch the while; but Ludovico wished to spare him this trouble; and Emily and Annette, wearied with travelling, tried to repose, while he stood guard with his trombone.

When Emily, refreshed by slumber, awoke, she found the sentinel asleep on his post and Du Pont awake, but lost in melancholy thought. As the sun was yet too high to allow them to continue their journey, and as it was necessary, that Ludovico, after the toils and trouble he had suffered, should finish his sleep, Emily took this opportunity of enquiring by what accident Du Pont became Montoni's prisoner, and he, pleased with the interest this enquiry expressed and with the excuse it gave him for talking to her of himself, immediately answered her curiosity.

“I came into Italy, madam” said Du Pont “in the service of my country. In an adventure among the mountains our party, engaging with the bands of Montoni, was routed, and I, with a few of my comrades, was taken prisoner. When they told me, whose captive I was, the name of Montoni struck me, for I remembered, that Madame Cheron, your aunt, had married an Italian of that name, and that you had accompanied them into Italy. It was not, however, till some time after, that I became convinced this was the same Montoni, or learned that you, madam, was under the same roof with myself. I will not pain you by describing what were my emotions upon this discovery, which I owed to a sentinel, whom I had so far won to my interest, that he granted me many indulgences, one of which was very important to me, and somewhat dangerous to himself; but he persisted in refusing to convey any letter, or notice of my situation to you, for he justly dreaded a discovery and the consequent vengeance of Montoni. He however enabled me to see you more than once. You are surprised, madam, and I will explain myself. My health and spirits suffered extremely from want of air and exercise, and, at length, I gained so far upon the pity, or the avarice of the man, that he gave me the means of walking on the terrace.”

Emily now listened, with very anxious attention, to the narrative of Du Pont, who proceeded:

“In granting this indulgence, he knew, that he had nothing to apprehend from a chance of my escaping from a castle, which was vigilantly guarded, and the nearest terrace of which rose over a perpendicular rock; he showed me also,” continued Du Pont, “a door concealed in the cedar wainscot of the apartment where I was confined, which he instructed me how to open; and which, leading into a passage, formed within the thickness of the wall, that extended far along the castle, finally opened in an obscure corner of the eastern rampart. I have since been informed, that there are many passages of the same kind concealed within the prodigious walls of that edifice, and which were, undoubtedly, contrived for the purpose of facilitating escapes in time of war. Through this avenue, at the dead of night, I often stole to the terrace, where I walked with the utmost caution, lest my steps should betray me to the sentinels on duty in distant parts; for this end of it, being guarded by high buildings, was not watched by soldiers. In one of these midnight wanderings, I saw light in a casement that overlooked the rampart, and which, I observed, was immediately over my prison chamber. It occurred to me, that you might be in that apartment, and, with the hope of seeing you, I placed myself opposite to the window.”

Emily, remembering the figure that had formerly appeared on the terrace, and which had occasioned her so much anxiety, exclaimed “It was you then, Monsieur Du Pont, who occasioned me much foolish terror; my spirits were, at that time, so much weakened by long suffering, that they took alarm at every hint.”

Du Pont, after lamenting, that he had occasioned her any apprehension, added “As I rested on the wall, opposite to your casement, the consideration of

your melancholy situation and of my own called from me involuntary sounds of lamentation, which drew you, I fancy, to the casement; I saw there a person, whom I believed to be you. O! I will say nothing of my emotion at that moment; I wished to speak, but prudence restrained me, till the distant footstep of a sentinel compelled me suddenly to quit my station.

“It was some time, before I had another opportunity of walking, for I could only leave my prison, when it happened to be the turn of one man to guard me; meanwhile I became convinced from some circumstances related by him, that your apartment was over mine, and, when again I ventured forth, I returned to your casement, where again I saw you, but without daring to speak. I waved my hand, and you suddenly disappeared; then it was, that I forgot my prudence, and yielded to lamentation; again you appeared — you spoke — I heard the well known accent of your voice! And, at that moment, my discretion would have forsaken me again, had I not heard also the approaching steps of a soldier, when I instantly quitted the place, though not before the man had seen me. He followed down the terrace and gained so fast upon me, that I was compelled to make use of a stratagem, ridiculous enough, to save myself. I had heard of the superstition of many of these men, and I uttered a strange noise, with a hope, that my pursuer would mistake it for something supernatural, and desist from pursuit. Luckily for myself I succeeded; the man, it seems, was subject to fits, and the terror he suffered threw him into one, by which accident I secured my retreat. A sense of the danger I had escaped, and the increased watchfulness, which my appearance had occasioned among the sentinels, deterred me ever after from walking on the terrace; but, in the stillness of night, I frequently beguiled myself with an old lute, procured for me by a soldier, which I sometimes accompanied with my voice, and sometimes, I will acknowledge, with a hope of making myself heard by you; but it was only a few evenings ago, that this hope was answered. I then thought I heard a voice in the wind, calling me; yet, even then I feared to reply, lest the sentinel at the prison door should hear me. Was I right, madam, in this conjecture — was it you who spoke?”

“Yes” said Emily, with an involuntary sigh, “you were right indeed.”

Du Pont, observing the painful emotions, which this question revived, now changed the subject. “In one of my excursions through the passage, which I have mentioned, I overheard a singular conversation” said he.

“In the passage!” said Emily, with surprise.

“I heard it in the passage” said Du Pont “but it proceeded from an apartment, adjoining the wall, within which the passage wound, and the shell of the wall was there so thin, and was also somewhat decayed, that I could distinctly hear every word, spoken on the other side. It happened that Montoni and his companions were assembled in the room, and Montoni began to relate the extraordinary history of the lady, his predecessor, in the castle. He did, indeed, mention some very surprising circumstances, and whether they were strictly true, his conscience must decide; I fear it will determine against him. But you,

madam, have doubtless heard the report, which he designs should circulate, on the subject of that lady's mysterious fate."

"I have, sir" replied Emily "and I perceive, that you doubt it."

"I doubted it before the period I am speaking of" rejoined Du Pont; — "but some circumstances, mentioned by Montoni, greatly contributed to my suspicions. The account I then heard, almost convinced me, that he was a murderer. I trembled for you; — the more so that I had heard the guests mention your name in a manner, that threatened your repose; and, knowing, that the most impious men are often the most superstitious, I determined to try whether I could not awaken their consciences, and awe them from the commission of the crime I dreaded. I listened closely to Montoni, and, in the most striking passages of his story, I joined my voice, and repeated his last words, in a disguised and hollow tone."

"But were you not afraid of being discovered?" said Emily.

"I was not" replied Du Pont; "for I knew, that, if Montoni had been acquainted with the secret of this passage, he would not have confined me in the apartment, to which it led. I knew also, from better authority, that he was ignorant of it. The party, for some time, appeared inattentive to my voice; but, at length, were so much alarmed, that they quitted the apartment; and, having heard Montoni order his servants to search it, I returned to my prison, which was very distant from this part of the passage."

"I remember perfectly to have heard of the conversation you mention" said Emily; "it spread a general alarm among Montoni's people, and I will own I was weak enough to partake of it."

Monsieur Du Pont and Emily thus continued to converse of Montoni, and then of France, and of the plan of their voyage; when Emily told him, that it was her intention to retire to a convent in Languedoc, where she had been formerly treated with much kindness, and from thence to write to her relation Monsieur Quesnel, and inform him of her conduct. There, she designed to wait, till La Vallée should again be her own, whither she hoped her income would some time permit her to return; for Du Pont now taught her to expect, that the estate, of which Montoni had attempted to defraud her, was not irrecoverably lost, and he again congratulated her on her escape from Montoni, who, he had not a doubt, meant to have detained her for life. The possibility of recovering her aunt's estates for Valancourt and herself lighted up a joy in Emily's heart, such as she had not known for many months; but she endeavoured to conceal this from Monsieur Du Pont, lest it should lead him to a painful remembrance of his rival.

They continued to converse, till the sun was declining in the west, when Du Pont awoke Ludovico, and they set forward on their journey. Gradually descending the lower slopes of the valley, they reached the Arno, and wound along its pastoral margin, for many miles, delighted with the scenery around

them, and with the remembrances, which its classic waves revived. At a distance, they heard the gay song of the peasants among the vineyards, and observed the setting sun tint the waves with yellow lustre, and twilight draw a dusky purple over the mountains, which, at length, deepened into night. Then the *lucciola*, the firefly of Tuscany, was seen to flash its sudden sparks among the foliage, while the *cicala*, with its shrill note, became more clamorous than even during the noon-day heat, loving best the hour when the English beetle, with less offensive sound,

winds
 His small but sullen horn,
 As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
 Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum.

COLLINS

The travellers crossed the Arno by moonlight, at a ferry, and, learning that Pisa was distant only a few miles down the river, they wished to have proceeded thither in a boat, but, as none could be procured, they set out on their wearied horses for that city. As they approached it, the vale expanded into a plain, variegated with vineyards, corn, olives and mulberry groves; but it was late, before they reached its gates, where Emily was surprised to hear the busy sound of footsteps and the tones of musical instruments, as well as to see the lively groups, that filled the streets, and she almost fancied herself again at Venice; but here was no moonlight sea — no gay gondolas, dashing the waves — no *Palladian* palaces, to throw enchantment over the fancy and lead it into the wilds of fairy story. The Arno rolled through the town, but no music trembled from balconies over its waters; it gave only the busy voices of sailors on board vessels just arrived from the Mediterranean; the melancholy heaving of the anchor, and the shrill boatswain's whistle; — sounds, which, since that period, have there sunk almost into silence. They then served to remind Du Pont, that it was probable he might hear of a vessel, sailing soon to France from this port, and thus be spared the trouble of going to Livorno. As soon as Emily had reached the inn, he went therefore to the quay, to make his enquiries; but, after all the endeavours of himself and Ludovico, they could hear of no bark, destined immediately for France, and the travellers returned to their resting place. Here also, Du Pont endeavoured to learn where his regiment then lay, but could acquire no information concerning it. The travellers retired early to rest, after the fatigues of this day; and, on the following, rose early, and, without pausing to view the celebrated antiquities of the place, or the wonders of its hanging tower, pursued their journey in the cooler hours, through a charming country, rich with wine, and corn and oil. The Apennines, no longer awful, or even grand, here softened into the beauty of sylvan and pastoral landscape; and Emily, as she descended them, looked down delighted on Livorno, and its spacious bay, filled with vessels, and crowned with these beautiful hills.

She was no less surprised and amused, on entering this town, to find it crowded with persons in the dresses of all nations; a scene, which reminded her of a Venetian masquerade, such as she had witnessed at the time of the

Carnival; but here was bustle without gaiety, and noise instead of music, while elegance was to be looked for only in the waving outlines of the surrounding hills.

Monsieur Du Pont, immediately on their arrival, went down to the quay, where he heard of several French vessels, and of one, that was to sail, in a few days, for Marseilles, from whence another vessel could be procured, without difficulty, to take them across the gulf of Lyons towards Narbonne, on the coast not many leagues from which city he understood the convent was seated, to which Emily wished to retire. He, therefore, immediately engaged with the captain to take them to Marseilles, and Emily was delighted to hear, that her passage to France was secured. Her mind was now relieved from the terror of pursuit, and the pleasing hope of soon seeing her native country — that country which held Valancourt, restored to her spirits a degree of cheerfulness, such as she had scarcely known, since the death of her father. At Livorno also, Du Pont heard of his regiment, and that it had embarked for France; a circumstance, which gave him great satisfaction, for he could now accompany Emily thither, without reproach to his conscience, or apprehension of displeasure from his commander. During these days, he scrupulously forbore to distress her by a mention of his passion, and she was compelled to esteem and pity, though she could not love him. He endeavoured to amuse her by showing the environs of the town, and they often walked together on the seashore, and on the busy quays, where Emily was frequently interested by the arrival and departure of vessels, participating in the joy of meeting friends, and, sometimes, shedding a sympathetic tear to the sorrow of those, that were separating. It was after having witnessed a scene of the latter kind, that she arranged the following stanzas:

THE MARINER

Soft came the breath of spring; smooth flow'd the tide;
And blue the heaven in its mirror smil'd;
The white sail trembled, swell'd, expanded wide,
The busy sailors at the anchor toil'd.

With anxious friends, that shed the parting tear,
The deck was throng'd — how swift the moments fly!
The vessel heaves, the farewell signs appear;
Mute is each tongue, and eloquent each eye!

The last dread moment comes! — The sailor youth
Hides the big drop, then smiles amid his pain,
Sooths his sad bride, and vows eternal truth,
“Farewell, my love — we shall — shall meet again!”

Long on the stern, with waving hand, he stood;
The crowded shore sinks, lessening, from his view,
As gradual glides the bark along the flood;
His bride is seen no more — “Adieu! — Adieu!”

The breeze of Eve moans low, her smile is o'er,
 Dim steals her twilight down the crimson'd west,
 He climbs the top-most mast, to seek once more
 The far-seen coast, where all his wishes rest.

He views its dark line on the distant sky,
 And Fancy leads him to his little home,
 He sees his weeping love, he hears her sigh,
 He soothes her griefs, and tells of joys to come.

Eve yields to night, the breeze to wintry gales,
 In one vast shade the seas and shores repose;
 He turns his aching eyes, — his spirit fails,
 The chill tear falls;—sad to the deck he goes!

The storm of midnight swells, the sails are furl'd,
 Deep sounds the lead, but finds no friendly shore,
 Fast o'er the waves the wretched bark is hurl'd,
 "O Ellen, Ellen! we must meet no more!"

Lightnings, that show the vast and foamy deep,
 The rending thunders, as they onward roll,
 The loud, loud winds, that o'er the billows sweep —
 Shake the firm nerve, appall the bravest soul!

Ah! what avails the seamen's toiling care!
 The straining cordage bursts, the mast is riv'n;
 The sounds of terror groan along the air,
 Then sink afar; — the bark on rocks is driv'n!

Fierce o'er the wreck the whelming waters pass'd,
 The helpless crew sunk in the roaring main!
 Henry's faint accents trembled in the blast—
 "Farewell, my love! — We ne'er shall meet again!"

Oft, at the calm and silent evening hour,
 When summer-breezes linger on the wave,
 A melancholy voice is heard to pour
 Its lonely sweetness o'er poor Henry's grave!

And oft, at midnight, airy strains are heard
 Around the grove, where Ellen's form is laid;
 Nor is the dirge by village-maidens fear'd,
 For lovers' spirits guard the holy shade!

CHAPTER X

Oh! the joy
Of young ideas painted on the mind
In the warm glowing colours fancy spreads
On objects not yet known, when all is new,
And all is lovely!

SACRED DRAMAS

We now return to Languedoc and to the mention of Count De Villefort, the nobleman, who succeeded to an estate of the Marquis De Villeroi situated near the monastery of St. Claire. It may be recollected, that this château was uninhabited, when St. Aubert and his daughter were in the neighbourhood, and that the former was much affected on discovering himself to be so near Château-le-Blanc, a place, concerning which the good old La Voisin afterwards dropped some hints, that had alarmed Emily's curiosity.

It was in the year 1584, the beginning of that, in which St. Aubert died, that Francis Beauveau, Count De Villefort, came into possession of the mansion and extensive domain called Château-le-Blanc, situated in the province of Languedoc, on the shore of the Mediterranean. This estate, which, during some centuries, had belonged to his family, now descended to him, on the decease of his relative, the Marquis De Villeroi, who had been latterly a man of reserved manners and austere character; circumstances, which, together with the duties of his profession, that often called him into the field, had prevented any degree of intimacy with his cousin, the Count De Villefort. For many years, they had known little of each other, and the Count received the first intelligence of his death, which happened in a distant part of France, together with the instruments, that gave him possession of the domain Château-le-Blanc; but it was not till the following year, that he determined to visit that estate, when he designed to pass the autumn there. The scenes of Château-le-Blanc often came to his remembrance, heightened by the touches, which a warm imagination gives to the recollection of early pleasures; for, many years before, in the lifetime of the Marchioness, and at that age when the mind is particularly sensible to impressions of gaiety and delight, he had once visited this spot, and, though he had passed a long intervening period amidst the vexations and tumults of public affairs, which too frequently corrode the heart, and vitiate the taste, the shades of Languedoc and the grandeur of its distant scenery had never been remembered by him with indifference.

During many years, the château had been abandoned by the late Marquis, and, being inhabited only by an old steward and his wife, had been suffered to fall much into decay. To superintend the repairs, that would be requisite to make it a comfortable residence, had been a principal motive with the Count for passing the autumnal months in Languedoc; and neither the remonstrances, nor the tears of the Countess, for, on urgent occasions, she could weep, were powerful enough to overcome his determination. She prepared, therefore, to obey the command, which she could not conquer, and

to resign the gay assemblies of Paris — where her beauty was generally unrivalled and won the applause, to which her wit had but feeble claim — for the twilight canopy of woods, the lonely grandeur of mountains and the solemnity of gothic halls and of long, long galleries, which echoed only the solitary step of a domestic, or the measured clink, that ascended from the great clock — the ancient monitor of the hall below. From these melancholy expectations she endeavoured to relieve her spirits by recollecting all that she had ever heard, concerning the joyous vintage of the plains of Languedoc; but there, alas, no airy forms would bound to the gay melody of Parisian dances, and a view of the rustic festivities of peasants could afford little pleasure to a heart, in which even the feelings of ordinary benevolence had long since decayed under the corruptions of luxury.

The Count had a son and a daughter, the children of a former marriage, who, he designed, should accompany him to the south of France; Henri, who was in his twentieth year, was in the French service; and Blanche, who was not yet eighteen, had been hitherto confined to the convent, where she had been placed immediately on her father's second marriage. The present Countess, who had neither sufficient ability, nor inclination, to superintend the education of her daughter-in-law, had advised this step, and the dread of superior beauty had since urged her to employ every art, that might prevail on the Count to prolong the period of Blanche's seclusion; it was, therefore, with extreme mortification, that she now understood he would no longer submit on this subject, yet it afforded her some consolation to consider, that, though the Lady Blanche would emerge from her convent, the shades of the country would, for some time, veil her beauty from the public eye.

On the morning, which commenced the journey, the postillions stopped at the convent, by the Count's order, to take up Blanche, whose heart beat with delight, at the prospect of novelty and freedom now before her. As the time of her departure drew nigh, her impatience had increased, and the last night, during which she counted every note of every hour, had appeared the most tedious of any she had ever known. The morning light, at length, dawned; the matin bell rang; she heard the nuns descending from their chambers, and she started from a sleepless pillow to welcome the day, which was to emancipate her from the severities of a cloister, and introduce her to a world, where pleasure was ever smiling, and goodness ever blessed — where, in short, nothing but pleasure and goodness reigned! When the bell of the great gate rang, and the sound was followed by that of carriage wheels, she ran, with a palpitating heart, to her lattice, and, perceiving her father's carriage in the court below, danced, with airy steps, along the gallery, where she was met by a nun with a summons from the abbess. In the next moment, she was in the parlour, and in the presence of the Countess who now appeared to her as an angel, that was to lead her into happiness. But the emotions of the Countess, on beholding her, were not in unison with those of Blanche, who had never appeared so lovely as at this moment, when her countenance, animated by the lightning smile of joy, glowed with the beauty of happy innocence.

After conversing for a few minutes with the abbess, the Countess rose to go. This was the moment, which Blanche had anticipated with such eager expectation, the summit from which she looked down upon the fairyland of happiness, and surveyed all its enchantment; was it a moment, then, for tears of regret? Yet it was so. She turned, with an altered and dejected countenance, to her young companions, who were come to bid her farewell, and wept! Even my lady abbess, so stately and so solemn, she saluted with a degree of sorrow, which, an hour before, she would have believed it impossible to feel, and which may be accounted for by considering how reluctantly we all part, even with unpleasing objects, when the separation is consciously for ever. Again, she kissed the poor nuns and then followed the Countess from that spot with tears, which she expected to leave only with smiles.

But the presence of her father and the variety of objects, on the road, soon engaged her attention, and dissipated the shade, which tender regret had thrown upon her spirits. Inattentive to a conversation, which was passing between the Countess and a Mademoiselle Bearn, her friend, Blanche sat, lost in pleasing reverie, as she watched the clouds floating silently along the blue expanse, now veiling the sun and stretching their shadows along the distant scene, and then disclosing all his brightness. The journey continued to give Blanche inexpressible delight, for new scenes of nature were every instant opening to her view, and her fancy became stored with gay and beautiful imagery.

It was on the evening of the seventh day, that the travellers came within view of Château-le-Blanc, the romantic beauty of whose situation strongly impressed the imagination of Blanche, who observed, with sublime astonishment, the Pyrenean mountains, which had been seen only at a distance during the day, now rising within a few leagues, with their wild cliffs and immense precipices, which the evening clouds, floating round them, now disclosed, and again veiled. The setting rays, that tinged their snowy summits with a roseate hue, touched their lower points with various colouring, while the bluish tint, that pervaded their shadowy recesses, gave the strength of contrast to the splendour of light. The plains of Languedoc, blushing with the purple vine and diversified with groves of mulberry, almond and olives, spread far to the north and the east; to the south, appeared the Mediterranean, clear as crystal, and blue as the heavens it reflected, bearing on its bosom vessels, whose white sails caught the sunbeams, and gave animation to the scene. On a high promontory, washed by the waters of the Mediterranean, stood her father's mansion, almost secluded from the eye by woods of intermingled pine, oak and chesnut, which crowned the eminence, and sloped towards the plains, on one side; while, on the other, they extended to a considerable distance along the seashores.

As Blanche drew nearer, the gothic features of this ancient mansion successively appeared — first an embattled turret, rising above the trees — then the broken arch of an immense gateway, retiring beyond them; and she almost fancied herself approaching a castle, such as is often celebrated in early story, where the knights look out from the battlements on some champion below, who, clothed in black armour, comes, with his companions, to rescue the fair lady of

his love from the oppression of his rival; a sort of legends, to which she had once or twice obtained access in the library of her convent, that, like many others, belonging to the monks, was stored with these reliques of romantic fiction.

The carriages stopped at a gate, which led into the domain of the château, but which was now fastened; and the great bell, that had formerly served to announce the arrival of strangers, having long since fallen from its station, a servant climbed over a ruined part of the adjoining wall, to give notice to those within of the arrival of their lord.

As Blanche leaned from the coach window, she resigned herself to the sweet and gentle emotions, which the hour and the scenery awakened. The sun had now left the earth, and twilight began to darken the mountains; while the distant waters, reflecting the blush that still glowed in the west, appeared like a line of light, skirting the horizon. The low murmur of waves, breaking on the shore, came in the breeze, and, now and then, the melancholy dashing of oars was feebly heard from a distance. She was suffered to indulge her pensive mood, for the thoughts of the rest of the party were silently engaged upon the subjects of their several interests. Meanwhile, the Countess, reflecting, with regret, upon the gay parties she had left at Paris, surveyed, with disgust, what she thought the gloomy woods and solitary wildness of the scene; and, shrinking from the prospect of being shut up in an old castle, was prepared to meet every object with displeasure. The feelings of Henri were somewhat similar to those of the Countess; he gave a mournful sigh to the delights of the capital, and to the remembrance of a lady, who, he believed, had engaged his affections, and who had certainly fascinated his imagination; but the surrounding country, and the mode of life, on which he was entering, had, for him, at least, the charm of novelty, and his regret was softened by the gay expectations of youth. The gates being at length unbarred, the carriage moved slowly on, under spreading chesnuts, that almost excluded the remains of day, following what had been formerly a road, but which now, overgrown with luxuriant vegetation, could be traced only by the boundary, formed by trees, on either side, and which wound for near half a mile among the woods, before it reached the château. This was the very avenue that St. Aubert and Emily had formerly entered, on their first arrival in the neighbourhood, with the hope of finding a house, that would receive them, for the night, and had so abruptly quitted, on perceiving the wildness of the place, and a figure, which the postillion had fancied was a robber.

“What a dismal place is this!” exclaimed the Countess, as the carriage penetrated the deeper recesses of the woods. “Surely, my lord, you do not mean to pass all the autumn in this barbarous spot! One ought to bring hither a cup of the waters of Lethe, that the remembrance of pleasanter scenes may not heighten, at least, the natural dreariness of these.”

“I shall be governed by circumstances, madam” said the Count “this barbarous spot was inhabited by my ancestors.”

The carriage now stopped at the château, where, at the door of the great hall, appeared the old steward and the Parisian servants, who had been sent to prepare the château, waiting to receive their lord. Lady Blanche now perceived, that the edifice was not built entirely in the gothic style, but that it had additions of a more modern date; the large and gloomy hall, however, into which she now entered, was entirely gothic, and sumptuous tapestry, which it was now too dark to distinguish, hung upon the walls, and depicted scenes from some of the ancient Provençal romances. A vast gothic window, embroidered with *clematis* and *eglantine*, that ascended to the south, led the eye, now that the casements were thrown open, through this verdant shade, over a sloping lawn, to the tops of dark woods, that hung upon the brow of the promontory. Beyond, appeared the waters of the Mediterranean, stretching far to the south, and to the east, where they were lost in the horizon; while, to the north east, they were bounded by the luxuriant shores of Languedoc and Provence, enriched with wood, and gay with vines and sloping pastures; and, to the south west, by the majestic Pyrenees, now fading from the eye, beneath the gradual gloom.

Blanche, as she crossed the hall, stopped a moment to observe this lovely prospect, which the evening twilight obscured, yet did not conceal. But she was quickly awakened from the complacent delight, which this scene had diffused upon her mind, by the Countess, who, discontented with every object around, and impatient for refreshment and repose, hastened forward to a large parlour, whose cedar wainscot, narrow, pointed casements, and dark ceiling of carved cypress wood, gave it an aspect of peculiar gloom, which the dingy green velvet of the chairs and couches, fringed with tarnished gold, had once been designed to enliven.

While the Countess enquired for refreshment, the Count, attended by his son, went to look over some part of the château, and Lady Blanche reluctantly remained to witness the discontent and ill humour of her stepmother.

“How long have you lived in this desolate place?” said her ladyship, to the old housekeeper, who came to pay her duty.

“Above twenty years, your ladyship, on the next feast of St. Jerome.”

“How happened it, that you have lived here so long, and almost alone, too? I understood, that the château had been shut up for some years?”

“Yes, madam, it was for many years after my late lord, the Count, went to the wars; but it is above twenty years, since I and my husband came into his service. The place is so large, and has of late been so lonely, that we were lost in it, and, after some time, we went to live in a cottage at the end of the woods, near some of the tenants, and came to look after the château, every now and then. When my lord returned to France from the wars, he took a dislike to the place, and never came to live here again, and so he was satisfied with our remaining at the cottage. Alas — alas! How the château is changed from what it once was! What delight my late lady used to take in it! I well remember when

she came here a bride, and how fine it was. Now, it has been neglected so long, and is gone into such decay! I shall never see those days again!"

The Countess appearing to be somewhat offended by the thoughtless simplicity, with which the old woman regretted former times, Dorothée added — "But the château will now be inhabited, and cheerful again; not all the world could tempt me to live in it alone."

"Well, the experiment will not be made, I believe," said the Countess, displeased that her own silence had been unable to awe the loquacity of this rustic old housekeeper, now spared from further attendance by the entrance of the Count, who said he had been viewing part of the château, and found, that it would require considerable repairs and some alterations, before it would be perfectly comfortable, as a place of residence. "I am sorry to hear it, my lord," replied the Countess.

"And why sorry, madam?"

"Because the place will ill repay your trouble; and were it even a paradise, it would be insufferable at such a distance from Paris."

The Count made no reply, but walked abruptly to a window. "There are windows, my lord, but they neither admit entertainment, nor light; they show only a scene of savage nature."

"I am at a loss, madam" said the Count "to conjecture what you mean by savage nature. Do those plains, or those woods, or that fine expanse of water, deserve the name?"

"Those mountains certainly do, my lord" rejoined the Countess, pointing to the Pyrenees, "and this château, though not a work of rude nature, is, to my taste, at least, one of savage art."

The Count coloured highly. "This place, madam, was the work of my ancestors" said he, "and you must allow me to say, that your present conversation discovers neither good taste, nor good manners." Blanche, now shocked at an altercation, which appeared to be increasing to a serious disagreement, rose to leave the room, when her mother's woman entered it; and the Countess, immediately desiring to be shown to her own apartment, withdrew, attended by Mademoiselle Bearn.

Lady Blanche, it being not yet dark, took this opportunity of exploring new scenes, and, leaving the parlour, she passed from the hall into a wide gallery, whose walls were decorated by marble pilasters, which supported an arched roof, composed of a rich mosaic work. Through a distant window, that seemed to terminate the gallery, were seen the purple clouds of evening and a landscape, whose features, thinly veiled in twilight, no longer appeared distinctly, but, blended into one grand mass, stretched to the horizon, coloured only with a tint of solemn grey.

The gallery terminated in a saloon, to which the window she had seen through an open door, belonged; but the increasing dusk permitted her only an imperfect view of this apartment, which seemed to be magnificent and of modern architecture; though it had been either suffered to fall into decay, or had never been properly finished. The windows, which were numerous and large, descended low, and afforded a very extensive, and what Blanche's fancy represented to be, a very lovely prospect; and she stood for some time, surveying the grey obscurity and depicting imaginary woods and mountains, valleys and rivers, on this scene of night; her solemn sensations rather assisted, than interrupted, by the distant bark of a watchdog, and by the breeze, as it trembled upon the light foliage of the shrubs. Now and then, appeared for a moment, among the woods, a cottage light; and, at length, was heard, afar off, the evening bell of a convent, dying on the air. When she withdrew her thoughts from these subjects of fanciful delight, the gloom and silence of the saloon somewhat awed her; and, having sought the door of the gallery, and pursued, for a considerable time, a dark passage, she came to a hall, but one totally different from that she had formerly seen. By the twilight, admitted through an open portico, she could just distinguish this apartment to be of very light and airy architecture, and that it was paved with white marble, pillars of which supported the roof, that rose into arches built in the Moorish style. While Blanche stood on the steps of this portico, the moon rose over the sea, and gradually disclosed, in partial light, the beauties of the eminence, on which she stood, whence a lawn, now rude and overgrown with high grass, sloped to the woods, that, almost surrounding the château, extended in a grand sweep down the southern sides of the promontory to the very margin of the ocean. Beyond the woods, on the north-side, appeared a long tract of the plains of Languedoc; and, to the east, the landscape she had before dimly seen, with the towers of a monastery, illumined by the moon, rising over dark groves.

The soft and shadowy tint, that overspread the scene, the waves, undulating in the moonlight, and their low and measured murmurs on the beach, were circumstances, that united to elevate the unaccustomed mind of Blanche to enthusiasm.

“And have I lived in this glorious world so long” said she “and never till now beheld such a prospect — never experienced these delights! Every peasant girl, on my father's domain, has viewed from her infancy the face of nature; has ranged, at liberty, her romantic wilds, while I have been shut in a cloister from the view of these beautiful appearances, which were designed to enchant all eyes, and awaken all hearts. How can the poor nuns and friars feel the full fervour of devotion, if they never see the sun rise, or set? Never, till this evening, did I know what true devotion is; for, never before did I see the sun sink below the vast earth! Tomorrow, for the first time in my life, I will see it rise. O, who would live in Paris, to look upon black walls and dirty streets, when, in the country, they might gaze on the blue heavens, and all the green earth!”

This enthusiastic soliloquy was interrupted by a rustling noise in the hall; and, while the loneliness of the place made her sensible to fear, she thought

she perceived something moving between the pillars. For a moment, she continued silently observing it, till, ashamed of her ridiculous apprehensions, she recollected courage enough to demand who was there. "O my young lady, is it you?" said the old housekeeper, who was come to shut the windows, "I am glad it is you."

The manner, in which she spoke this, with a faint breath, rather surprised Blanche, who said, "You seemed frightened, Dorothée, what is the matter?"

"No, not frightened, ma'amselle," replied Dorothée, hesitating and trying to appear composed, "but I am old, and — a little matter startles me." The Lady Blanche smiled at the distinction. "I am glad, that my lord the Count is come to live at the château, ma'amselle" continued Dorothée "for it has been many a year deserted, and dreary enough; now, the place will look a little as it used to do, when my poor lady was alive." Blanche enquired how long it was, since the Marchioness died. "Alas! my lady" replied Dorothée "so long — that I have ceased to count the years! The place, to my mind, has mourned ever since, and I am sure my lord's vassals have! But you have lost yourself, ma'amselle — shall I show you to the other side of the château?"

Blanche enquired how long this part of the edifice had been built. "Soon after my lord's marriage, ma'am" replied Dorothée. "The place was large enough without this addition, for many rooms of the old building were even then never made use of, and my lord had a princely household too; but he thought the ancient mansion gloomy, and gloomy enough it is!"

Lady Blanche now desired to be shown to the inhabited part of the château; and, as the passages were entirely dark, Dorothée conducted her along the edge of the lawn to the opposite side of the edifice, where, a door opening into the great hall, she was met by Mademoiselle Bearn. "Where have you been so long?" said she "I had begun to think some wonderful adventure had befallen you, and that the giant of this enchanted castle, or the ghost, which, no doubt, haunts it, had conveyed you through a trapdoor into some subterranean vault, whence you were never to return."

"No" replied Blanche, laughingly "you seem to love adventures so well, that I leave them for you to achieve."

"Well, I am willing to achieve them, provided I am allowed to describe them."

"My dear Mademoiselle Bearn" said Henri, as he met her at the door of the parlour, "no ghost of these days would be so savage as to impose silence on you. Our ghosts are more civilized than to condemn a lady to a purgatory severer even, than their own, be it what it may."

Mademoiselle Bearn replied only by a laugh; and, the Count now entering the room, supper was served, during which he spoke little, frequently appeared to be abstracted from the company, and more than once remarked, that the place was greatly altered, since he had last seen it. "Many years have intervened since

that period” said he; “and, though the grand features of the scenery admit of no change, they impress me with sensations very different from those I formerly experienced.”

“Did these scenes, sir” said Blanche “ever appear more lovely, than they do now? To me this seems hardly possible.”

The Count, regarding her with a melancholy smile, said “They once were as delightful to me, as they are now to you; the landscape is not changed, but time has changed me; from my mind the illusion, which gave spirit to the colouring of nature, is fading fast! If you live, my dear Blanche, to revisit this spot, at the distance of many years, you will, perhaps, remember and understand the feelings of your father.” Lady Blanche, affected by these words, remained silent; she looked forward to the period, which the Count anticipated, and considering, that he, who now spoke, would then probably be no more, her eyes, bent to the ground, were filled with tears. She gave her hand to her father, who, smiling affectionately, rose from his chair, and went to a window to conceal his emotion.

The fatigues of the day made the party separate at an early hour, when Blanche retired through a long oak gallery to her chamber, whose spacious and lofty walls, high antiquated casements, and, what was the effect of these, its gloomy air, did not reconcile her to its remote situation, in this ancient building. The furniture, also, was of ancient date; the bed was of blue damask, trimmed with tarnished gold lace, and its lofty tester rose in the form of a canopy, whence the curtains descended, like those of such tents as are sometimes represented in old pictures, and, indeed, much resembling those, exhibited on the faded tapestry, with which the chamber was hung. To Blanche, every object here was matter of curiosity; and, taking the light from her woman to examine the tapestry, she perceived, that it represented scenes from the wars of Troy, though the almost colourless worsted now mocked the glowing actions they once had painted. She laughed at the ludicrous absurdity she observed, till, recollecting, that the hands, which had wove it, were, like the poet, whose thoughts of fire they had attempted to express, long since mouldered into dust, a train of melancholy ideas passed over her mind, and she almost wept.

Having given her woman a strict injunction to awaken her, before sunrise, she dismissed her; and then, to dissipate the gloom, which reflection had cast upon her spirits, opened one of the high casements, and was again cheered by the face of living nature. The shadowy earth, the air, and ocean — all was still. Along the deep serene of the heavens, a few light clouds floated slowly, through whose skirts the stars now seemed to tremble, and now to emerge with purer splendour. Blanche’s thoughts arose involuntarily to the Great Author of the sublime objects she contemplated, and she breathed a prayer of finer devotion, than any she had ever uttered beneath the vaulted roof of a cloister. At this casement, she remained till the glooms of midnight were stretched over the prospect. She then retired to her pillow, and, “with gay visions of tomorrow”, to those sweet slumbers, which health and happy innocence only know.

Tomorrow, to fresh woods and pastures new.