

CHAPTER III

O how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which nature to her vot'ry yields!
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even;
All that the mountain's shelt'ring bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven;
O how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!

.....

These charms shall work thy soul's eternal health,
And love, and gentleness, and joy, impart.

THE MINSTREL

St. Aubert, instead of taking the more direct road, that ran along the feet of the Pyrenees to Languedoc, chose one that, winding over the heights, afforded more extensive views and greater variety of romantic scenery. He turned a little out of his way to take leave of M. Barreaux, whom he found botanising in the wood near his château, and who, when he was told the purpose of St. Aubert's visit, expressed a degree of concern, such as his friend had thought it was scarcely possible for him to feel on any similar occasion. They parted with mutual regret.

"If anything could have tempted me from my retirement," said M. Barreaux, "it would have been the pleasure of accompanying you on this little tour. I do not often offer compliments; you may, therefore, believe me, when I say, that I shall look for your return with impatience."

The travellers proceeded on their journey. As they ascended the heights, St. Aubert often looked back upon the château, in the plain below; tender images crowded to his mind; his melancholy imagination suggested that he should return no more; and though he checked this wandering thought, still he continued to look, till the haziness of distance blended his home with the general landscape, and St. Aubert seemed to

Drag at each remove a lengthening chain.

He and Emily continued sunk in musing silence for some leagues, from which melancholy reverie Emily first awoke, and her young fancy, struck with the grandeur of the objects around, gradually yielded to delightful impressions. The road now descended into glens, confined by stupendous walls of rock, grey and barren, except where shrubs fringed their summits, or patches of meagre vegetation tinted their recesses, in which the wild goat was frequently browsing. And now, the way led to the lofty cliffs, from whence the landscape was seen extending in all its magnificence.

Emily could not restrain her transport as she looked over the pine forests of the mountains upon the vast plains, that, enriched with woods, towns, blushing vines, and plantations of almonds, palms, and olives, stretched along, till their various colours melted in distance into one harmonious hue, that seemed to unite earth with heaven. Through the whole of this glorious scene the majestic Garonne wandered; descending from its source among the Pyrenees, and winding its blue waves towards the Bay of Biscay.

The ruggedness of the unfrequented road often obliged the wanderers to alight from their little carriage, but they thought themselves amply repaid for this inconvenience by the grandeur of the scenes; and, while the muleteer led his animals slowly over the broken ground, the travellers had leisure to linger amid these solitudes, and to indulge the sublime reflections, which soften, while they elevate, the heart, and fill it with the certainty of a present God! Still the enjoyment of St. Aubert was touched with that pensive melancholy, which gives to every object a mellower tint, and breathes a sacred charm over all around.

They had provided against part of the evil to be encountered from a want of convenient inns, by carrying a stock of provisions in the carriage, so that they might take refreshment on any pleasant spot, in the open air, and pass the nights wherever they should happen to meet with a comfortable cottage. For the mind, also, they had provided, by a work on botany, written by M. Barreaux, and by several of the Latin and Italian poets; while Emily's pencil enabled her to preserve some of those combinations of forms, which charmed her at every step.

The loneliness of the road, where, only now and then, a peasant was seen driving his mule, or some mountaineer-children at play among the rocks, heightened the effect of the scenery. St. Aubert was so much struck with it, that he determined, if he could hear of a road, to penetrate further among the mountains, and, bending his way rather more to the south, to emerge into Rousillon, and coast the Mediterranean along part of that country to Languedoc.

Soon after mid-day, they reached the summit of one of those cliffs, which, bright with the verdure of palm-trees, adorn, like gems, the tremendous walls of the rocks, and which overlooked the greater part of Gascony, and part of Languedoc. Here was shade, and the fresh water of a spring, that, gliding among the turf, under the trees, thence precipitated itself from rock to rock, till its dashing murmurs were lost in the abyss, though its white foam was long seen amid the darkness of the pines below.

This was a spot well suited for rest, and the travellers alighted to dine, while the mules were unharnessed to browse on the savoury herbs that enriched this summit.

It was some time before St. Aubert or Emily could withdraw their attention from the surrounding objects, so as to partake of their little repast. Seated in the shade of the palms, St. Aubert pointed out to her observation the course of

the rivers, the situation of great towns, and the boundaries of provinces, which science, rather than the eye, enabled him to describe. Notwithstanding this occupation, when he had talked awhile he suddenly became silent, thoughtful, and tears often swelled to his eyes, which Emily observed, and the sympathy of her own heart told her their cause. The scene before them bore some resemblance, though it was on a much grander scale, to a favourite one of the late Madame St. Aubert, within view of the fishing-house. They both observed this, and thought how delighted she would have been with the present landscape, while they knew that her eyes must never, never more open upon this world. St. Aubert remembered the last time of his visiting that spot in company with her, and also the mournfully presaging thoughts which had then arisen in his mind, and were now, even thus soon, realised! The recollections subdued him, and he abruptly rose from his seat, and walked away to where no eye could observe his grief.

When he returned, his countenance had recovered its usual serenity; he took Emily's hand, pressed it affectionately, without speaking, and soon after called to the muleteer, who sat at a little distance, concerning a road among the mountains towards Rousillon. Michael said, there were several that way, but he did not know how far they extended, or even whether they were passable; and St. Aubert, who did not intend to travel after sunset, asked what village they could reach about that time. The muleteer calculated that they could easily reach Mateau, which was in their present road; but that, if they took a road that sloped more to the south, towards Rousillon, there was a hamlet, which he thought they could gain before the evening shut in.

St. Aubert, after some hesitation, determined to take the latter course, and Michael, having finished his meal, and harnessed his mules, again set forward, but soon stopped; and St. Aubert saw him doing homage to a cross, that stood on a rock impending over their way. Having concluded his devotions, he smacked his whip in the air, and, in spite of the rough road, and the pain of his poor mules, which he had been lately lamenting, rattled, in a full gallop, along the edge of a precipice, which it made the eye dizzy to look down. Emily was terrified almost to fainting; and St. Aubert, apprehending still greater danger from suddenly stopping the driver, was compelled to sit quietly, and trust his fate to the strength and discretion of the mules, who seemed to possess a greater portion of the latter quality than their master; for they carried the travellers safely into the valley, and there stopped upon the brink of the rivulet that watered it.

Leaving the splendour of extensive prospects, they now entered this narrow valley screened by

Rocks on rocks piled, as if by magic spell,
Here scorch'd by lightnings, there with ivy green.

The scene of barrenness was here and there interrupted by the spreading branches of the larch and cedar, which threw their gloom over the cliff, or athwart the torrent that rolled in the vale. No living creature appeared, except

the lizard, scrambling among the rocks, and often hanging upon points so dangerous, that fancy shrunk from the view of them. This was such a scene as *Salvator* would have chosen, had he then existed, for his canvas; St. Aubert, impressed by the romantic character of the place, almost expected to see banditti start from behind some projecting rock, and he kept his hand upon the arms with which he always travelled.

As they advanced, the valley opened; its savage features gradually softened, and, towards evening, they were among heathy mountains, stretched in far perspective, along which the solitary sheep bell was heard, and the voice of the shepherd calling his wandering flocks to the nightly fold. His cabin, partly shadowed by the cork tree and the ilex, which St. Aubert observed to flourish in higher regions of the air than any other trees, except the fir, was all the human habitation that yet appeared. Along the bottom of this valley the most vivid verdure was spread; and, in the little hollow recesses of the mountains, under the shade of the oak and chestnut, herds of cattle were grazing. Groups of them, too, were often seen reposing on the banks of the rivulet, or laving their sides in the cool stream, and sipping its wave.

The sun was now setting upon the valley; its last light gleamed upon the water, and heightened the rich yellow and purple tints of the heath and broom, that overspread the mountains. St. Aubert enquired of Michael the distance to the hamlet he had mentioned, but the man could not with certainty tell; and Emily began to fear that he had mistaken the road. Here was no human being to assist, or direct them; they had left the shepherd and his cabin far behind, and the scene became so obscured in twilight, that the eye could not follow the distant perspective of the valley in search of a cottage, or a hamlet. A glow of the horizon still marked the west, and this was of some little use to the travellers. Michael seemed endeavouring to keep up his courage by singing; his music, however, was not of a kind to disperse melancholy; he sung, in a sort of chant, one of the most dismal ditties his present auditors had ever heard, and St. Aubert at length discovered it to be a vesper hymn to his favourite saint.

They travelled on, sunk in that thoughtful melancholy, with which twilight and solitude impress the mind. Michael had now ended his ditty, and nothing was heard but the drowsy murmur of the breeze among the woods, and its light flutter, as it blew freshly into the carriage. They were at length roused by the sound of firearms. St. Aubert called to the muleteer to stop, and they listened. The noise was not repeated; but presently they heard a rustling among the brakes. St. Aubert drew forth a pistol, and ordered Michael to proceed as fast as possible; who had not long obeyed, before a horn sounded, that made the mountains ring. He looked again from the window, and then saw a young man spring from the bushes into the road, followed by a couple of dogs. The stranger was in a hunter's dress. His gun was slung across his shoulders, the hunter's horn hung from his belt, and in his hand was a small pike, which, as he held it, added to the manly grace of his figure, and assisted the agility of his steps.

After a moment's hesitation, St. Aubert again stopped the carriage, and waited till he came up, that they might enquire concerning the hamlet they were

in search of. The stranger informed him, that it was only half a league distant, that he was going thither himself, and would readily show the way. St. Aubert thanked him for the offer, and, pleased with his chevalier-like air and open countenance, asked him to take a seat in the carriage; which the stranger, with an acknowledgment, declined, adding that he would keep pace with the mules. "But I fear you will be wretchedly accommodated," said he: "the inhabitants of these mountains are a simple people, who are not only without the luxuries of life, but almost destitute of what in other places are held to be its necessaries."

"I perceive you are not one of its inhabitants, sir," said St. Aubert.

"No, sir, I am only a wanderer here."

The carriage drove on, and the increasing dusk made the travellers very thankful that they had a guide; the frequent glens, too, that now opened among the mountains, would likewise have added to their perplexity. Emily, as she looked up one of these, saw something at a great distance like a bright cloud in the air. "What light is yonder, sir?" said she.

St. Aubert looked, and perceived that it was the snowy summit of a mountain, so much higher than any around it, that it still reflected the sun's rays, while those below lay in deep shade.

At length, the village lights were seen to twinkle through the dusk, and, soon after, some cottages were discovered in the valley, or rather were seen by reflection in the stream, on whose margin they stood, and which still gleamed with the evening light.

The stranger now came up, and St. Aubert, on further enquiry, found not only that there was no inn in the place, but not any sort of house of public reception. The stranger, however, offered to walk on, and enquire for a cottage to accommodate them; for which further civility St. Aubert returned his thanks, and said, that, as the village was so near, he would alight, and walk with him. Emily followed slowly in the carriage.

On the way, St. Aubert asked his companion what success he had had in the chase. "Not much, sir," he replied, "nor do I aim at it. I am pleased with the country, and mean to saunter away a few weeks among its scenes. My dogs I take with me more for companionship than for game. This dress, too, gives me an ostensible business, and procures me that respect from the people, which would, perhaps, be refused to a lonely stranger, who had no visible motive for coming among them."

"I admire your taste," said St. Aubert, "and, if I was a younger man, should like to pass a few weeks in your way exceedingly. I, too, am a wanderer, but neither my plan nor pursuits are exactly like yours — I go in search of health, as much as of amusement." St. Aubert sighed, and paused; and then, seeming to recollect himself, he resumed: "If I can hear of a tolerable road, that shall afford decent accommodation, it is my intention to pass into Rousillon, and

along the seashore to Languedoc. You, sir, seem to be acquainted with the country, and can, perhaps, give me information on the subject."

The stranger said, that what information he could give was entirely at his service; and then mentioned a road rather more to the east, which led to a town, whence it would be easy to proceed into Rousillon.

They now arrived at the village, and commenced their search for a cottage, that would afford a night's lodging. In several, which they entered, ignorance, poverty, and mirth seemed equally to prevail; and the owners eyed St. Aubert with a mixture of curiosity and timidity. Nothing like a bed could be found, and he had ceased to enquire for one, when Emily joined him, who observed the languor of her father's countenance, and lamented, that he had taken a road so ill provided with the comforts necessary for an invalid. Other cottages, which they examined, seemed somewhat less savage than the former, consisting of two rooms, if such they could be called; the first of these occupied by mules and pigs, the second by the family, which generally consisted of six or eight children, with their parents, who slept on beds of skins and dried beech leaves, spread upon a mud floor. Here, light was admitted, and smoke discharged, through an aperture in the roof; and here the scent of spirits (for the travelling smugglers, who haunted the Pyrenees, had made this rude people familiar with the use of liquors) was generally perceptible enough. Emily turned from such scenes, and looked at her father with anxious tenderness, which the young stranger seemed to observe; for, drawing St. Aubert aside, he made him an offer of his own bed. "It is a decent one," said he, "when compared with what we have just seen, yet such as in other circumstances I should be ashamed to offer you." St. Aubert acknowledged how much he felt himself obliged by this kindness, but refused to accept it, till the young stranger would take no denial. "Do not give me the pain of knowing, sir," said he, "that an invalid, like you, lies on hard skins, while I sleep in a bed. Besides, sir, your refusal wounds my pride; I must believe you think my offer unworthy your acceptance. Let me show you the way. I have no doubt my landlady can accommodate this young lady also."

St. Aubert at length consented, that, if this could be done, he would accept his kindness, though he felt rather surprised, that the stranger had proved himself so deficient in gallantry, as to administer to the repose of an infirm man, rather than to that of a very lovely young woman, for he had not once offered the room for Emily. But she thought not of herself, and the animated smile she gave him, told how much she felt herself obliged for the preference of her father.

On their way, the stranger, whose name was Valancourt, stepped on first to speak to his hostess, and she came out to welcome St. Aubert into a cottage, much superior to any he had seen. This good woman seemed very willing to accommodate the strangers, who were soon compelled to accept the only two beds in the place. Eggs and milk were the only food the cottage afforded; but against scarcity of provisions St. Aubert had provided, and he requested Valancourt to stay, and partake with him of less homely fare; an invitation, which was readily accepted, and they passed an hour in intelligent conversation. St. Aubert was much pleased with the manly frankness,

simplicity, and keen susceptibility to the grandeur of nature, which his new acquaintance discovered; and, indeed, he had often been heard to say, that, without a certain simplicity of heart, this taste could not exist in any strong degree.

The conversation was interrupted by a violent uproar without, in which the voice of the muleteer was heard above every other sound. Valancourt started from his seat, and went to enquire the occasion; but the dispute continued so long afterwards, that St. Aubert went himself, and found Michael quarrelling with the hostess, because she had refused to let his mules lie in a little room where he and three of her sons were to pass the night. The place was wretched enough, but there was no other for these people to sleep in; and, with somewhat more of delicacy than was usual among the inhabitants of this wild tract of country, she persisted in refusing to let the animals have the same *bedchamber* with her children. This was a tender point with the muleteer; his honour was wounded when his mules were treated with disrespect, and he would have received a blow, perhaps, with more meekness. He declared that his beasts were as honest beasts, and as good beasts, as any in the whole province; and that they had a right to be well treated wherever they went. "They are as harmless as lambs," said he, "if people don't affront them. I never knew them behave themselves amiss above once or twice in my life, and then they had good reason for doing so. Once, indeed, they kicked at a boy's leg that lay asleep in the stable, and broke it; but I told them they were out there, and by St. Anthony! I believe they understood me, for they never did so again."

He concluded this eloquent harangue with protesting, that they should share with him, go where he would.

The dispute was at length settled by Valancourt, who drew the hostess aside, and desired she would let the muleteer and his beasts have the place in question to themselves, while her sons should have the bed of skins designed for him, for that he would wrap himself in his cloak, and sleep on the bench by the cottage door. But this she thought it her duty to oppose, and she felt it to be her inclination to disappoint the muleteer. Valancourt, however, was positive, and the tedious affair was at length settled.

It was late when St. Aubert and Emily retired to their rooms, and Valancourt to his station at the door, which, at this mild season, he preferred to a close cabin and a bed of skins. St. Aubert was somewhat surprised to find in his room volumes of Homer, Horace, and Petrarch; but the name of Valancourt, written in them, told him to whom they belonged.

CHAPTER IV

In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle, and each dreadful scene,
In darkness, and in storm he found delight;
Nor less than when on ocean-wave serene
The southern sun diffus'd his dazzling sheen.
Even sad vicissitude amus'd his soul;
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh, a tear, so sweet, he wish'd not to control.

THE MINSTREL

St. Aubert awoke at an early hour, refreshed by sleep, and desirous to set forward. He invited the stranger to breakfast with him; and, talking again of the road, Valancourt said, that, some months past, he had travelled as far as Beaujeu, which was a town of some consequence on the way to Rousillon. He recommended it to St. Aubert to take that route, and the latter determined to do so.

"The road from this hamlet," said Valancourt, "and that to Beaujeu, part at the distance of about a league and a half from hence; if you will give me leave, I will direct your muleteer so far. I must wander somewhere, and your company would make this a pleasanter ramble than any other I could take."

St. Aubert thankfully accepted his offer, and they set out together, the young stranger on foot, for he refused the invitation of St. Aubert to take a seat in his little carriage.

The road wound along the feet of the mountains through a pastoral valley, bright with verdure, and varied with groves of dwarf oak, beech and sycamore, under whose branches herds of cattle reposed. The mountain ash too, and the weeping birch, often threw their pendant foliage over the steeps above, where the scanty soil scarcely concealed their roots, and where their light branches waved to every breeze that fluttered from the mountains.

The travellers were frequently met at this early hour, for the sun had not yet risen upon the valley, by shepherds driving immense flocks from their folds to feed upon the hills. St. Aubert had set out thus early, not only that he might enjoy the first appearance of sunrise, but that he might inhale the first pure breath of morning, which above all things is refreshing to the spirits of the invalid. In these regions it was particularly so, where an abundance of wild flowers and aromatic herbs breathed forth their essence on the air.

The dawn, which softened the scenery with its peculiar grey tint, now dispersed, and Emily watched the progress of the day, first trembling on the tops of the highest cliffs, then touching them with splendid light, while their sides and the vale below were still wrapt in dewy mist. Meanwhile, the sullen

grey of the eastern clouds began to blush, then to redden, and then to glow with a thousand colours, till the golden light darted over all the air, touched the lower points of the mountain's brow, and glanced in long sloping beams upon the valley and its stream. All nature seemed to have awakened from death into life; the spirit of St. Aubert was renovated. His heart was full; he wept, and his thoughts ascended to the Great Creator.

Emily wished to trip along the turf, so green and bright with dew, and to taste the full delight of that liberty, which the izard seemed to enjoy as he bounded along the brow of the cliffs; while Valancourt often stopped to speak with the travellers, and with social feeling to point out to them the peculiar objects of his admiration. St. Aubert was pleased with him: "Here is the real ingenuousness and ardour of youth," said he to himself; "this young man has never been at Paris."

He was sorry when they came to the spot where the roads parted, and his heart took a more affectionate leave of him than is usual after so short an acquaintance. Valancourt talked long by the side of the carriage; seemed more than once to be going, but still lingered, and appeared to search anxiously for topics of conversation to account for his delay. At length he took leave. As he went, St. Aubert observed him look with an earnest and pensive eye at Emily, who bowed to him with a countenance full of timid sweetness, while the carriage drove on. St. Aubert, for whatever reason, soon after looked from the window, and saw Valancourt standing upon the bank of the road, resting on his pike with folded arms, and following the carriage with his eyes. He waved his hand, and Valancourt, seeming to awake from his reverie, returned the salute, and started away.

The aspect of the country now began to change, and the travellers soon found themselves among mountains covered from their base nearly to their summits with forests of gloomy pine, except where a rock of granite shot up from the vale, and lost its snowy top in the clouds. The rivulet, which had hitherto accompanied them, now expanded into a river; and, flowing deeply and silently along, reflected, as in a mirror, the blackness of the impending shades. Sometimes a cliff was seen lifting its bold head above the woods and the vapours, that floated midway down the mountains; and sometimes a face of perpendicular marble rose from the water's edge, over which the larch threw his gigantic arms, here scathed with lightning, and there floating in luxuriant foliage.

They continued to travel over a rough and unfrequented road, seeing now and then at a distance the solitary shepherd, with his dog, stalking along the valley, and hearing only the dashing of torrents, which the woods concealed from the eye, the long sullen murmur of the breeze, as it swept over the pines, or the notes of the eagle and the vulture, which were seen towering round the beetling cliff.

Often, as the carriage moved slowly over uneven ground, St. Aubert alighted, and amused himself with examining the curious plants that grew on the banks

of the road, and with which these regions abound; while Emily, wrapt in high enthusiasm, wandered away under the shades, listening in deep silence to the lonely murmur of the woods.

Neither village nor hamlet was seen for many leagues; the goatherd's or the hunter's cabin, perched among the cliffs of the rocks, were the only human habitations that appeared.

The travellers again took their dinner in the open air, on a pleasant spot in the valley, under the spreading shade of cedars; and then set forward towards Beaujeu.

The road now began to descend, and, leaving the pine forests behind, wound among rocky precipices. The evening twilight again fell over the scene, and the travellers were ignorant how far they might yet be from Beaujeu. St. Aubert, however, conjectured that the distance could not be very great, and comforted himself with the prospect of travelling on a more frequented road after reaching that town, where he designed to pass the night. Mingled woods, and rocks, and heathy mountains were now seen obscurely through the dusk; but soon even these imperfect images faded in darkness. Michael proceeded with caution, for he could scarcely distinguish the road; his mules, however, seemed to have more sagacity, and their steps were sure.

On turning the angle of a mountain, a light appeared at a distance, that illumined the rocks, and the horizon to a great extent. It was evidently a large fire, but whether accidental, or otherwise, there were no means of knowing. St. Aubert thought it was probably kindled by some of the numerous banditti, that infested the Pyrenees, and he became watchful and anxious to know whether the road passed near this fire. He had arms with him, which, on an emergency, might afford some protection, though certainly a very unequal one, against a band of robbers, so desperate too as those usually were who haunted these wild regions. While many reflections rose upon his mind, he heard a voice shouting from the road behind, and ordering the muleteer to stop. St. Aubert bade him proceed as fast as possible; but either Michael, or his mules were obstinate, for they did not quit the old pace. Horses' feet were now heard; a man rode up to the carriage, still ordering the driver to stop; and St. Aubert, who could no longer doubt his purpose, was with difficulty able to prepare a pistol for his defence, when his hand was upon the door of the chaise. The man staggered on his horse, the report of the pistol was followed by a groan, and St. Aubert's horror may be imagined, when in the next instant he thought he heard the faint voice of Valancourt. He now himself bade the muleteer stop; and, pronouncing the name of Valancourt, was answered in a voice, that no longer suffered him to doubt. St. Aubert, who instantly alighted and went to his assistance, found him still sitting on his horse, but bleeding profusely, and appearing to be in great pain, though he endeavoured to soften the terror of St. Aubert by assurances that he was not materially hurt, the wound being only in his arm. St. Aubert, with the muleteer, assisted him to dismount, and he sat down on the bank of the road, where St. Aubert tried to bind up his arm, but his hands trembled so excessively that he could not accomplish it; and, Michael being now

gone in pursuit of the horse, which, on being disengaged from his rider, had galloped off, he called Emily to his assistance. Receiving no answer, he went to the carriage, and found her sunk on the seat in a fainting fit. Between the distress of this circumstance and that of leaving Valancourt bleeding, he scarcely knew what he did; he endeavoured, however, to raise her, and called to Michael to fetch water from the rivulet that flowed by the road, but Michael was gone beyond the reach of his voice. Valancourt, who heard these calls, and also the repeated name of Emily, instantly understood the subject of his distress; and, almost forgetting his own condition, he hastened to her relief. She was reviving when he reached the carriage; and then, understanding that anxiety for him had occasioned her indisposition, he assured her, in a voice that trembled, but not from anguish, that his wound was of no consequence. While he said this St. Aubert turned round, and perceiving that he was still bleeding, the subject of his alarm changed again, and he hastily formed some handkerchiefs into a bandage. This stopped the effusion of the blood; but St. Aubert, dreading the consequence of the wound, enquired repeatedly how far they were from Beaujeu; when, learning that it was at two leagues' distance, his distress increased, since he knew not how Valancourt, in his present state, would bear the motion of the carriage, and perceived that he was already faint from loss of blood. When he mentioned the subject of his anxiety, Valancourt entreated that he would not suffer himself to be thus alarmed on his account, for that he had no doubt he should be able to support himself very well; and then he talked of the accident as a slight one. The muleteer being now returned with Valancourt's horse, assisted him into the chaise; and, as Emily was now revived, they moved slowly on towards Beaujeu.

St. Aubert, when he had recovered from the terror occasioned him by this accident, expressed surprise on seeing Valancourt, who explained his unexpected appearance by saying, "You, sir, renewed my taste for society; when you had left the hamlet, it did indeed appear a solitude. I determined, therefore, since my object was merely amusement, to change the scene; and I took this road, because I knew it led through a more romantic tract of mountains than the spot I have left. Besides," added he, hesitating for an instant, "I will own, and why should I not? that I had some hope of overtaking you."

"And I have made you a very unexpected return for the compliment," said St. Aubert, who lamented again the rashness which had produced the accident, and explained the cause of his late alarm. But Valancourt seemed anxious only to remove from the minds of his companions every unpleasant feeling relative to himself; and, for that purpose, still struggled against a sense of pain, and tried to converse with gaiety. Emily meanwhile was silent, except when Valancourt particularly addressed her, and there was at those times a tremulous tone in his voice that spoke much.

They were now so near the fire, which had long flamed at a distance on the blackness of night, that it gleamed upon the road, and they could distinguish figures moving about the blaze. The way winding still nearer, they perceived in the valley one of those numerous bands of gipsies, which at that period particularly haunted the wilds of the Pyrenees, and lived partly by plundering

the traveller. Emily looked with some degree of terror on the savage countenances of these people, shown by the fire, which heightened the romantic effects of the scenery, as it threw a red dusky gleam upon the rocks and on the foliage of the trees, leaving heavy masses of shade and regions of obscurity, which the eye feared to penetrate. They were preparing their supper; a large pot stood by the fire, over which several figures were busy. The blaze discovered a rude kind of tent, round which many children and dogs were playing, and the whole formed a picture highly grotesque. The travellers saw plainly their danger. Valancourt was silent, but laid his hand on one of St. Aubert's pistols; St. Aubert drew forth another, and Michael was ordered to proceed as fast as possible. They passed the place, however, without being attacked; the rovers being probably unprepared for the opportunity, and too busy about their supper to feel much interest, at the moment, in anything besides.

After a league and a half more, passed in darkness, the travellers arrived at Beaujeu, and drove up to the only inn the place afforded; which, though superior to any they had seen since they entered the mountains, was bad enough.

The surgeon of the town was immediately sent for, if a surgeon he could be called, who prescribed for horses as well as for men, and shaved faces at least as dexterously as he set bones. After examining Valancourt's arm, and perceiving that the bullet had passed through the flesh without touching the bone, he dressed it, and left him with a solemn prescription of quiet, which his patient was not inclined to obey. The delight of ease had now succeeded to pain; for ease may be allowed to assume a positive quality when contrasted with anguish; and, his spirits thus reanimated, he wished to partake of the conversation of St. Aubert and Emily, who, released from so many apprehensions, were uncommonly cheerful. Late as it was, however, St. Aubert was obliged to go out with the landlord to buy meat for supper; and Emily, who, during this interval, had been absent as long as she could, upon excuses of looking to their accommodation, which she found rather better than she expected, was compelled to return, and converse with Valancourt alone. They talked of the character of the scenes they had passed, of the natural history of the country, of poetry, and of St. Aubert; a subject on which Emily always spoke and listened to with peculiar pleasure.

The travellers passed an agreeable evening; but St. Aubert was fatigued with his journey; and, as Valancourt seemed again sensible of pain, they separated soon after supper.

In the morning St. Aubert found that Valancourt had passed a restless night; that he was feverish, and his wound very painful. The surgeon, when he dressed it, advised him to remain quietly at Beaujeu; advice which was too reasonable to be rejected. St. Aubert, however, had no favourable opinion of this practitioner, and was anxious to commit Valancourt into more skilful hands; but learning, upon enquiry, that there was no town within several leagues which seemed more likely to afford better advice, he altered the plan of his

journey, and determined to await the recovery of Valancourt, who, with somewhat more ceremony than sincerity, made many objections to this delay.

By order of his surgeon, Valancourt did not go out of the house that day; but St. Aubert and Emily surveyed with delight the environs of the town, situated at the feet of the Pyrenean Alps, that rose, some in abrupt precipices, and others swelling with woods of cedar, fir, and cypress, which stretched nearly to their highest summits. The cheerful green of the beech and mountain ash was sometimes seen, like a gleam of light, amidst the dark verdure of the forest; and sometimes a torrent poured its sparkling flood, high among the woods.

Valancourt's indisposition detained the travellers at Beaujeu several days, during which interval St. Aubert had observed his disposition and his talents with the philosophic inquiry so natural to him. He saw a frank and generous nature, full of ardour, highly susceptible of whatever is grand and beautiful, but impetuous, wild, and somewhat romantic. Valancourt had known little of the world. His perceptions were clear, and his feelings just; his indignation of an unworthy, or his admiration of a generous action, were expressed in terms of equal vehemence. St. Aubert sometimes smiled at his warmth, but seldom checked it, and often repeated to himself, "This young man has never been at Paris." A sigh sometimes followed this silent ejaculation. He determined not to leave Valancourt till he should be perfectly recovered; and, as he was now well enough to travel, though not able to manage his horse, St. Aubert invited him to accompany him for a few days in the carriage. This he the more readily did, since he had discovered that Valancourt was of a family of the same name in Gascony, with whose respectability he was well acquainted. The latter accepted the offer with great pleasure, and they again set forward among these romantic wilds about Rousillon.

They travelled leisurely; stopping wherever a scene uncommonly grand appeared; frequently alighting to walk to an eminence, whither the mules could not go, from which the prospect opened in greater magnificence; and often sauntering over hillocks covered with lavender, wild thyme, juniper, and tamarisc; and under the shades of woods, between those boles they caught the long mountain-vista, sublime beyond anything that Emily had ever imagined.

St. Aubert sometimes amused himself with botanising, while Valancourt and Emily strolled on; he pointing out to her notice the objects that particularly charmed him, and reciting beautiful passages from such of the Latin and Italian poets as he had heard her admire. In the pauses of conversation, when he thought himself not observed, he frequently fixed his eyes pensively on her countenance, which expressed with so much animation the taste and energy of her mind; and when he spoke again, there was a peculiar tenderness in the tone of his voice, that defeated any attempt to conceal his sentiments. By degrees these silent pauses became more frequent; till Emily, only, betrayed an anxiety to interrupt them; and she; who had been hitherto reserved, would now talk again, and again, of the woods and the valleys and the mountains, to avoid the danger of sympathy and silence.

From Beaujeu the road had constantly ascended, conducting the travellers into the higher regions of the air, where immense glaciers exhibited their frozen horrors, and eternal snow whitened the summits of the mountains. They often paused to contemplate these stupendous scenes, and, seated on some wild cliff, where only the ilex or the larch could flourish, looked over dark forests of fir, and precipices where human foot had never wandered, into the glen — so deep, that the thunder of the torrent, which was seen to foam along the bottom, was scarcely heard to murmur. Over these crags rose others of stupendous height, and fantastic shape; some shooting into cones; others impending far over their base, in huge masses of granite, along whose broken ridges was often lodged a weight of snow, that, trembling even to the vibration of a sound, threatened to bear destruction in its course to the vale. Around, on every side, far as the eye could penetrate, were seen only forms of grandeur — the long perspective of mountain tops, tinged with ethereal blue, or white with snow; valleys of ice, and forests of gloomy fir. The serenity and clearness of the air in these high regions were particularly delightful to the travellers; it seemed to inspire them with a finer spirit, and diffused an indescribable complacency over their minds. They had no words to express the sublime emotions they felt. A solemn expression characterised the feelings of St. Aubert; tears often came to his eyes, and he frequently walked away from his companions. Valancourt now and then spoke, to point to Emily's notice some feature of the scene. The thinness of the atmosphere, through which every object came so distinctly to the eye, surprised and deluded her; who could scarcely believe that objects, which appeared so near, were, in reality, so distant. The deep silence of these solitudes was broken only at intervals by the scream of the vultures, seen cowering round some cliff below, or by the cry of the eagle sailing high in the air; except when the travellers listened to the hollow thunder that sometimes muttered at their feet. While, above, the deep blue of the heavens was unobscured by the lightest cloud, half way down the mountains, long billows of vapour were frequently seen rolling, now wholly excluding the country below, and now opening, and partially revealing its features. Emily delighted to observe the grandeur of these clouds as they changed in shape and tints, and to watch their various effect on the lower world, whose features, partly veiled, were continually assuming new forms of sublimity.

After traversing these regions for many leagues, they began to descend towards Rousillon, and features of beauty then mingled with the scene. Yet the travellers did not look back without some regret to the sublime objects they had quitted; though the eye, fatigued with the extension of its powers, was glad to repose on the verdure of woods and pastures, that now hung on the margin of the river below; to view again the humble cottage shaded by cedars, the playful group of mountaineer-children, and the flowery nooks that appeared among the hills.

As they descended, they saw at a distance, on the right, one of the grand passes of the Pyrenees into Spain, gleaming with its battlements and towers to the splendour of the setting rays, yellow tops of woods colouring the steeps below, while far above aspired the snowy points of the mountains, still reflecting a rosy hue.

St. Aubert began to look out for the little town he had been directed to by the people of Beaujeu, and where he meant to pass the night; but no habitation yet appeared. Of its distance Valancourt could not assist him to judge, for he had never been so far along this chain of Alps before. There was, however, a road to guide them; and there could be little doubt that it was the right one; for, since they had left Beaujeu, there had been no variety of tracks to perplex or mislead.

The sun now gave his last light, and St. Aubert bade the muleteer proceed with all possible dispatch. He found, indeed, the lassitude of illness return upon him, after a day of uncommon fatigue, both of body and mind, and he longed for repose. His anxiety was not soothed by observing a numerous train, consisting of men, horses, and loaded mules, winding down the steeps of an opposite mountain, appearing and disappearing at intervals among the woods, so that its numbers could not be judged of. Something bright, like arms, glanced in the setting ray, and the military dress was distinguishable upon the men who were in the van, and on others scattered among the troop that followed. As these wound into the vale, the rear of the party emerged from the woods, and exhibited a band of soldiers. St. Aubert's apprehensions now subsided; he had no doubt that the train before him consisted of smugglers, who, in conveying prohibited goods over the Pyrenees, had been encountered, and conquered by a party of troops.

The travellers had lingered so long among the sublimer scenes of these mountains, that they found themselves entirely mistaken in their calculation that they could reach Montigny at sunset; but, as they wound along the valley, the saw, on a rude Alpine bridge, that united two lofty crags of the glen, a group of mountaineer children, amusing themselves with dropping pebbles into a torrent below, and watching the stones plunge into the water, that threw up its white spray high in the air as it received them, and returned a sullen sound, which the echoes of the mountains prolonged. Under the bridge was seen a perspective of the valley, with its cataract descending among the rocks, and a cottage on a cliff, overshadowed with pines. It appeared, that they could not be far from some small town. St. Aubert bade the muleteer stop, and then called to the children to enquire if he was near Montigny; but the distance, and the roaring of the waters, would not suffer his voice to be heard; and the crags, adjoining the bridge, were of such tremendous height and steepness, that to have climbed either would have been scarcely practicable to a person unacquainted with the ascent. St. Aubert, therefore, did not waste more moments in delay. They continued to travel long after twilight had obscured the road, which was so broken, that, now thinking it safer to walk than to ride, they all alighted. The moon was rising, but her light was yet too feeble to assist them. While they stepped carefully on, they heard the vesper bell of a convent. The twilight would not permit them to distinguish anything like a building, but the sounds seemed to come from some woods, that overhung an acclivity to the right. Valancourt proposed to go in search of this convent. "If they will not accommodate us with a night's lodging," said he, "they may certainly inform us how far we are from Montigny, and direct us towards it." He was bounding forward, without waiting St. Aubert's reply, when the latter stopped him. "I am

very weary," said St. Aubert, "and wish for nothing so much as for immediate rest. We will all go to the convent; your good looks would defeat our purpose; but when they see mine and Emily's exhausted countenances, they will scarcely deny us repose."

As he said this, he took Emily's arm within his, and, telling Michael to wait awhile in the road with the carriage, they began to ascend towards the woods, guided by the bell of the convent. His steps were feeble, and Valancourt offered him his arm, which he accepted. The moon now threw a faint light over their path, and, soon after, enabled them to distinguish some towers rising above the tops of the woods. Still following the note of the bell, they entered the shade of those woods, lighted only by the moonbeams, that glided down between the leaves, and threw a tremulous uncertain gleam upon the steep track they were winding. The gloom and the silence that prevailed, except when the bell returned upon the air, together with the wildness of the surrounding scene, struck Emily with a degree of fear, which, however, the voice and conversation of Valancourt somewhat repressed. When they had been some time ascending, St. Aubert complained of weariness, and they stopped to rest upon a little green summit, where the trees opened, and admitted the moonlight. He sat down upon the turf, between Emily and Valancourt. The bell had now ceased, and the deep repose of the scene was undisturbed by any sound, for the low dull murmur of some distant torrents might be said to sooth, rather than to interrupt, the silence.

Before them, extended the valley they had quitted; its rocks, and woods to the left, just silvered by the rays, formed a contrast to the deep shadow, that involved the opposite cliffs, whose fringed summits only were tipped with light; while the distant perspective of the valley was lost in the yellow mist of moonlight. The travellers sat for some time wrapt in the complacency which such scenes inspire.

"These scenes," said Valancourt, at length, "soften the heart, like the notes of sweet music, and inspire that delicious melancholy which no person, who had felt it once, would resign for the gayest pleasures. They waken our best and purest feelings, disposing us to benevolence, pity, and friendship. Those whom I love — I always seem to love more in such an hour as this." His voice trembled, and he paused.

St. Aubert was silent; Emily perceived a warm tear fall upon the hand he held; she knew the object of his thoughts; hers too had, for some time, been occupied by the remembrance of her mother. He seemed by an effort to rouse himself. "Yes," said he, with a half-suppressed sigh, "the memory of those we love — of times for ever past! in such an hour as this steals upon the mind, like a strain of distant music in the stillness of night; — all tender and harmonious as this landscape, sleeping in the mellow moonlight." After the pause of a moment, St. Aubert added, "I have always fancied, that I thought with more clearness, and precision, at such an hour than at any other, and that heart must be insensible in a great degree, that does not soften to its influence. But many such there are."

Valancourt sighed.

"Are there, indeed, many such?" said Emily.

"A few years hence, my Emily," replied St. Aubert, "and you may smile at the recollection of that question — if you do not weep to it. But come, I am somewhat refreshed, let us proceed."

Having emerged from the woods, they saw, upon a turf y hillock above, the convent of which they were in search. A high wall, that surrounded it, led them to an ancient gate, at which they knocked; and the poor monk, who opened it, conducted them into a small adjoining room, where he desired they would wait while he informed the superior of their request. In this interval, several friars came in separately to look at them; and at length the first monk returned, and they followed him to a room, where the superior was sitting in an armchair, with a large folio volume, printed in black letter, open on a desk before him. He received them with courtesy, though he did not rise from his seat; and, having asked them a few questions, granted their request. After a short conversation, formal and solemn on the part of the superior, they withdrew to the apartment where they were to sup, and Valancourt, whom one of the inferior friars civilly desired to accompany, went to seek Michael and his mules. They had not descended half way down the cliffs, before they heard the voice of the muleteer echoing far and wide. Sometimes he called on St. Aubert, and sometimes on Valancourt; who having, at length, convinced him that he had nothing to fear either for himself, or his master; and having disposed of him, for the night, in a cottage on the skirts of the woods, returned to sup with his friends, on such sober fare as the monks thought it prudent to set before them. While St. Aubert was too much indisposed to share it, Emily, in her anxiety for her father, forgot herself; and Valancourt, silent and thoughtful, yet never inattentive to them, appeared particularly solicitous to accommodate and relieve St. Aubert, who often observed, while his daughter was pressing him to eat, or adjusting the pillow she had placed in the back of his armchair, that Valancourt fixed on her a look of pensive tenderness, which he was not displeased to understand.

They separated at an early hour, and retired to their respective apartments. Emily was shown to hers by a nun of the convent, whom she was glad to dismiss, for her heart was melancholy, and her attention so much abstracted, that conversation with a stranger was painful. She thought her father daily declining, and attributed his present fatigue more to the feeble state of his frame, than to the difficulty of the journey. A train of gloomy ideas haunted her mind, till she fell asleep.

In about two hours after, she was awakened by the chiming of a bell, and then heard quick steps pass along the gallery, into which her chamber opened. She was so little accustomed to the manners of a convent, as to be alarmed by this circumstance; her fears, ever alive for her father, suggested that he was very ill, and she rose in haste to go to him. Having paused, however, to let the persons in the gallery pass before she opened her door, her thoughts, in the

mean time, recovered from the confusion of sleep, and she understood that the bell was the call of the monks to prayers. It had now ceased, and, all being again still, she forbore to go to St. Aubert's room. Her mind was not disposed for immediate sleep, and the moonlight, that shone into her chamber, invited her to open the casement, and look out upon the country.

It was a still and beautiful night, the sky was unobscured by any cloud, and scarce a leaf of the woods beneath trembled in the air. As she listened, the midnight hymn of the monks rose softly from a chapel, that stood on one of the lower cliffs, a holy strain, that seemed to ascend through the silence of night to heaven, and her thoughts ascended with it. From the consideration of His works, her mind arose to the adoration of the Deity, in His goodness and power; wherever she turned her view, whether on the sleeping earth, or to the vast regions of space, glowing with worlds beyond the reach of human thought, the sublimity of God, and the majesty of His presence appeared. Her eyes were filled with tears of awful love and admiration; and she felt that pure devotion, superior to all the distinctions of human system, which lifts the soul above this world, and seems to expand it into a nobler nature; such devotion as can, perhaps, only be experienced, when the mind, rescued, for a moment, from the humbleness of earthly considerations, aspires to contemplate His power in the sublimity of His works, and His goodness in the infinity of His blessings.

Is it not now the hour,
The holy hour, when to the cloudless height
Of yon starred concave climbs the full-orbed moon,
And to this nether world in solemn stillness,
Gives sign, that, to the list'ning ear of Heaven
Religion's voice should plead? The very babe
Knows this, and, chance awak'd, his little hands
Lifts to the gods, and on his innocent couch
Calls down a blessing.

CARACTACUS

The midnight chant of the monks soon after dropped into silence; but Emily remained at the casement, watching the setting moon, and the valley sinking into deep shade, and willing to prolong her present state of mind. At length she retired to her mattress, and sunk into tranquil slumber.

CHAPTER V

While in the rosy vale
Love breath'd his infant sighs, from anguish free.
THOMSON

St. Aubert, sufficiently restored by a night's repose to pursue his journey, set out in the morning, with his family and Valancourt, for Rousillon, which he hoped to reach before nightfall. The scenes, through which they now passed, were as wild and romantic, as any they had yet observed, with this difference, that beauty, every now and then, softened the landscape into smiles. Little woody recesses appeared among the mountains, covered with bright verdure and flowers; or a pastoral valley opened its grassy bosom in the shade of the cliffs, with flocks and herds loitering along the banks of a rivulet, that refreshed it with perpetual green. St. Aubert could not repent the having taken this fatiguing road, though he was this day, also, frequently obliged to alight, to walk along the rugged precipice, and to climb the steep and flinty mountain. The wonderful sublimity and variety of the prospects repaid him for all this, and the enthusiasm, with which they were viewed by his young companions, heightened his own, and awakened a remembrance of all the delightful emotions of his early days, when the sublime charms of nature were first unveiled to him. He found great pleasure in conversing with Valancourt, and in listening to his ingenuous remarks. The fire and simplicity of his manners seemed to render him a characteristic figure in the scenes around them; and St. Aubert discovered in his sentiments the justness and the dignity of an elevated mind, unbiased by intercourse with the world. He perceived, that his opinions were formed, rather than imbibed; were more the result of thought, than of learning. Of the world he seemed to know nothing; for he believed well of all mankind, and this opinion gave him the reflected image of his own heart.

St. Aubert, as he sometimes lingered to examine the wild plants in his path, often looked forward with pleasure to Emily and Valancourt, as they strolled on together; he, with a countenance of animated delight, pointing to her attention some grand feature of the scene; and she, listening and observing with a look of tender seriousness, that spoke the elevation of her mind. They appeared like two lovers who had never strayed beyond these their native mountains; whose situation had secluded them from the frivolities of common life, whose ideas were simple and grand, like the landscapes among which they moved, and who knew no other happiness, than in the union of pure and affectionate hearts. St. Aubert smiled, and sighed at the romantic picture of felicity his fancy drew; and sighed again to think, that nature and simplicity were so little known to the world, as that their pleasures were thought romantic.

"The world," said he, pursuing this train of thought, "ridicules a passion which it seldom feels; its scenes, and its interests, distract the mind, deprave the taste, corrupt the heart, and love cannot exist in a heart that has lost the meek dignity of innocence. Virtue and taste are nearly the same, for virtue is little more than active taste, and the most delicate affections of each combine in real love. How then are we to look for love in great cities, where selfishness,

dissipation, and insincerity supply the place of tenderness, simplicity and truth?"

It was near noon, when the travellers, having arrived at a piece of steep and dangerous road, alighted to walk. The road wound up an ascent, that was clothed with wood, and, instead of following the carriage, they entered the refreshing shade. A dewy coolness was diffused upon the air, which, with the bright verdure of turf, that grew under the trees, the mingled fragrance of flowers and of balm, thyme, and lavender, that enriched it, and the grandeur of the pines, beech, and chestnuts, that overshadowed them, rendered this a most delicious retreat. Sometimes, the thick foliage excluded all view of the country; at others, it admitted some partial catches of the distant scenery, which gave hints to the imagination to picture landscapes more interesting, more impressive, than any that had been presented to the eye. The wanderers often lingered to indulge in these reveries of fancy.

The pauses of silence, such as had formerly interrupted the conversations of Valancourt and Emily, were more frequent today than ever. Valancourt often dropped suddenly from the most animating vivacity into fits of deep musing, and there was, sometimes, an unaffected melancholy in his smile, which Emily could not avoid understanding, for her heart was interested in the sentiment it spoke.

St. Aubert was refreshed by the shades, and they continued to saunter under them, following, as nearly as they could guess, the direction of the road, till they perceived that they had totally lost it. They had continued near the brow of the precipice, allured by the scenery it exhibited, while the road wound far away over the cliff above. Valancourt called loudly to Michael, but heard no voice, except his own, echoing among the rocks, and his various efforts to regain the road were equally unsuccessful. While they were thus circumstanced, they perceived a shepherd's cabin, between the boles of the trees at some distance, and Valancourt bounded on first to ask assistance. When he reached it, he saw only two little children, at play, on the turf before the door. He looked into the hut, but no person was there, and the eldest of the boys told him that their father was with his flocks, and their mother was gone down into the vale, but would be back presently. As he stood, considering what was further to be done, on a sudden he heard Michael's voice roaring forth most manfully among the cliffs above, till he made their echoes ring. Valancourt immediately answered the call, and endeavoured to make his way through the thicket that clothed the steeps, following the direction of the sound. After much struggle over brambles and precipices, he reached Michael, and at length prevailed with him to be silent, and to listen to him. The road was at a considerable distance from the spot where St. Aubert and Emily were; the carriage could not easily return to the entrance of the wood, and, since it would be very fatiguing for St. Aubert to climb the long and steep road to the place where it now stood, Valancourt was anxious to find a more easy ascent, by the way he had himself passed.

Meanwhile St. Aubert and Emily approached the cottage, and rested themselves on a rustic bench, fastened between two pines, which overshadowed it, till Valancourt, whose steps they had observed, should return.

The eldest of the children desisted from his play, and stood still to observe the strangers, while the younger continued his little gambols, and teased his brother to join in them. St. Aubert looked with pleasure upon this picture of infantine simplicity, till it brought to his remembrance his own boys, whom he had lost about the age of these, and their lamented mother; and he sunk into a thoughtfulness, which Emily observing, she immediately began to sing one of those simple and lively airs he was so fond of, and which she knew how to give with the most captivating sweetness. St. Aubert smiled on her through his tears, took her hand and pressed it affectionately, and then tried to dissipate the melancholy reflections that lingered in his mind.

While she sung, Valancourt approached, who was unwilling to interrupt her, and paused at a little distance to listen. When she had concluded, he joined the party, and told them, that he had found Michael, as well as a way, by which he thought they could ascend the cliff to the carriage. He pointed to the woody steeps above, which St. Aubert surveyed with an anxious eye. He was already wearied by his walk, and this ascent was formidable to him. He thought, however, it would be less toilsome than the long and broken road, and he determined to attempt it; but Emily, ever watchful of his ease, proposing that he should rest, and dine before they proceeded further, Valancourt went to the carriage for the refreshments deposited there.

On his return, he proposed removing a little higher up the mountain, to where the woods opened upon a grand and extensive prospect; and thither they were preparing to go, when they saw a young woman join the children, and caress and weep over them.

The travellers, interested by her distress, stopped to observe her. She took the youngest of the children in her arms, and, perceiving the strangers, hastily dried her tears, and proceeded to the cottage. St. Aubert, on enquiring the occasion of her sorrow, learned that her husband, who was a shepherd, and lived here in the summer months to watch over the flocks he led to feed upon these mountains, had lost, on the preceding night, his little all. A gang of gipsies, who had for some time infested the neighbourhood, had driven away several of his master's sheep. "Jacques," added the shepherd's wife, "had saved a little money, and had bought a few sheep with it, and now they must go to his master for those that are stolen; and what is worse than all, his master, when he comes to know how it is, will trust him no longer with the care of his flocks, for he is a hard man! and then what is to become of our children!"

The innocent countenance of the woman, and the simplicity of her manner in relating her grievance, inclined St. Aubert to believe her story; and Valancourt, convinced that it was true, asked eagerly what was the value of the stolen sheep; on hearing which he turned away with a look of disappointment. St. Aubert put some money into her hand, Emily too gave something from her

little purse, and they walked towards the cliff; but Valancourt lingered behind, and spoke to the shepherd's wife, who was now weeping with gratitude and surprise. He enquired how much money was yet wanting to replace the stolen sheep, and found, that it was a sum very little short of all he had about him. He was perplexed and distressed. "This sum then," said he to himself, "would make this poor family completely happy — it is in my power to give it — to make them completely happy! But what is to become of me? — how shall I contrive to reach home with the little money that will remain?" For a moment he stood, unwilling to forego the luxury of raising a family from ruin to happiness, yet considering the difficulties of pursuing his journey with so small a sum as would be left.

While he was in this state of perplexity, the shepherd himself appeared: his children ran to meet him; he took one of them in his arms, and, with the other clinging to his coat, came forward with a loitering step. His forlorn and melancholy look determined Valancourt at once; he threw down all the money he had, except a very few louis, and bounded away after St. Aubert and Emily, who were proceeding slowly up the steep. Valancourt had seldom felt his heart so light as at this moment; his gay spirits danced with pleasure; every object around him appeared more interesting, or beautiful, than before. St. Aubert observed the uncommon vivacity of his countenance: "What has pleased you so much?" said he. "O what a lovely day," replied Valancourt, "how brightly the sun shines, how pure is this air, what enchanting scenery!" "It is indeed enchanting," said St. Aubert, whom early experience had taught to understand the nature of Valancourt's present feelings. "What pity that the wealthy, who can command such sunshine, should ever pass their days in gloom — in the cold shade of selfishness! For you, my young friend, may the sun always shine as brightly as at this moment; may your own conduct always give you the sunshine of benevolence and reason united!"

Valancourt, highly flattered by this compliment, could make no reply but by a smile of gratitude.

They continued to wind under the woods, between the grassy knolls of the mountain, and, as they reached the shady summit, which he had pointed out, the whole party burst into an exclamation. Behind the spot where they stood, the rock rose perpendicularly in a massy wall to a considerable height, and then branched out into overhanging crags. Their grey tints were well contrasted by the bright hues of the plants and wild flowers, that grew in their fractured sides, and were deepened by the gloom of the pines and cedars, that waved above. The steeps below, over which the eye passed abruptly to the valley, were fringed with thickets of alpine shrubs; and, lower still, appeared the tufted tops of the chesnut woods, that clothed their base, among which peeped forth the shepherd's cottage, just left by the travellers, with its bluish smoke curling high in the air. On every side appeared the majestic summits of the Pyrenees, some exhibiting tremendous crags of marble, whose appearance was changing every instant, as the varying lights fell upon their surface; others, still higher, displaying only snowy points, while their lower steeps were covered almost invariably with forests of pine, larch, and oak, that stretched down to the vale.

This was one of the narrow valleys, that open from the Pyrenees into the country of Rousillon, and whose green pastures, and cultivated beauty, form a decided and wonderful contrast to the romantic grandeur that environs it. Through a vista of the mountains appeared the lowlands of Rousillon, tinted with the blue haze of distance, as they united with the waters of the Mediterranean; where, on a promontory, which marked the boundary of the shore, stood a lonely beacon, over which were seen circling flights of seafowl. Beyond, appeared, now and then, a stealing sail, white with the sunbeam, and whose progress was perceivable by its approach to the light-house. Sometimes, too, was seen a sail so distant, that it served only to mark the line of separation between the sky and the waves.

On the other side of the valley, immediately opposite to the spot where the travellers rested, a rocky pass opened toward Gascony. Here no sign of cultivation appeared. The rocks of granite, that screened the glen, rose abruptly from their base, and stretched their barren points to the clouds, unvaried with woods, and uncheered even by a hunter's cabin. Sometimes, indeed, a gigantic larch threw its long shade over the precipice, and here and there a cliff reared on its brow a monumental cross, to tell the traveller the fate of him who had ventured thither before. This spot seemed the very haunt of banditti; and Emily, as she looked down upon it, almost expected to see them stealing out from some hollow cave to look for their prey. Soon after an object not less terrific struck her — a gibbet standing on a point of rock near the entrance of the pass, and immediately over one of the crosses she had before observed. These were hieroglyphics that told a plain and dreadful story. She forbore to point it out to St. Aubert, but it threw a gloom over her spirits, and made her anxious to hasten forward, that they might with certainty reach Rousillon before night-fall. It was necessary, however, that St. Aubert should take some refreshment, and, seating themselves on the short dry turf, they opened the basket of provisions, while

by breezy murmurs cool'd,
Broad o'er their heads the verdant cedars wave,
And high palmetos lift their graceful shade.

— *they draw*
Ethereal soul, there drink reviving gales
Profusely breathing from the piney groves,
And vales of fragrance; there at a distance hear
The roaring floods, and cataracts.

THOMSON

St. Aubert was revived by rest, and by the serene air of this summit; and Valancourt was so charmed with all around, and with the conversation of his companions, that he seemed to have forgotten he had any further to go. Having concluded their simple repast, they gave a long farewell look to the scene, and again began to ascend. St. Aubert rejoiced when he reached the carriage, which Emily entered with him; but Valancourt, willing to take a more extensive view of the enchanting country, into which they were about to descend, than he

could do from a carriage, loosened his dogs, and once more bounded with them along the banks of the road. He often quitted it for points that promised a wider prospect, and the slow pace, at which the mules travelled, allowed him to overtake them with ease. Whenever a scene of uncommon magnificence appeared, he hastened to inform St. Aubert, who, though he was too much tired to walk himself, sometimes made the chaise wait, while Emily went to the neighbouring cliff.

It was evening when they descended the lower alps, that bind Rousillon, and form a majestic barrier round that charming country, leaving it open only on the east to the Mediterranean. The gay tints of cultivation once more beautified the landscape; for the lowlands were coloured with the richest hues, which a luxuriant climate, and an industrious people can awaken into life. Groves of orange and lemon perfumed the air, their ripe fruit glowing among the foliage; while, sloping to the plains, extensive vineyards spread their treasures. Beyond these, woods and pastures, and mingled towns and hamlets stretched towards the sea, on whose bright surface gleamed many a distant sail; while, over the whole scene, was diffused the purple glow of evening. This landscape with the surrounding alps did, indeed, present a perfect picture of the lovely and the sublime, of "beauty sleeping in the lap of horror."

The travellers, having reached the plains, proceeded, between hedges of flowering myrtle and pomegranate, to the town of Arles, where they proposed to rest for the night. They met with simple, but neat accommodation, and would have passed a happy evening, after the toils and the delights of this day, had not the approaching separation thrown a gloom over their spirit. It was St. Aubert's plan to proceed, on the morrow, to the borders of the Mediterranean, and travel along its shores into Languedoc; and Valancourt, since he was now nearly recovered, and had no longer a pretence for continuing with his new friends, resolved to leave them here. St. Aubert, who was much pleased with him, invited him to go further, but did not repeat the invitation, and Valancourt had resolution enough to forego the temptation of accepting it, that he might prove himself not unworthy of the favour. On the following morning, therefore, they were to part, St. Aubert to pursue his way to Languedoc, and Valancourt to explore new scenes among the mountains, on his return home. During this evening he was often silent and thoughtful; St. Aubert's manner towards him was affectionate, though grave, and Emily was serious, though she made frequent efforts to appear cheerful. After one of the most melancholy evenings they had yet passed together, they separated for the night.