CHAPTER VI

I care not, Fortune! what you me deny;
You cannot rob me of free nature's grace;
You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
Through which Aurora shows her brightening face;
You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
The woods and lawns, by living stream, at eve:
Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,
And I their toys to the great children leave:
Of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can me bereave.
THOMSON

In the morning, Valancourt breakfasted with St. Aubert and Emily, neither of whom seemed much refreshed by sleep. The languor of illness still hung over St. Aubert, and to Emily's fears his disorder appeared to be increasing fast upon him. She watched his looks with anxious affection, and their expression was always faithfully reflected in her own.

At the commencement of their acquaintance, Valancourt had made known his name and family. St. Aubert was not a stranger to either, for the family estates, which were now in the possession of an elder brother of Valancourt, were little more than twenty miles distant from La Vallée, and he had sometimes met the elder Valancourt on visits in the neighbourhood. This knowledge had made him more willingly receive his present companion; for, though his countenance and manners would have won him the acquaintance of St. Aubert, who was very apt to trust to the intelligence of his own eyes, with respect to countenances, he would not have accepted these, as sufficient introductions to that of his daughter.

The breakfast was almost as silent as the supper of the preceding night; but their musing was at length interrupted by the sound of the carriage wheels, which were to bear away St. Aubert and Emily. Valancourt started from his chair, and went to the window; it was indeed the carriage, and he returned to his seat without speaking. The moment was now come when they must part. St. Aubert told Valancourt, that he hoped he would never pass La Vallée without favouring him with a visit; and Valancourt, eagerly thanking him, assured him that he never would; as he said which he looked timidly at Emily, who tried to smile away the seriousness of her spirits. They passed a few minutes in interesting conversation, and St. Aubert then led the way to the carriage, Emily and Valancourt following in silence. The latter lingered at the door several minutes after they were seated, and none of the party seemed to have courage enough to say — Farewell. At length, St. Aubert pronounced the melancholy word, which Emily passed to Valancourt, who returned it, with a dejected smile, and the carriage drove on.

The travellers remained, for some time, in a state of tranquil pensiveness, which is not unpleasing. St. Aubert interrupted it by observing, "This is a very

promising young man; it is many years since I have been so much pleased with any person, on so short an acquaintance. He brings back to my memory the days of my youth, when every scene was new and delightful!" St. Aubert sighed, and sunk again into a reverie; and, as Emily looked back upon the road they had passed, Valancourt was seen, at the door of the little inn, following them with his eyes. Her perceived her, and waved his hand; and she returned the adieu, till the winding road shut her from his sight.

"I remember when I was about his age," resumed St. Aubert, "and I thought, and felt exactly as he does. The world was opening upon me then, now — it is closing."

"My dear sir, do not think so gloomily," said Emily in a trembling voice, "I hope you have many, many years to live — for your own sake — for *my* sake."

"Ah, my Emily!" replied St. Aubert, "for thy sake! Well — I hope it is so." He wiped away a tear, that was stealing down his cheek, threw a smile upon his countenance, and said in a cheering voice, "there is something in the ardour and ingenuousness of youth, which is particularly pleasing to the contemplation of an old man, if his feelings have not been entirely corroded by the world. It is cheering and reviving, like the view of spring to a sick person; his mind catches somewhat of the spirit of the season, and his eyes are lighted up with a transient sunshine. Valancourt is this spring to me."

Emily, who pressed her father's hand affectionately, had never before listened with so much pleasure to the praises he bestowed; no, not even when he had bestowed them on herself.

They travelled on, among vineyards, woods, and pastures, delighted with the romantic beauty of the landscape, which was bounded, on one side, by the grandeur of the Pyrenees, and, on the other, by the ocean; and, soon after noon, they reached the town of Colioure, situated on the Mediterranean. Here they dined, and rested till towards the cool of day, when they pursued their way along the shores — those enchanting shores! — which extend to Languedoc. Emily gazed with enthusiasm on the vastness of the sea, its surface varying, as the lights and shadows fell, and on its woody banks, mellowed with autumnal tints.

St. Aubert was impatient to reach Perpignan, where he expected letters from M. Quesnel; and it was the expectation of these letters, that had induced him to leave Colioure, for his feeble frame had required immediate rest. After travelling a few miles, he fell asleep; and Emily, who had put two or three books into the carriage, on leaving La Vallée, had now the leisure for looking into them. She sought for one, in which Valancourt had been reading the day before, and hoped for the pleasure of retracing a page, over which the eyes of a beloved friend had lately passed, of dwelling on the passages, which he had admired, and of permitting them to speak to her in the language of his own mind, and to bring himself to her presence. On searching for the book, she could find it nowhere, but in its stead perceived a volume of Petrarch's poems, that had

belonged to Valancourt, whose name was written in it, and from which he had frequently read passages to her, with all the pathetic expression, that characterised the feelings of the author. She hesitated in believing, what would have been sufficiently apparent to almost any other person, that he had purposely left this book, instead of the one she had lost, and that love had prompted the exchange; but, having opened it with impatient pleasure, and observed the lines of his pencil drawn along the various passages he had read aloud, and under others more descriptive of delicate tenderness than he had dared to trust his voice with, the conviction came, at length, to her mind. For some moments she was conscious only of being beloved; then, a recollection of all the variations of tone and countenance, with which he had recited these sonnets, and of the soul, which spoke in their expression, pressed to her memory, and she wept over the memorial of his affection.

They arrived at Perpignan soon after sunset, where St. Aubert found, as he had expected, letters from M. Quesnel, the contents of which so evidently and grievously affected him, that Emily was alarmed, and pressed him, as far as her delicacy would permit, to disclose the occasion of his concern; but he answered her only by tears, and immediately began to talk on other topics. Emily, though she forbore to press the one most interesting to her, was greatly affected by her father's manner, and passed a night of sleepless solicitude.

In the morning they pursued their journey along the coast towards Leucate, another town on the Mediterranean, situated on the borders of Languedoc and Rousillon. On the way, Emily renewed the subject of the preceding night, and appeared so deeply affected by St. Aubert's silence and dejection, that he relaxed from his reserve. "I was unwilling, my dear Emily," said he, "to throw a cloud over the pleasure you receive from these scenes, and meant, therefore, to conceal, for the present, some circumstances, with which, however, you must at length have been made acquainted. But your anxiety has defeated my purpose; you suffer as much from this, perhaps, as you will do from a knowledge of the facts I have to relate. M. Quesnel's visit proved an unhappy one to me; he came to tell me part of the news he has now confirmed. You may have heard me mention a M. Motteville, of Paris, but you did not know that the chief of my personal property was invested in his hands. I had great confidence in him, and I am yet willing to believe, that he is not wholly unworthy of my esteem. A variety of circumstances have concurred to ruin him, and — I am ruined with him."

St. Aubert paused to conceal his emotion.

"The letters I have just received from M. Quesnel," resumed he, struggling to speak with firmness, "enclosed others from Motteville, which confirmed all I dreaded."

"Must we then quit La Vallée?" said Emily, after a long pause of silence. "That is yet uncertain," replied St. Aubert, "it will depend upon the compromise Motteville is able to make with his creditors. My income, you know, was never large, and now it will be reduced to little indeed! It is for you, Emily, for you, my

child, that I am most afflicted." His last words faltered; Emily smiled tenderly upon him through her tears, and then, endeavouring to overcome her emotion, "My dear father," said she, "do not grieve for me, or for yourself; we may yet be happy — if La Vallée remains for us, we must be happy. We will retain only one servant, and you shall scarcely perceive the change in your income. Be comforted, my dear sir; we shall not feel the want of those luxuries, which others value so highly, since we never had a taste for them; and poverty cannot deprive us of many consolations. It cannot rob us of the affection we have for each other, or degrade us in our own opinion, or in that of any person, whose opinion we ought to value."

St. Aubert concealed his face with his handkerchief, and was unable to speak; but Emily continued to urge to her father the truths, which himself had impressed upon her mind.

"Besides, my dear sir, poverty cannot deprive us of intellectual delights. It cannot deprive you of the comfort of affording me examples of fortitude and benevolence; nor me of the delight of consoling a beloved parent. It cannot deaden our taste for the grand, and the beautiful, or deny us the means of indulging it; for the scenes of nature — those sublime spectacles, so infinitely superior to all artificial luxuries! are open for the enjoyment of the poor, as well as of the rich. Of what, then, have we to complain, so long as we are not in want of necessaries? Pleasures, such as wealth cannot buy, will still be ours. We retain, then, the sublime luxuries of nature, and lose only the frivolous ones of art."

St. Aubert could not reply: he caught Emily to his bosom, their tears flowed together, but—they were not tears of sorrow. After this language of the heart, all other would have been feeble, and they remained silent for some time. Then, St. Aubert conversed as before; for, if his mind had not recovered its natural tranquillity, it at least assumed the appearance of it.

They reached the romantic town of Leucate early in the day, but St. Aubert was weary, and they determined to pass the night there. In the evening, he exerted himself so far as to walk with his daughter to view the environs that overlook the lake of Leucate, the Mediterranean, part of Rousillon, with the Pyrenees, and a wide extent of the luxuriant province of Languedoc, now blushing with the ripened vintage, which the peasants were beginning to gather. St. Aubert and Emily saw the busy groups, caught the joyous song, that was wafted on the breeze, and anticipated, with apparent pleasure, their next day's journey over this gay region. He designed, however, still to wind along the seashore. To return home immediately was partly his wish, but from this he was withheld by a desire to lengthen the pleasure, which the journey gave his daughter, and to try the effect of the sea air on his own disorder.

On the following day, therefore, they recommenced their journey through Languedoc, winding the shores of the Mediterranean; the Pyrenees still forming the magnificent back-ground of their prospects, while on their right was the ocean, and, on their left, wide extended plains melting into the blue horizon. St.

Aubert was pleased, and conversed much with Emily, yet his cheerfulness was sometimes artificial, and sometimes a shade of melancholy would steal upon his countenance, and betray him. This was soon chased away by Emily's smile; who smiled, however, with an aching heart, for she saw that his misfortunes preyed upon his mind, and upon his enfeebled frame.

It was evening when they reached a small village of Upper Languedoc, where they meant to pass the night, but the place could not afford them beds; for here, too, it was the time of the vintage, and they were obliged to proceed to the next post. The languor of illness and of fatigue, which returned upon St. Aubert, required immediate repose, and the evening was now far advanced; but from necessity there was no appeal, and he ordered Michael to proceed.

The rich plains of Languedoc, which exhibited all the glories of the vintage, with the gaieties of a French festival, no longer awakened St. Aubert to pleasure, whose condition formed a mournful contrast to the hilarity and youthful beauty which surrounded him. As his languid eyes moved over the scene, he considered, that they would soon, perhaps, be closed for ever on this world. "Those distant and sublime mountains," said he secretly, as he gazed on a chain of the Pyrenees that stretched towards the west, "these luxuriant plains, this blue vault, the cheerful light of day, will be shut from my eyes! The song of the peasant, the cheering voice of man — will no longer sound for me!"

The intelligent eyes of Emily seemed to read what passed in the mind of her father, and she fixed them on his face, with an expression of such tender pity, as recalled his thoughts from every desultory object of regret, and he remembered only, that he must leave his daughter without protection. This reflection changed regret to agony; he sighed deeply, and remained silent, while she seemed to understand that sigh, for she pressed his hand affectionately, and then turned to the window to conceal her tears. The sun now threw a last yellow gleam on the waves of the Mediterranean, and the gloom of twilight spread fast over the scene, till only a melancholy ray appeared on the western horizon, marking the point where the sun had set amid the vapours of an autumnal evening. A cool breeze now came from the shore, and Emily let down the glass; but the air, which was refreshing to health, was as chilling to sickness, and St. Aubert desired, that the window might be drawn up. Increasing illness made him now more anxious than ever to finish the day's journey, and he stopped the muleteer to enquire how far they had yet to go to the next post. He replied, "Nine miles." "I feel I am unable to proceed much further," said St. Aubert; "enquire, as you go, if there is any house on the road that would accommodate us for the night." He sunk back in the carriage, and Michael, cracking his whip in the air, set off, and continued on the full gallop, till St. Aubert, almost fainting, called to him to stop. Emily looked anxiously from the window, and saw a peasant walking at some little distance on the road, for whom they waited, till he came up, when he was asked, if there was any house in the neighbourhood that accommodated travellers. He replied, that he knew of none. "There is a château, indeed, among those woods on the right," added he, "but I believe it receives nobody, and I cannot show you the way, for I am almost a stranger here." St. Aubert was going to ask him some further

question concerning the château, but the man abruptly passed on. After some consideration, he ordered Michael to proceed slowly to the woods. Every moment now deepened the twilight, and increased the difficulty of finding the road. Another peasant soon after passed. “Which is the way to the château in the woods?” cried Michael.

“The château in the woods!” exclaimed the peasant — “Do you mean that with the turret, yonder?”

“I don’t know as for the turret, as you call it,” said Michael, “I mean that white piece of a building, that we see at a distance there, among the trees.”

“Yes, that is the turret; why, who are you, that you are going thither?” said the man with surprise.

St. Aubert, on hearing this odd question, and observing the peculiar tone in which it was delivered, looked out from the carriage. “We are travellers,” said he, “who are in search of a house of accommodation for the night; is there any hereabout?”

“None, Monsieur, unless you have a mind to try your luck yonder,” replied the peasant, pointing to the woods, “but I would not advise you to go there.”

“To whom does the château belong?”

“I scarcely know myself, Monsieur.”

“It is uninhabited, then?” — “No, not uninhabited; the steward and housekeeper are there, I believe.”

On hearing this, St. Aubert determined to proceed to the château, and risk the refusal of being accommodated for the night; he therefore desired the countryman would show Michael the way, and bade him expect reward for his trouble. The man was for a moment silent, and then said, that he was going on other business, but that the road could not be missed, if they went up an avenue to the right, to which he pointed. St. Aubert was going to speak, but the peasant wished him good night, and walked on.

The carriage now moved towards the avenue, which was guarded by a gate, and Michael having dismounted to open it, they entered between rows of ancient oak and chesnut, whose intermingled branches formed a lofty arch above. There was something so gloomy and desolate in the appearance of this avenue, and its lonely silence, that Emily almost shuddered as she passed along; and, recollecting the manner in which the peasant had mentioned the château, she gave a mysterious meaning to his words, such as she had not suspected when he uttered them. These apprehensions, however, she tried to check, considering that they were probably the effect of a melancholy imagination, which her father’s situation, and a consideration of her own circumstances, had made sensible to every impression.

They passed slowly on, for they were now almost in darkness, which, together with the unevenness of the ground, and the frequent roots of old trees, that shot up above the soil, made it necessary to proceed with caution. On a sudden Michael stopped the carriage; and, as St. Aubert looked from the window to enquire the cause, he perceived a figure at some distance moving up the avenue. The dusk would not permit him to distinguish what it was, but he bade Michael go on.

"This seems a wild place," said Michael; "there is no house hereabout, don't your honour think we had better turn back?"

"Go a little farther, and if we see no house then, we will return to the road," replied St. Aubert.

Michael proceeded with reluctance, and the extreme slowness of his pace made St. Aubert look again from the window to hasten him, when again he saw the same figure. He was somewhat startled: probably the gloominess of the spot made him more liable to alarm than usual; however this might be, he now stopped Michael, and bade him call to the person in the avenue.

"Please your honour, he may be a robber," said Michael. "It does not please me," replied St. Aubert, who could not forbear smiling at the simplicity of his phrase, "and we will, therefore, return to the road, for I see no probability of meeting here with what we seek."

Michael turned about immediately, and was retracing his way with alacrity, when a voice was heard from among the trees on the left. It was not the voice of command, or distress, but a deep hollow tone, which seemed to be scarcely human. The man whipped his mules till they went as fast as possible, regardless of the darkness, the broken ground, and the necks of the whole party, nor once stopped till he reached the gate, which opened from the avenue into the high-road, where he went into a more moderate pace.

"I am very ill," said St. Aubert, taking his daughter's hand. "You are worse, then, sir!" said Emily, extremely alarmed by his manner, "you are worse, and here is no assistance. Good God! what is to be done!" He leaned his head on her shoulder, while she endeavoured to support him with her arm, and Michael was again ordered to stop. When the rattling of the wheels had ceased, music was heard on their air; it was to Emily the voice of Hope. "Oh! we are near some human habitation!" said she, "help may soon be had."

She listened anxiously; the sounds were distant, and seemed to come from a remote part of the woods that bordered the road; and, as she looked towards the spot whence they issued, she perceived in the faint moonlight something like a château. It was difficult, however, to reach this; St. Aubert was now too ill to bear the motion of the carriage; Michael could not quit his mules; and Emily, who still supported her father, feared to leave him, and also feared to venture alone to such a distance, she knew not whither, or to whom. Something,

however, it was necessary to determine upon immediately; St. Aubert, therefore, told Michael to proceed slowly; but they had not gone far, when he fainted, and the carriage was again stopped. He lay quite senseless. — “My dear, dear father!” cried Emily in great agony, who began to fear that he was dying, “speak, if it is only one word to let me hear the sound of your voice!” But no voice spoke in reply. In the agony of terror she bade Michael bring water from the rivulet, that flowed along the road; and, having received some in the man’s hat, with trembling hands she sprinkled it over her father’s face, which, as the moon’s rays now fell upon it, seemed to bear the impression of death. Every emotion of selfish fear now gave way to a stronger influence, and, committing St. Aubert to the care of Michael, who refused to go far from his mules, she stepped from the carriage in search of the château she had seen at a distance. It was a still moonlight night, and the music, which yet sounded on the air, directed her steps from the high road, up a shadowy lane, that led to the woods. Her mind was for some time so entirely occupied by anxiety and terror for her father, that she felt none for herself, till the deepening gloom of the overhanging foliage, which now wholly excluded the moonlight, and the wildness of the place, recalled her to a sense of her adventurous situation. The music had ceased, and she had no guide but chance. For a moment she paused in terrified perplexity, till a sense of her father’s condition again overcoming every consideration for herself, she proceeded. The lane terminated in the woods, but she looked round in vain for a house, or a human being, and as vainly listened for a sound to guide her. She hurried on, however, not knowing whither, avoiding the recesses of the woods, and endeavouring to keep along their margin, till a rude kind of avenue, which opened upon a moonlight spot, arrested her attention. The wildness of this avenue brought to her recollection the one leading to the turreted château, and she was inclined to believe, that this was a part of the same domain, and probably led to the same point. While she hesitated, whether to follow it or not, a sound of many voices in loud merriment burst upon her ear. It seemed not the laugh of cheerfulness, but of riot, and she stood appalled. While she paused, she heard a distant voice, calling from the way she had come, and not doubting but it was that of Michael, her first impulse was to hasten back; but a second thought changed her purpose; she believed that nothing less than the last extremity could have prevailed with Michael to quit his mules, and fearing that her father was now dying, she rushed forward, with a feeble hope of obtaining assistance from the people in the woods. Her heart beat with fearful expectation, as she drew near the spot whence the voices issued, and she often startled when her steps disturbed the fallen leaves. The sounds led her towards the moonlight glade she had before noticed; at a little distance from which she stopped, and saw, between the boles of the trees, a small circular level of green turf, surrounded by the woods, on which appeared a group of figures. On drawing nearer, she distinguished these, by their dress, to be peasants, and perceived several cottages scattered round the edge of the woods, which waved loftily over this spot. While she gazed, and endeavoured to overcome the apprehensions that withheld her steps, several peasant girls came out of a cottage; music instantly struck up, and the dance began. It was the joyous music of the vintage — the same she had before heard upon the air. Her heart, occupied with terror for her father, could not feel the contrast, which this gay scene offered to her own

distress; she stepped hastily forward towards a group of elder peasants, who were seated at the door of a cottage, and, having explained her situation, entreated their assistance. Several of them rose with alacrity, and, offering any service in their power, followed Emily, who seemed to move on the wind, as fast as they could towards the road.

When she reached the carriage she found St. Aubert restored to animation. On the recovery of his senses, having heard from Michael whither his daughter was gone, anxiety for her overcame every regard for himself, and he had sent him in search of her. He was, however, still languid, and, perceiving himself unable to travel much farther, he renewed his enquiries for an inn, and concerning the château in the woods. “The château cannot accommodate you, sir,” said a venerable peasant who had followed Emily from the woods, “it is scarcely inhabited; but, if you will do me the honour to visit my cottage, you shall be welcome to the best bed it affords.”

St. Aubert was himself a Frenchman; he therefore was not surprised at French courtesy; but, ill as he was, he felt the value of the offer enhanced by the manner which accompanied it. He had too much delicacy to apologise, or to appear to hesitate about availing himself of the peasant’s hospitality, but immediately accepted it with the same frankness with which it was offered.

The carriage again moved slowly on; Michael following the peasants up the lane, which Emily had just quitted, till they came to the moonlight glade. St. Aubert’s spirits were so far restored by the courtesy of his host, and the near prospect of repose, that he looked with a sweet complacency upon the moonlight scene, surrounded by the shadowy woods, through which, here and there, an opening admitted the streaming splendour, discovering a cottage, or a sparkling rivulet. He listened, with no painful emotion, to the merry notes of the guitar and tamborine; and, though tears came to his eyes, when he saw the *debonnaire* dance of the peasants, they were not merely tears of mournful regret. With Emily it was otherwise; immediate terror for her father had now subsided into a gentle melancholy, which every note of joy, by awakening comparison, served to heighten.

The dance ceased on the approach of the carriage, which was a phenomenon in these sequestered woods, and the peasantry flocked round it with eager curiosity. On learning that it brought a sick stranger, several girls ran across the turf, and returned with wine and baskets of grapes, which they presented to the travellers, each with kind contention pressing for a preference. At length, the carriage stopped at a neat cottage, and his venerable conductor, having assisted St. Aubert to alight, led him and Emily to a small inner room, illuminated only by moonbeams, which the open casement admitted. St. Aubert, rejoicing in rest, seated himself in an armchair, and his senses were refreshed by the cool and balmy air, that lightly waved the embowering honeysuckles, and wafted their sweet breath into the apartment. His host, who was called La Voisin, quitted the room, but soon returned with fruits, cream, and all the pastoral luxury his cottage afforded; having set down which, with a smile of unfeigned welcome, he retired behind the chair of his guest. St. Aubert

insisted on his taking a seat at the table, and, when the fruit had allayed the fever of his palate, and he found himself somewhat revived, he began to converse with his host, who communicated several particulars concerning himself and his family, which were interesting, because they were spoken from the heart, and delineated a picture of the sweet courtesies of family kindness. Emily sat by her father, holding his hand, and, while she listened to the old man, her heart swelled with the affectionate sympathy he described, and her tears fell to the mournful consideration, that death would probably soon deprive her of the dearest blessing she then possessed. The soft moonlight of an autumnal evening, and the distant music, which now sounded a plaintive strain, aided the melancholy of her mind. The old man continued to talk of his family, and St. Aubert remained silent. “I have only one daughter living,” said La Voisin, “but she is happily married, and is everything to me. When I lost my wife,” he added with a sigh, “I came to live with Agnes, and her family; she has several children, who are all dancing on the green yonder, as merry as grasshoppers — and long may they be so! I hope to die among them, monsieur. I am old now, and cannot expect to live long, but there is some comfort in dying surrounded by one’s children.”

“My good friend,” said St. Aubert, while his voice trembled, “I hope you will long live surrounded by them.”

“Ah, sir! at my age I must not expect that!” replied the old man, and he paused: “I can scarcely wish it,” he resumed, “for I trust that whenever I die I shall go to heaven, where my poor wife is gone before me. I can sometimes almost fancy I see her of a still moonlight night, walking among these shades she loved so well. Do you believe, monsieur, that we shall be permitted to revisit the earth, after we have quitted the body?”

Emily could no longer stifle the anguish of her heart; her tears fell fast upon her father’s hand, which she yet held. He made an effort to speak, and at length said in a low voice, “I hope we shall be permitted to look down on those we have left on the earth, but I can only hope it. Futurity is much veiled from our eyes, and faith and hope are our only guides concerning it. We are not enjoined to believe, that disembodied spirits watch over the friends they have loved, but we may innocently hope it. It is a hope which I will never resign,” continued he, while he wiped the tears from his daughter’s eyes, “it will sweeten the bitter moments of death!” Tears fell slowly on his cheeks; La Voisin wept too, and there was a pause of silence.

Then, La Voisin, renewing the subject, said, “But you believe, sir, that we shall meet in another world the relations we have loved in this; I must believe this.”

“Then do believe it,” replied St. Aubert, “severe, indeed, would be the pangs of separation, if we believed it to be eternal. Look up, my dear Emily, we shall meet again!” He lifted his eyes towards heaven, and a gleam of moonlight, which fell upon his countenance, discovered peace and resignation, stealing on the lines of sorrow.

La Voisin felt that he had pursued the subject too far, and he dropped it, saying, “We are in darkness, I forgot to bring a light.”

“No,” said St. Aubert, “this is a light I love. Sit down, my good friend. Emily, my love, I find myself better than I have been all day; this air refreshes me. I can enjoy this tranquil hour, and that music, which floats so sweetly at a distance. Let me see you smile. Who touches that guitar so tastefully? are there two instruments, or is it an echo I hear?”

“It is an echo, monsieur, I fancy. That guitar is often heard at night, when all is still, but nobody knows who touches it, and it is sometimes accompanied by a voice so sweet, and so sad, one would almost think the woods were haunted.”

“They certainly are haunted,” said St. Aubert with a smile, “but I believe it is by mortals.”

“I have sometimes heard it at midnight, when I could not sleep,” rejoined La Voisin, not seeming to notice this remark, “almost under my window, and I never heard any music like it. It has often made me think of my poor wife till I cried. I have sometimes got up to the window to look if I could see anybody, but as soon as I opened the casement all was hushed, and nobody to be seen; and I have listened, and listened till I have been so timorous, that even the trembling of the leaves in the breeze has made me start. They say it often comes to warn people of their death, but I have heard it these many years, and outlived the warning.”

Emily, though she smiled at the mention of this ridiculous superstition, could not, in the present tone of her spirits, wholly resist its contagion.

“Well, but, my good friend,” said St. Aubert, “has nobody had courage to follow the sounds? If they had, they would probably have discovered who is the musician.”

“Yes, sir, they have followed them some way into the woods, but the music has still retreated, and seemed as distant as ever, and the people have at last been afraid of being led into harm, and would go no further. It is very seldom that I have heard these sounds so early in the evening. They usually come about midnight, when that bright planet, which is rising above the turret yonder, sets below the woods on the left.”

“What turret?” asked St. Aubert with quickness, “I see none.”

“Your pardon, monsieur, you do see one indeed, for the moon shines full upon it — up the avenue yonder, a long way off; the château it belongs to is hid among the trees.”

“Yes, my dear sir,” said Emily, pointing, “don’t you see something glitter above the dark woods? It is a fane, I fancy, which the rays fall upon.”

"O yes, I see what you mean; and who does the château belong to?"

"The Marquis de Villeroi was its owner," replied La Voisin, emphatically.

"Ah!" said St. Aubert, with a deep sigh, "are we then so near Le-Blanc!" He appeared much agitated.

"It used to be the Marquis's favourite residence," resumed La Voisin, "but he took a dislike to the place, and has not been there for many years. We have heard lately that he is dead, and that it is fallen into other hands."

St. Aubert, who had sat in deep musing, was roused by the last words. "Dead!" he exclaimed, "Good God! when did he die?"

"He is reported to have died about five weeks since," replied La Voisin. "Did you know the Marquis, sir?"

"This is very extraordinary!" said St. Aubert without attending to the question.

"Why is it so, my dear sir?" said Emily, in a voice of timid curiosity. He made no reply, but sunk again into a reverie; and in a few moments, when he seemed to have recovered himself, asked who had succeeded to the estates.

"I have forgot his title, monsieur," said La Voisin; "but my lord resides at Paris chiefly; I hear no talk of his coming hither."

"The château is shut up then, still?"

"Why, little better, sir; the old housekeeper, and her husband the steward, have the care of it, but they live generally in a cottage hard by."

"The château is spacious, I suppose," said Emily, "and must be desolate for the residence of only two persons."

"Desolate enough, mademoiselle," replied La Voisin, "I would not pass one night in the château, for the value of the whole domain."

"What is that?" said St. Aubert, roused again from thoughtfulness. As his host repeated his last sentence, a groan escaped from St. Aubert, and then, as if anxious to prevent it from being noticed, he hastily asked La Voisin how long he had lived in this neighbourhood.

"Almost from my childhood, sir," replied his host.

"You remember the late marchioness, then?" said St. Aubert in an altered voice.

“Ah, monsieur!—that I do well. There are many besides me who remember her.”

“Yes — ” said St. Aubert, “and I am one of those.”

“Alas, sir! you remember, then, a most beautiful and excellent lady. She deserved a better fate.”

Tears stood in St. Aubert’s eyes; “Enough,” said he, in a voice almost stifled by the violence of his emotions — “it is enough, my friend.”

Emily, though extremely surprised by her father’s manner, forbore to express her feelings by any question. La Voisin began to apologise, but St. Aubert interrupted him; “Apology is quite unnecessary” said he, “let us change the topic. You were speaking of the music we just now heard.”

“I was, monsieur — but hark! — It comes again; listen to that voice!” They were all silent;

At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose, like a stream of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ’ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more
Still, to be so displaced.
MILTON.

In a few moments the voice died into air, and the instrument, which had been heard before, sounded in low symphony. St. Aubert now observed, that it produced a tone much more full and melodious than that of a guitar, and still more melancholy and soft than the lute. They continued to listen, but the sounds returned no more. “This is strange!” said St. Aubert, at length interrupting the silence.

“Very strange!” said Emily.

“It is so,” rejoined La Voisin, and they were again silent.

After a long pause, “It is now about eighteen years since I first heard that music,” said La Voisin; “I remember it was on a fine summer’s night, much like this, but later, that I was walking in the woods, and alone. I remember, too, that my spirits were very low, for one of my boys was ill, and we feared we should lose him. I had been watching at his bedside all the evening while his mother slept; for she had sat up with him the night before. I had been watching, and went out for a little fresh air, the day had been very sultry. As I walked under the shades and mused, I heard music at a distance, and thought it was Claude playing upon his flute, as he often did of a fine evening, at the cottage door. But, when I came to a place where the trees opened, (I shall never forget it!) and

stood looking up at the north-lights, which shot up the heaven to a great height, I heard all of a sudden such sounds! — They came so as I cannot describe. It was like the music of angels, and I looked up again almost expecting to see them in the sky. When I came home, I told what I had heard, but they laughed at me, and said it must be some of the shepherds playing on their pipes, and I could not persuade them to the contrary. A few nights after, however, my wife herself heard the same sounds, and was as much surprised as I was, and Father Denis frightened her sadly by saying, that it was music come to warn her of her child's death, and that music often came to houses where there was a dying person."

Emily, on hearing this, shrunk with a superstitious dread entirely new to her, and could scarcely conceal her agitation from St. Aubert.

"But the boy lived, monsieur, in spite of Father Denis."

"Father Denis!" said St. Aubert, who had listened to 'narrative old age' with patient attention, "are we near a convent, then?"

"Yes, sir; the convent of St. Clair stands at no great distance, on the seashore yonder."

"Ah!" said St. Aubert, as if struck with some sudden remembrance, "the convent of St. Clair!" Emily observed the clouds of grief, mingled with a faint expression of horror, gathering on his brow; his countenance became fixed, and, touched as it now was by the silver whiteness of the moonlight, he resembled one of those marble statues of a monument, which seem to bend, in hopeless sorrow, over the ashes of the dead, shown

By the blunted light
That the dim moon through painted casements lends.
THE EMIGRANTS.

"But, my dear sir," said Emily, anxious to dissipate his thoughts, "you forget that repose is necessary to you. If our kind host will give me leave, I will prepare your bed, for I know how you like it to be made." St. Aubert, recollecting himself, and smiling affectionately, desired she would not add to her fatigue by that attention; and La Voisin, whose consideration for his guest had been suspended by the interests which his own narrative had recalled, now started from his seat, and, apologising for not having called Agnes from the green, hurried out of the room.

In a few moments he returned with his daughter, a young woman of pleasing countenance, and Emily learned from her, what she had not before suspected, that, for their accommodation, it was necessary part of La Voisin's family should leave their beds; she lamented this circumstance, but Agnes, by her reply, fully proved that she inherited, at least, a share of her father's courteous hospitality.

It was settled, that some of her children and Michael should sleep in the neighbouring cottage.

"If I am better, tomorrow, my dear," said St. Aubert when Emily returned to him, "I mean to set out at an early hour, that we may rest, during the heat of the day, and will travel towards home. In the present state of my health and spirits I cannot look on a longer journey with pleasure, and I am also very anxious to reach La Vallée." Emily, though she also desired to return, was grieved at her father's sudden wish to do so, which she thought indicated a greater degree of indisposition than he would acknowledge. St. Aubert now retired to rest, and Emily to her little chamber, but not to immediate repose. Her thoughts returned to the late conversation, concerning the state of departed spirits; a subject, at this time, particularly affecting to her, when she had every reason to believe that her dear father would ere long be numbered with them. She leaned pensively on the little open casement, and in deep thought fixed her eyes on the heaven, whose blue unclouded concave was studded thick with stars, the worlds, perhaps, of spirits, unsphered of mortal mould. As her eyes wandered along the boundless æther, her thoughts rose, as before, towards the sublimity of the Deity, and to the contemplation of futurity. No busy note of this world interrupted the course of her mind; the merry dance had ceased, and every cottager had retired to his home. The still air seemed scarcely to breathe upon the woods, and, now and then, the distant sound of a solitary sheep bell, or of a closing casement, was all that broke on silence. At length, even this hint of human being was heard no more. Elevated and enwrapt, while her eyes were often wet with tears of sublime devotion and solemn awe, she continued at the casement, till the gloom of midnight hung over the earth, and the planet, which La Voisin had pointed out, sunk below the woods. She then recollected what he had said concerning this planet, and the mysterious music; and, as she lingered at the window, half hoping and half fearing that it would return, her mind was led to the remembrance of the extreme emotion her father had shown on mention of the Marquis La Villeroi's death, and of the fate of the Marchioness, and she felt strongly interested concerning the remote cause of this emotion. Her surprise and curiosity were indeed the greater, because she did not recollect ever to have heard him mention the name of Villeroi.

No music, however, stole on the silence of the night, and Emily, perceiving the lateness of the hour, returned to a scene of fatigue, remembered that she was to rise early in the morning, and withdrew from the window to repose.

CHAPTER VII

Let those deplore their doom,
Whose hope still grovels in this dark sojourn.
But lofty souls can look beyond the tomb,
Can smile at fate, and wonder how they mourn.
Shall Spring to these sad scenes no more return?
Is yonder wave the sun's eternal bed?—
Soon shall the orient with new lustre burn,
And Spring shall soon her vital influence shed,
Again attune the grove, again adorn the mead!
BEATTIE

Emily, called, as she had requested, at an early hour, awoke, little refreshed by sleep, for uneasy dreams had pursued her, and marred the kindest blessing of the unhappy. But, when she opened her casement, looked out upon the woods, bright with the morning sun, and inspired the pure air, her mind was soothed. The scene was filled with that cheering freshness, which seems to breathe the very spirit of health, and she heard only sweet and *picturesque* sounds, if such an expression may be allowed — the matin bell of a distant convent, the faint murmur of the sea-waves, the song of birds, and the far-off low of cattle, which she saw coming slowly on between the trunks of trees. Struck with the circumstances of imagery around her, she indulged the pensive tranquillity which they inspired; and while she leaned on her window, waiting till St. Aubert should descend to breakfast, her ideas arranged themselves in the following lines:

THE FIRST HOUR OF MORNING

How sweet to wind the forest's tangled shade,
When early twilight, from the eastern bound,
Dawns on the sleeping landscape in the glade,
And fades as morning spreads her blush around!

When ev'ry infant flower, that wept in night,
Lifts its chill head soft glowing with a tear,
Expands its tender blossom to the light,
And gives its incense to the genial air.

How fresh the breeze that wafts the rich perfume,
And swells the melody of waking birds;
The hum of bees, beneath the verdant gloom,
And woodman's song, and low of distant herds!

Then, doubtful gleams the mountain's hoary head,
Seen through the parting foliage from afar;
And, farther still, the ocean's misty bed,
With flitting sails, that partial sunbeams share.

But, vain the sylvan shade — the breath of May,
The voice of music floating on the gale,
And forms, that beam through morning's dewy veil,
If health no longer bid the heart be gay!

O balmy hour! 'tis thine her wealth to give,
Here spread her blush, and bid the parent live!

Emily now heard persons moving below in the cottage, and presently the voice of Michael, who was talking to his mules, as he led them forth from a hut adjoining. As she left her room, St. Aubert, who was now risen, met her at the door, apparently as little restored by sleep as herself. She led him down stairs to the little parlour, in which they had supped on the preceding night, where they found a neat breakfast set out, while the host and his daughter waited to bid them goodmorrow.

"I envy you this cottage, my good friends," said St. Aubert, as he met them, "it is so pleasant, so quiet, and so neat; and this air, that one breathes — if anything could restore lost health, it would surely be this air."

La Voisin bowed gratefully, and replied, with the gallantry of a Frenchman, "Our cottage may be envied, sir, since you and Mademoiselle have honoured it with your presence." St. Aubert gave him a friendly smile for his compliment, and sat down to a table, spread with cream, fruit, new cheese, butter, and coffee. Emily, who had observed her father with attention and thought he looked very ill, endeavoured to persuade him to defer travelling till the afternoon; but he seemed very anxious to be at home, and his anxiety he expressed repeatedly, and with an earnestness that was unusual with him. He now said, he found himself as well as he had been of late, and that he could bear travelling better in the cool hour of the morning, than at any other time. But, while he was talking with his venerable host, and thanking him for his kind attentions, Emily observed his countenance change, and, before she could reach him, he fell back in his chair. In a few moments he recovered from the sudden faintness that had come over him, but felt so ill, that he perceived himself unable to set out, and, having remained a little while, struggling against the pressure of indisposition, he begged he might be helped up stairs to bed. This request renewed all the terror which Emily had suffered on the preceding evening; but, though scarcely able to support herself, under the sudden shock it gave her, she tried to conceal her apprehensions from St. Aubert, and gave her trembling arm to assist him to the door of his chamber.

When he was once more in bed, he desired that Emily, who was then weeping in her own room, might be called; and, as she came, he waved his hand for every other person to quit the apartment. When they were alone, he held out his hand to her, and fixed his eyes upon her countenance, with an expression so full of tenderness and grief, that all her fortitude forsook her, and she burst into an agony of tears.

St. Aubert seemed struggling to acquire firmness, but was still unable to speak; he could only press her hand, and check the tears that stood trembling in his eyes. At length he commanded his voice, “My dear child,” said he, trying to smile through his anguish, “my dear Emily!” — and paused again. He raised his eyes to heaven, as if in prayer, and then, in a firmer tone, and with a look, in which the tenderness of the father was dignified by the pious solemnity of the saint, he said, “My dear child, I would soften the painful truth I have to tell you, but I find myself quite unequal to the art. Alas! I would, at this moment, conceal it from you, but that it would be most cruel to deceive you. It cannot be long before we must part; let us talk of it, that our thoughts and our prayers may prepare us to bear it.” His voice faltered, while Emily, still weeping, pressed his hand close to her heart, which swelled with a convulsive sigh, but she could not look up.

“Let me not waste these moments,” said St. Aubert, recovering himself, “I have much to say. There is a circumstance of solemn consequence, which I have to mention, and a solemn promise to obtain from you; when this is done I shall be easier. You have observed, my dear, how anxious I am to reach home, but know not all my reasons for this. Listen to what I am going to say. — Yet stay — before I say more give me this promise, a promise made to your dying father!” — St. Aubert was interrupted; Emily, struck by his last words, as if for the first time, with a conviction of his immediate danger, raised her head; her tears stopped, and, gazing at him for a moment with an expression of unutterable anguish, a slight convulsion seized her, and she sunk senseless in her chair. St. Aubert’s cries brought La Voisin and his daughter to the room, and they administered every means in their power to restore her, but, for a considerable time, without effect. When she recovered, St. Aubert was so exhausted by the scene he had witnessed, that it was many minutes before he had strength to speak; he was, however, somewhat revived by a cordial, which Emily gave him; and, being again alone with her, he exerted himself to tranquilize her spirits, and to offer her all the comfort of which her situation admitted. She threw herself into his arms, wept on his neck, and grief made her so insensible to all he said, that he ceased to offer the alleviations, which he himself could not, at this moment, feel, and mingled his silent tears with hers. Recalled, at length, to a sense of duty, she tried to spare her father from a farther view of her suffering; and, quitting his embrace, dried her tears, and said something, which she meant for consolation. “My dear Emily,” replied St. Aubert, “my dear child, we must look up with humble confidence to that Being, who has protected and comforted us in every danger, and in every affliction we have known; to whose eye every moment of our lives has been exposed; he will not, he does not, forsake us now; I feel his consolations in my heart. I shall leave you, my child, still in his care; and, though I depart from this world, I shall be still in his presence. Nay, weep not again, my Emily. In death there is nothing new, or surprising, since we all know, that we are born to die; and nothing terrible to those, who can confide in an all-powerful God. Had my life been spared now, after a very few years, in the course of nature, I must have resigned it; old age, with all its train of infirmity, its privations and its sorrows, would have been mine; and then, at last, death would have come, and called forth the tears you now shed. Rather, my child, rejoice, that I am saved from such suffering, and that I am

permitted to die with a mind unimpaired, and sensible of the comforts of faith and resignation." St. Aubert paused, fatigued with speaking. Emily again endeavoured to assume an air of composure; and, in replying to what he had said, tried to sooth him with a belief, that he had not spoken in vain.

When he had reposed a while, he resumed the conversation. "Let me return," said he, "to a subject, which is very near my heart. I said I had a solemn promise to receive from you; let me receive it now, before I explain the chief circumstance which it concerns; there are others, of which your peace requires that you should rest in ignorance. Promise, then, that you will perform exactly what I shall enjoin."

Emily, awed by the earnest solemnity of his manner, dried her tears, that had begun again to flow, in spite of her efforts to suppress them; and, looking eloquently at St. Aubert, bound herself to do whatever he should require by a vow, at which she shuddered, yet knew not why.

He proceeded: "I know you too well, my Emily, to believe, that you would break any promise, much less one thus solemnly given; your assurance gives me peace, and the observance of it is of the utmost importance to your tranquillity. Hear, then, what I am going to tell you. The closet, which adjoins my chamber at La Vallée, has a sliding board in the floor. You will know it by a remarkable knot in the wood, and by its being the next board, except one, to the wainscot, which fronts the door. At the distance of about a yard from that end, nearer the window, you will perceive a line across it, as if the plank had been joined; — the way to open it is this:— Press your foot upon the line; the end of the board will then sink, and you may slide it with ease beneath the other. Below, you will see a hollow place." St. Aubert paused for breath, and Emily sat fixed in deep attention. "Do you understand these directions, my dear?" said he. Emily, though scarcely able to speak, assured him that she did.

"When you return home, then," he added with a deep sigh —

At the mention of her return home, all the melancholy circumstances, that must attend this return, rushed upon her fancy; she burst into convulsive grief, and St. Aubert himself, affected beyond the resistance of the fortitude which he had, at first, summoned, wept with her. After some moments, he composed himself. "My dear child," said he, "be comforted. When I am gone, you will not be forsaken — I leave you only in the more immediate care of that Providence, which has never yet forsaken me. Do not afflict me with this excess of grief; rather teach me by your example to bear my own." He stopped again, and Emily, the more she endeavoured to restrain her emotion, found it the less possible to do so.

St. Aubert, who now spoke with pain, resumed the subject. "That closet, my dear — when you return home, go to it; and, beneath the board I have described, you will find a packet of written papers. Attend to me now, for the promise you have given particularly relates to what I shall direct. These papers you must burn — and, solemnly I command you, *without examining them*."

Emily's surprise, for a moment, overcame her grief, and she ventured to ask, why this must be? St. Aubert replied, that, if it had been right for him to explain his reasons, her late promise would have been unnecessarily exacted. "It is sufficient for you, my love, to have a deep sense of the importance of observing me in this instance." St. Aubert proceeded. "Under that board you will also find about two hundred louis d'ors, wrapped in a silk purse; indeed, it was to secure whatever money might be in the château, that this secret place was contrived, at a time when the province was overrun by troops of men, who took advantage of the tumults, and became plunderers.

"But I have yet another promise to receive from you, which is — that you will never, whatever may be your future circumstances, *sell* the château." St. Aubert even enjoined her, whenever she might marry, to make it an article in the contract, that the château should always be hers. He then gave her a more minute account of his present circumstances than he had yet done, adding, "The two hundred louis, with what money you will now find in my purse, is all the ready money I have to leave you. I have told you how I am circumstanced with M. Motteville, at Paris. Ah, my child! I leave you poor — but not destitute," he added, after a long pause. Emily could make no reply to anything he now said, but knelt at the bedside, with her face upon the quilt, weeping over the hand she held there.

After this conversation, the mind of St. Aubert appeared to be much more at ease; but, exhausted by the effort of speaking, he sunk into a kind of doze, and Emily continued to watch and weep beside him, till a gentle tap at the chamber door roused her. It was La Voisin, come to say, that a confessor from the neighbouring convent was below, ready to attend St. Aubert. Emily would not suffer her father to be disturbed, but desired, that the priest might not leave the cottage. When St. Aubert awoke from this doze, his senses were confused, and it was some moments before he recovered them sufficiently to know, that it was Emily who sat beside him. He then moved his lips, and stretched forth his hand to her; as she received which, she sunk back in her chair, overcome by the impression of death on his countenance. In a few minutes he recovered his voice, and Emily then asked, if he wished to see the confessor; he replied, that he did; and, when the holy father appeared, she withdrew. They remained alone together above half an hour; when Emily was called in, she found St. Aubert more agitated than when she had left him, and she gazed, with a slight degree of resentment, at the friar, as the cause of this; who, however, looked mildly and mournfully at her, and turned away. St. Aubert, in a tremulous voice, said, he wished her to join in prayer with him, and asked if La Voisin would do so too. The old man and his daughter came; they both wept, and knelt with Emily round the bed, while the holy father read in a solemn voice the service for the dying. St. Aubert lay with a serene countenance, and seemed to join fervently in the devotion, while tears often stole from beneath his closed eyelids, and Emily's sobs more than once interrupted the service.

When it was concluded, and extreme unction had been administered, the friar withdrew. St. Aubert then made a sign for La Voisin to come nearer. He

gave him his hand, and was, for a moment, silent. At length, he said, in a trembling voice, “My good friend, our acquaintance has been short, but long enough to give you an opportunity of showing me much kind attention. I cannot doubt, that you will extend this kindness to my daughter, when I am gone; she will have need of it. I entrust her to your care during the few days she will remain here. I need say no more — you know the feelings of a father, for you have children; mine would be, indeed, severe if I had less confidence in you.” He paused. La Voisin assured him, and his tears bore testimony to his sincerity, that he would do all he could to soften her affliction, and that, if St. Aubert wished it, he would even attend her into Gascony; an offer so pleasing to St. Aubert, that he had scarcely words to acknowledge his sense of the old man’s kindness, or to tell him, that he accepted it. The scene, that followed between St. Aubert and Emily, affected La Voisin so much, that he quitted the chamber, and she was again left alone with her father, whose spirits seemed fainting fast, but neither his senses, nor his voice, yet failed him; and, at intervals, he employed much of these last awful moments in advising his daughter, as to her future conduct. Perhaps, he never had thought more justly, or expressed himself more clearly, than he did now.

“Above all, my dear Emily,” said he, “do not indulge in the pride of fine feeling, the romantic error of amiable minds. Those, who really possess sensibility, ought early to be taught, that it is a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery, or delight, from every surrounding circumstance. And, since, in our passage through this world, painful circumstances occur more frequently than pleasing ones, and since our sense of evil is, I fear, more acute than our sense of good, we become the victims of our feelings, unless we can in some degree command them. I know you will say, (for you are young, my Emily) I know you will say, that you are contented sometimes to suffer, rather than to give up your refined sense of happiness, at others; but, when your mind has been long harassed by vicissitude, you will be content to rest, and you will then recover from your delusion. You will perceive, that the phantom of happiness is exchanged for the substance; for happiness arises in a state of peace, not of tumult. It is of a temperate and uniform nature, and can no more exist in a heart, that is continually alive to minute circumstances, than in one that is dead to feeling. You see, my dear, that, though I would guard you against the dangers of sensibility, I am not an advocate for apathy. At your age I should have said *that* is a vice more hateful than all the errors of sensibility, and I say so still. I call it a *vice*, because it leads to positive evil; in this, however, it does no more than an ill-governed sensibility, which, by such a rule, might also be called a vice; but the evil of the former is of more general consequence. I have exhausted myself,” said St. Aubert, feebly, “and have wearied you, my Emily; but, on a subject so important to your future comfort, I am anxious to be perfectly understood.”

Emily assured him, that his advice was most precious to her, and that she would never forget it, or cease from endeavouring to profit by it. St. Aubert smiled affectionately and sorrowfully upon her. “I repeat it,” said he, “I would not teach you to become insensible, if I could; I would only warn you of the evils of susceptibility, and point out how you may avoid them. Beware, my love, I

conjure you, of that self-delusion, which has been fatal to the peace of so many persons; beware of priding yourself on the gracefulness of sensibility; if you yield to this vanity, your happiness is lost for ever. Always remember how much more valuable is the strength of fortitude, than the grace of sensibility. Do not, however, confound fortitude with apathy; apathy cannot know the virtue. Remember, too, that one act of beneficence, one act of real usefulness, is worth all the abstract sentiment in the world. Sentiment is a disgrace, instead of an ornament, unless it lead us to good actions. The miser, who thinks himself respectable, merely because he possesses wealth, and thus mistakes the means of doing good, for the actual accomplishment of it, is not more blameable than the man of sentiment, without active virtue. You may have observed persons, who delight so much in this sort of sensibility to sentiment, which excludes that to the calls of any practical virtue, that they turn from the distressed, and, because their sufferings are painful to be contemplated, do not endeavour to relieve them. How despicable is that humanity, which can be contented to pity, where it might assuage!"

St. Aubert, some time after, spoke of Madame Cheron, his sister. "Let me inform you of a circumstance, that nearly affects your welfare," he added. "We have, you know, had little intercourse for some years, but, as she is now your only female relation, I have thought it proper to consign you to her care, as you will see in my will, till you are of age, and to recommend you to her protection afterwards. She is not exactly the person, to whom I would have committed my Emily, but I had no alternative, and I believe her to be upon the whole — a good kind of woman. I need not recommend it to your prudence, my love, to endeavour to conciliate her kindness; you will do this for his sake, who has often wished to do so for yours."

Emily assured him, that, whatever he requested she would religiously perform to the utmost of her ability. "Alas!" added she, in a voice interrupted by sighs, "that will soon be all which remains for me; it will be almost my only consolation to fulfil your wishes."

St. Aubert looked up silently in her face, as if would have spoken, but his spirit sunk a while, and his eyes became heavy and dull. She felt that look at her heart. "My dear father!" she exclaimed; and then, checking herself, pressed his hand closer, and hid her face with her handkerchief. Her tears were concealed, but St. Aubert heard her convulsive sobs.

His spirits returned. "O my child!" said he, faintly, "let my consolations be yours. I die in peace; for I know, that I am about to return to the bosom of my Father, who will still be your Father, when I am gone. Always trust in him, my love, and he will support you in these moments, as he supports me."

Emily could only listen, and weep; but the extreme composure of his manner, and the faith and hope he expressed, somewhat soothed her anguish. Yet, whenever she looked upon his emaciated countenance, and saw the lines of death beginning to prevail over it — saw his sunk eyes, still bent on her, and

their heavy lids pressing to a close, there was a pang in her heart, such as defied expression, though it required filial virtue, like hers, to forbear the attempt.

He desired once more to bless her; “Where are you, my dear?” said he, as he stretched forth his hands. Emily had turned to the window, that he might not perceive her anguish; she now understood, that his sight had failed him. When he had given her his blessing, and it seemed to be the last effort of expiring life, he sunk back on his pillow. She kissed his forehead; the damps of death had settled there, and, forgetting her fortitude for a moment, her tears mingled with them. St. Aubert lifted up his eyes; the spirit of a father returned to them, but it quickly vanished, and he spoke no more.

St. Aubert lingered till about three o’clock in the afternoon, and, thus gradually sinking into death, he expired without a struggle, or a sigh.

Emily was led from the chamber by La Voisin and his daughter, who did what they could to comfort her. The old man sat and wept with her. Agnes was more erroneously officious.