CHAPTER III

He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men: he loves no plays,
..... he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit
that could be mov'd to smile at anything.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
While they behold a greater than themselves.

JULIUS CÆSAR

Montoni and his companion did not return home, till many hours after the dawn had blushed upon the Adriatic. The airy groups, which had danced all night along the colonnade of St. Mark, dispersed before the morning, like so many spirits. Montoni had been otherwise engaged; his soul was little susceptible of light pleasures. He delighted in the energies of the passions; the difficulties and tempests of life, which wreck the happiness of others, roused and strengthened all the powers of his mind, and afforded him the highest enjoyments, of which his nature was capable. Without some object of strong interest, life was to him little more than a sleep; and, when pursuits of real interest failed, he substituted artificial ones, till habit changed their nature, and they ceased to be unreal. Of this kind was the habit of gaming, which he had adopted, first, for the purpose of relieving him from the languor of inaction, but had since pursued with the ardour of passion. In this occupation he had passed the night with Cavigni and a party of young men, who had more money than rank, and more vice than either. Montoni despised the greater part of these for the inferiority of their talents, rather than for their vicious inclinations, and associated with them only to make them the instruments of his purposes. Among these, however, were some of superior abilities, and a few whom Montoni admitted to his intimacy, but even towards these he still preserved a decisive and haughty air, which, while it imposed submission on weak and timid minds, roused the fierce hatred of strong ones. He had, of course, many and bitter enemies; but the rancour of their hatred proved the degree of his power; and, as power was his chief aim, he gloried more in such hatred, than it was possible he could in being esteemed. A feeling so tempered as that of esteem, he despised, and would have despised himself also had he thought himself capable of being flattered by it.

Among the few whom he distinguished, were the Signors Bertolini, Orsino, and Verezzi. The first was a man of gay temper, strong passions, dissipated, and of unbounded extravagance, but generous, brave, and unsuspicious. Orsino was reserved, and haughty; loving power more than ostentation; of a cruel and suspicious temper; quick to feel an injury, and relentless in avenging it; cunning and unsearchable in contrivance, patient and indefatigable in the execution of his schemes. He had a perfect command of feature and of his passions, of which he had scarcely any, but pride, revenge and avarice; and, in the gratification of these, few considerations had power to restrain him, few

obstacles to withstand the depth of his stratagems. This man was the chief favourite of Montoni. Verezzi was a man of some talent, of fiery imagination, and the slave of alternate passions. He was gay, voluptuous, and daring; yet had neither perseverance nor true courage, and was meanly selfish in all his aims. Quick to form schemes, and sanguine in his hope of success, he was the first to undertake, and to abandon, not only his own plans, but those adopted from other persons. Proud and impetuous, he revolted against all subordination; yet those who were acquainted with his character, and watched the turn of his passions, could lead him like a child.

Such were the friends whom Montoni introduced to his family and his table, on the day after his arrival at Venice. There were also of the party a Venetian nobleman, Count Morano, and a Signora Livona, whom Montoni had introduced to his wife, as a lady of distinguished merit, and who, having called in the morning to welcome her to Venice, had been requested to be of the dinner party.

Madame Montoni received with a very ill grace, the compliments of the Signors. She disliked them, because they were the friends of her husband; hated them, because she believed they had contributed to detain him abroad till so late an hour of the preceding morning; and envied them, since, conscious of her own want of influence, she was convinced, that he preferred their society to her own. The rank of Count Morano procured him that distinction which she refused to the rest of the company. The haughty sullenness of her countenance and manner, and the ostentatious extravagance of her dress, for she had not yet adopted the Venetian habit, were strikingly contrasted by the beauty, modesty, sweetness and simplicity of Emily, who observed, with more attention than pleasure, the party around her. The beauty and fascinating manners of Signora Livona, however, won her involuntary regard; while the sweetness of her accents and her air of gentle kindness awakened with Emily those pleasing affections, which so long had slumbered.

In the cool of the evening the party embarked in Montoni's gondola, and rowed out upon the sea. The red glow of sunset still touched the waves, and lingered in the west, where the melancholy gleam seemed slowly expiring, while the dark blue of the upper æther began to twinkle with stars. Emily sat, given up to pensive and sweet emotions. The smoothness of the water, over which she glided, its reflected images — a new heaven and trembling stars below the waves, with shadowy outlines of towers and porticos, conspired with the stillness of the hour, interrupted only by the passing wave, or the notes of distant music, to raise those emotions to enthusiasm. As she listened to the measured sound of the oars, and to the remote warblings that came in the breeze, her softened mind returned to the memory of St. Aubert and to Valancourt, and tears stole to her eyes. The rays of the moon, strengthening as the shadows deepened, soon after threw a silvery gleam upon her countenance, which was partly shaded by a thin black veil, and touched it with inimitable softness. Hers was the *contour* of a Madona, with the sensibility of a Magdalen; and the pensive uplifted eye, with the tear that glittered on her cheek, confirmed the expression of the character.

The last strain of distant music now died in air, for the gondola was far upon the waves, and the party determined to have music of their own. The Count Morano, who sat next to Emily, and who had been observing her for some time in silence, snatched up a lute, and struck the chords with the finger of harmony herself, while his voice, a fine tenor, accompanied them in a rondeau full of tender sadness. To him, indeed, might have been applied that beautiful exhortation of an English poet, had it then existed:

Strike up, my master,
But touch the strings with a religious softness!
Teach sounds to languish through the night's dull ear
Till Melancholy starts from off her couch,
And Carelessness grows concert to attention!

With such powers of expression the Count sung the following

RONDEAU

Soft as yon silver ray, that sleeps
Upon the ocean's trembling tide;
Soft as the air, that lightly sweeps
Yon sad, that swells in stately pride:

Soft as the surge's stealing note,
That dies along the distant shores,
Or warbled strain, that sinks remote —
So soft the sigh my bosom pours!

True as the wave to Cynthia's ray,
True as the vessel to the breeze,
True as the soul to music's sway,
Or music to Venetian seas:

Soft as yon silver beams, that sleep
Upon the ocean's trembling breast;
So soft, so true, fond Love shall weep,
So soft, so true, with *thee* shall rest.

The cadence with which he returned from the last stanza to a repetition of the first; the fine modulation in which his voice stole upon the first line, and the pathetic energy with which it pronounced the last, were such as only exquisite taste could give. When he had concluded, he gave the lute with a sigh to Emily, who, to avoid any appearance of affectation, immediately began to play. She sung a melancholy little air, one of the popular songs of her native province, with a simplicity and pathos that made it enchanting. But its well known melody brought so forcibly to her fancy the scenes and the persons, among which she had often heard it, that her spirits were overcome, her voice

trembled and ceased — and the strings of the lute were struck with a disordered hand; till, ashamed of the emotion she had betrayed, she suddenly passed on to a song so gay and airy, that the steps of the dance seemed almost to echo to the notes. *Bravissimo*! burst instantly from the lips of her delighted auditors, and she was compelled to repeat the air. Among the compliments that followed, those of the Count were not the least audible, and they had not concluded, when Emily gave the instrument to Signora Livona, whose voice accompanied it with true Italian taste.

Afterwards, the Count, Emily, Cavigni, and the Signora, sung *canzonettes*, accompanied by a couple of lutes and a few other instruments. Sometimes the instruments suddenly ceased, and the voices dropped from the full swell of harmony into a low chant; then, after a deep pause, they rose by degrees, the instruments one by one striking up, till the loud and full chorus soared again to heaven!

Meanwhile, Montoni, who was weary of this harmony, was considering how he might disengage himself from his party, or withdraw with such of it as would be willing to play, to a Casino. In a pause of the music, he proposed returning to shore, a proposal which Orsino eagerly seconded, but which the Count and the other gentlemen as warmly opposed.

Montoni still meditated how he might excuse himself from longer attendance upon the Count, for to him only he thought excuse necessary, and how he might get to land, till the gondolieri of an empty boat, returning to Venice, hailed his people. Without troubling himself longer about an excuse, he seized this opportunity of going thither, and, committing the ladies to the care of his friends, departed with Orsino, while Emily, for the first time, saw him go with regret; for she considered his presence a protection, though she knew not what she should fear. He landed at St. Mark's, and, hurrying to a Casino, was soon lost amidst a crowd of gamesters.

Meanwhile, the Count having secretly dispatched a servant in Montoni's boat, for his own gondola and musicians, Emily heard, without knowing his project, the gay song of gondolieri approaching, as they sat on the stern of the boat, and saw the tremulous gleam of the moonlight wave, which their oars disturbed. Presently she heard the sound of instruments, and then a full symphony swelled on the air, and, the boats meeting, the gondolieri hailed each other. The Count then explaining himself, the party removed into his gondola, which was embellished with all that taste could bestow.

While they partook of a collation of fruits and ice, the whole band, following at a distance in the other boat, played the most sweet and enchanting strains, and the Count, who had again seated himself by Emily, paid her unremitted attention, and sometimes, in a low but impassioned voice, uttered compliments which she could not misunderstand. To avoid them she conversed with Signora Livona, and her manner to the Count assumed a mild reserve, which, though dignified, was too gentle to repress his assiduities: he could see, hear, speak to no person, but Emily while Cavigni observed him now and then, with a look of

displeasure, and Emily, with one of uneasiness. She now wished for nothing so much as to return to Venice, but it was near midnight before the gondolas approached St. Mark's Place, where the voice of gaiety and song was loud. The busy hum of mingling sounds was heard at a considerable distance on the water, and, had not a bright moonlight discovered the city, with its terraces and towers, a stranger would almost have credited the fabled wonders of Neptune's court, and believed, that the tumult arose from beneath the waves.

They landed at St. Mark's, where the gaiety of the colonnades and the beauty of the night, made Madame Montoni willingly submit to the Count's solicitations to join the promenade, and afterwards to take a supper with the rest of the party, at his Casino. If anything could have dissipated Emily's uneasiness, it would have been the grandeur, gaiety, and novelty of the surrounding scene, adorned with Palladio's palaces, and busy with parties of masqueraders.

At length they withdrew to the Casino, which was fitted up with infinite taste, and where a splendid banquet was prepared; but here Emily's reserve made the Count perceive, that it was necessary for his interest to win the favour of Madame Montoni, which, from the condescension she had already shown to him, appeared to be an achievement of no great difficulty. He transferred, therefore, part of his attention from Emily to her aunt, who felt too much flattered by the distinction even to disguise her emotion; and before the party broke up, he had entirely engaged the esteem of Madame Montoni. Whenever he addressed her, her ungracious countenance relaxed into smiles, and to whatever he proposed she assented. He invited her, with the rest of the party, to take coffee, in his box at the opera, on the following evening, and Emily heard the invitation accepted, with strong anxiety, concerning the means of excusing herself from attending Madame Montoni thither.

It was very late before their gondola was ordered, and Emily's surprise was extreme, when, on quitting the Casino, she beheld the broad sun rising out of the Adriatic, while St. Mark's Place was yet crowded with company. Sleep had long weighed heavily on her eyes, but now the fresh sea-breeze revived her, and she would have quitted the scene with regret, had not the Count been present, performing the duty, which he had imposed upon himself, of escorting them home. There they heard that Montoni was not yet returned; and his wife, retiring in displeasure to her apartment, at length released Emily from the fatigue of further attendance.

Montoni came home late in the morning, in a very ill humour, having lost considerably at play, and, before he withdrew to rest, had a private conference with Cavigni, whose manner, on the following day, seemed to tell, that the subject of it had not been pleasing to him.

In the evening, Madame Montoni, who, during the day, had observed a sullen silence towards her husband, received visits from some Venetian ladies, with whose sweet manners Emily was particularly charmed. They had an air of ease and kindness towards the strangers, as if they had been their familiar friends for years; and their conversation was by turns tender, sentimental and gay.

Madame, though she had no taste for such conversation, and whose coarseness and selfishness sometimes exhibited a ludicrous contrast to their excessive refinement, could not remain wholly insensible to the captivations of their manner.

In a pause of conversation, a lady who was called Signora Herminia took up a lute, and began to play and sing, with as much easy gaiety, as if she had been alone. Her voice was uncommonly rich in tone, and various in expression; yet she appeared to be entirely unconscious of its powers, and meant nothing less than to display them. She sung from the gaiety of her heart, as she sat with her veil half thrown back, holding gracefully the lute, under the spreading foliage and flowers of some plants, that rose from baskets, and interlaced one of the lattices of the saloon. Emily, retiring a little from the company, sketched her figure, with the miniature scenery around her, and drew a very interesting picture, which, though it would not, perhaps, have borne criticism, had spirit and taste enough to awaken both the fancy and the heart. When she had finished it, she presented it to the beautiful original, who was delighted with the offering, as well as the sentiment it conveyed, and assured Emily, with a smile of captivating sweetness, that she should preserve it as a pledge of her friendship.

In the evening Cavigni joined the ladies, but Montoni had other engagements; and they embarked in the gondola for St. Mark's, where the same gay company seemed to flutter as on the preceding night. The cool breeze, the glassy sea, the gentle sound of its waves, and the sweeter murmur of distant music; the lofty porticos and arcades, and the happy groups that sauntered beneath them; these, with every feature and circumstance of the scene, united to charm Emily, no longer teased by the officious attentions of Count Morano. But, as she looked upon the moonlight sea, undulating along the walls of St. Mark, and, lingering for a moment over those walls, caught the sweet and melancholy song of some gondolier as he sat in his boat below, waiting for his master, her softened mind returned to the memory of her home, of her friends, and of all that was dear in her native country.

After walking some time, they sat down at the door of a Casino, and, while Cavigni was accommodating them with coffee and ice, were joined by Count Morano. He sought Emily with a look of impatient delight, who, remembering all the attention he had shown her on the preceding evening, was compelled, as before, to shrink from his assiduities into a timid reserve, except when she conversed with Signora Herminia and the other ladies of her party.

It was near midnight before they withdrew to the opera, where Emily was not so charmed but that, when she remembered the scene she had just quitted, she felt how infinitely inferior all the splendour of art is to the sublimity of nature. Her heart was not now affected, tears of admiration did not start to her eyes, as when she viewed the vast expanse of ocean, the grandeur of the heavens, and listened to the rolling waters, and to the faint music that, at intervals, mingled with their roar. Remembering these, the scene before her faded into insignificance.

Of the evening, which passed on without any particular incident, she wished the conclusion, that she might escape from the attentions of the Count; and, as opposite qualities frequently attract each other in our thoughts, thus Emily, when she looked on Count Morano, remembered Valancourt, and a sigh sometimes followed the recollection.

Several weeks passed in the course of customary visits, during which nothing remarkable occurred. Emily was amused by the manners and scenes that surrounded her, so different from those of France, but where Count Morano, too frequently for her comfort, contrived to introduce himself. His manner, figure and accomplishments, which were generally admired, Emily would, perhaps, have admired also, had her heart been disengaged from Valancourt, and had the Count forborne to persecute her with officious attentions, during which she observed some traits in his character, that prejudiced her against whatever might otherwise be good in it.

Soon after his arrival at Venice, Montoni received a packet from M. Quesnel, in which the latter mentioned the death of his wife's uncle, at his villa on the Brenta; and that, in consequence of this event, he should hasten to take possession of that estate and of other effects bequeathed to him. This uncle was the brother of Madame Quesnel's late mother; Montoni was related to her by the father's side, and though he could have had neither claim nor expectation concerning these possessions, he could scarcely conceal the envy which M. Quesnel's letter excited.

Emily had observed with concern, that, since they left France, Montoni had not even affected kindness towards her aunt, and that, after treating her, at first, with neglect, he now met her with uniform ill humour and reserve. She had never supposed, that her aunt's foibles could have escaped the discernment of Montoni, or that her mind or figure were of a kind to deserve his attention. Her surprise, therefore, at this match, had been extreme; but since he had made the choice, she did not suspect that he would so openly have discovered his contempt of it. But Montoni, who had been allured by the seeming wealth of Madame Cheron, was now severely disappointed by her comparative poverty, and highly exasperated by the deceit she had employed to conceal it, till concealment was no longer necessary. He had been deceived in an affair, wherein he meant to be the deceiver; outwitted by the superior cunning of a woman, whose understanding he despised, and to whom he had sacrificed his pride and his liberty, without saving himself from the ruin, which had impended over his head. Madame Montoni had contrived to have the greatest part of what she really did possess, settled upon herself: what remained, though it was totally inadequate both to her husband's expectations, and to his necessities, he had converted into money, and brought with him to Venice, that he might a little longer delude society, and make a last effort to regain the fortunes he had lost.

The hints which had been thrown out to Valancourt, concerning Montoni's character and condition, were too true; but it was now left to time and occasion,

to unfold the circumstances, both of what had, and of what had not been hinted, and to time and occasion we commit them.

Madame Montoni was not of a nature to bear injuries with meekness, or to resent them with dignity: her exasperated pride displayed itself in all the violence and acrimony of a little, or at least of an ill regulated mind. She would not acknowledge, even to herself, that she had in any degree provoked contempt by her duplicity, but weakly persisted in believing, that she alone was to be pitied, and Montoni alone to be censured; for, as her mind had naturally little perception of moral obligation, she seldom understood its force but when it happened to be violated towards herself: her vanity had already been severely shocked by a discovery of Montoni's contempt; it remained to be farther reproved by a discovery of his circumstances. His mansion at Venice, though its furniture discovered a part of the truth to unprejudiced persons, told nothing to those who were blinded by a resolution to believe whatever they wished. Madame Montoni still thought herself little less than a princess, possessing a palace at Venice, and a castle among the Apennines. To the castle di Udolpho, indeed, Montoni sometimes talked of going for a few weeks to examine into its condition, and to receive some rents; for it appeared that he had not been there for two years, and that, during this period, it had been inhabited only by an old servant, whom he called his steward.

Emily listened to the mention of this journey with pleasure, for she not only expected from it new ideas, but a release from the persevering assiduities of Count Morano. In the country, too, she would have leisure to think of Valancourt, and to indulge the melancholy, which his image, and a recollection of the scenes of La Vallée, always blessed with the memory of her parents, awakened. The ideal scenes were dearer, and more soothing to her heart, than all the splendour of gay assemblies; they were a kind of talisman that expelled the poison of temporary evils, and supported her hopes of happy days: they appeared like a beautiful landscape, lighted up by a gleam of sunshine, and seen through a perspective of dark and rugged rocks.

But Count Morano did not long confine himself to silent assiduities; he declared his passion to Emily, and made proposals to Montoni, who encouraged, though Emily rejected, him: with Montoni for his friend, and an abundance of vanity to delude him, he did not despair of success. Emily was astonished and highly disgusted at his perseverance, after she had explained her sentiments with a frankness that would not allow him to misunderstand them.

He now passed the greater part of his time at Montoni's, dining there almost daily, and attending Madame and Emily wherever they went; and all this, notwithstanding the uniform reserve of Emily, whose aunt seemed as anxious as Montoni to promote this marriage; and would never dispense with her attendance at any assembly where the Count proposed to be present.

Montoni now said nothing of his intended journey, of which Emily waited impatiently to hear; and he was seldom at home but when the Count, or Signor

Orsino, was there, for between himself and Cavigni a coolness seemed to subsist, though the latter remained in his house. With Orsino, Montoni was frequently closeted for hours together, and, whatever might be the business, upon which they consulted, it appeared to be of consequence, since Montoni often sacrificed to it his favourite passion for play, and remained at home the whole night. There was somewhat of privacy, too, in the manner of Orsino's visits, which had never before occurred, and which excited not only surprise, but some degree of alarm in Emily's mind, who had unwillingly discovered much of his character when he had most endeavoured to disguise it. After these visits, Montoni was often more thoughtful than usual; sometimes the deep workings of his mind entirely abstracted him from surrounding objects, and threw a gloom over his visage that rendered it terrible; at others, his eyes seemed almost to flash fire, and all the energies of his soul appeared to be roused for some great enterprise. Emily observed these written characters of his thoughts with deep interest, and not without some degree of awe, when she considered that she was entirely in his power; but forbore even to hint her fears, or her observations, to Madame Montoni, who discerned nothing in her husband, at these times, but his usual sternness.

A second letter from M. Quesnel announced the arrival of himself and his lady at the Villa Miarenti; stated several circumstances of his good fortune, respecting the affair that had brought him into Italy; and concluded with an earnest request to see Montoni, his wife and niece, at his new estate.

Emily received, about the same period, a much more interesting letter, and which soothed for a while every anxiety of her heart. Valancourt, hoping she might be still at Venice, had trusted a letter to the ordinary post, that told her of his health, and of his unceasing and anxious affection. He had lingered at Toulouse for some time after her departure, that he might indulge the melancholy pleasure of wandering through the scenes where he had been accustomed to behold her, and had thence gone to his brother's château, which was in the neighbourhood of La Vallée. Having mentioned this, he added, "If the duty of attending my regiment did not require my departure, I know not when I should have resolution enough to quit the neighbourhood of a place which is endeared by the remembrance of you. The vicinity to La Vallée has alone detained me thus long at Estuvière: I frequently ride thither early in the morning, that I may wander, at leisure, through the day, among scenes, which were once your home, where I have been accustomed to see you, and to hear you converse. I have renewed my acquaintance with the good old Theresa, who rejoiced to see me, that she might talk of you: I need not say how much this circumstance attached me to her, or how eagerly I listened to her upon her favourite subject. You will guess the motive that first induced me to make myself known to Theresa: it was, indeed, no other than that of gaining admittance into the château and gardens, which my Emily had so lately inhabited: here, then, I wander, and meet your image under every shade: but chiefly I love to sit beneath the spreading branches of your favourite plane, where once, Emily, we sat together; where I first ventured to tell you, that I loved. O Emily! The remembrance of those moments overcomes me — I sit lost in reverie — I endeavour to see you dimly through my tears, in all the heaven of peace and

innocence, such as you then appeared to me; to hear again the accents of that voice, which then thrilled my heart with tenderness and hope. I lean on the wall of the terrace, where we together watched the rapid current of the Garonne below, while I described the wild scenery about its source, but thought only of you. O Emily! Are these moments passed for ever — will they never more return?"

In another part of his letter he wrote thus. "You see my letter is dated on many different days, and, if you look back to the first, you will perceive, that I began to write soon after your departure from France. To write was, indeed, the only employment that withdrew me from my own melancholy, and rendered your absence supportable, or rather, it seemed to destroy absence; for, when I was conversing with you on paper, and telling you every sentiment and affection of my heart, you almost appeared to be present. This employment has been from time to time my chief consolation, and I have deferred sending off my packet, merely for the comfort of prolonging it, though it was certain, that what I had written, was written to no purpose till you received it. Whenever my mind has been more than usually depressed I have come to pour forth its sorrows to you, and have always found consolation; and, when any little occurrence has interested my heart, and given a gleam of joy to my spirits, I have hastened to communicate it to you, and have received reflected satisfaction. Thus, my letter is a kind of picture of my life and of my thoughts for the last month, and thus, though it has been deeply interesting to me, while I wrote it, and I dare hope will, for the same reason, be not indifferent to you, yet to other readers it would seem to abound only in frivolities. Thus it is always, when we attempt to describe the finer movements of the heart, for they are too fine to be discerned, they can only be experienced, and are therefore passed over by the indifferent observer, while the interested one feels, that all description is imperfect and unnecessary, except as it may prove the sincerity of the writer, and sooth his own sufferings. You will pardon all this egotism — for I am a lover."

"I have just heard of a circumstance, which entirely destroys all my fairy paradise of ideal delight, and which will reconcile me to the necessity of returning to my regiment, for I must no longer wander beneath the beloved shades, where I have been accustomed to meet you in thought. — La Vallée is let! I have reason to believe this is without your knowledge, from what Theresa told me this morning, and, therefore, I mention the circumstance. She shed tears, while she related, that she was going to leave the service of her dear mistress, and the château where she had lived so many happy years; and all this, added she, without even a letter from Mademoiselle to soften the news; but it is all Mons. Quesnel's doings, and I dare say she does not even know what is going forward."

"Theresa added, That she had received a letter from him, informing her the château was let, and that, as her services would no longer be required, she must quit the place, on that day week, when the new tenant would arrive."

"Theresa had been surprised by a visit from M. Quesnel, some time before the receipt of this letter, who was accompanied by a stranger that viewed the premises with much curiosity."

Towards the conclusion of his letter, which is dated a week after this sentence, Valancourt adds, "I have received a summons from my regiment, and I join it without regret, since I am shut out from the scenes that are so interesting to my heart. I rode to La Vallée this morning, and heard that the new tenant was arrived, and that Theresa was gone. I should not treat the subject thus familiarly if I did not believe you to be uninformed of this disposal of your house; for your satisfaction I have endeavoured to learn something of the character and fortune of your tenant, but without success. He is a gentleman, they say, and this is all I can hear. The place, as I wandered round the boundaries, appeared more melancholy to my imagination, than I had ever seen it. I wished earnestly to have got admittance, that I might have taken another leave of your favourite plane tree, and thought of you once more beneath its shade: but I forbore to tempt the curiosity of strangers: the fishing house in the woods, however, was still open to me; thither I went, and passed an hour, which I cannot even look back upon without emotion. O Emily! Surely we are not separated for ever — surely we shall live for each other!"

This letter brought many tears to Emily's eyes; tears of tenderness and satisfaction on learning that Valancourt was well, and that time and absence had in no degree effaced her image from his heart. There were passages in this letter which particularly affected her, such as those describing his visits to La Vallée, and the sentiments of delicate affection that its scenes had awakened. It was a considerable time before her mind was sufficiently abstracted from Valancourt to feel the force of his intelligence concerning La Vallée. That Mons. Quesnel should let it, without even consulting her on the measure, both surprised and shocked her, particularly as it proved the absolute authority he thought himself entitled to exercise in her affairs. It is true, he had proposed, before she left France, that the château should be let, during her absence, and to the economical prudence of this she had nothing to object; but the committing what had been her father's villa to the power and caprice of strangers, and the depriving herself of a sure home, should any unhappy circumstances make her look back to her home as an asylum, were considerations that made her, even then, strongly oppose the measure. Her father, too, in his last hour, had received from her a solemn promise never to dispose of La Vallée; and this she considered as in some degree violated if she suffered the place to be let. But it was now evident with how little respect M. Quesnel had regarded these objections, and how insignificant he considered every obstacle to pecuniary advantage. It appeared, also, that he had not even condescended to inform Montoni of the step he had taken, since no motive was evident for Montoni's concealing the circumstance from her, if it had been made known to him: this both displeased and surprised her; but the chief subjects of her uneasiness were — the temporary disposal of La Vallée, and the dismission of her father's old and faithful servant. — "Poor Theresa" said Emily, "thou hadst not saved much in thy servitude, for thou wast always tender towards the poor, and believd'st thou shouldst die in the family, where thy best years

had been spent. Poor Theresa! — Now thou art turned out in thy old age to seek thy bread!"

Emily wept bitterly as these thoughts passed over her mind, and she determined to consider what could be done for Theresa, and to talk very explicitly to M. Quesnel on the subject; but she much feared that his cold heart could feel only for itself. She determined also to enquire whether he had made any mention of her affairs, in his letter to Montoni, who soon gave her the opportunity she sought, by desiring that she would attend him in his study. She had little doubt, that the interview was intended for the purpose of communicating to her a part of M. Quesnel's letter concerning the transactions at La Vallée, and she obeyed him immediately. Montoni was alone.

"I have just been writing to Mons. Quesnel," said he when Emily appeared, "in reply to the letter I received from him a few days ago, and I wished to talk to you upon a subject that occupied part of it."

"I also wished to speak with you on this topic, sir," said Emily.

"It is a subject of some interest to you, undoubtedly," rejoined Montoni, "and I think you must see it in the light that I do; indeed it will not bear any other. I trust you will agree with me, that any objection founded on sentiment, as they call it, ought to yield to circumstances of solid advantage."

"Granting this, sir," replied Emily, modestly, "those of humanity ought surely to be attended to. But I fear it is now too late to deliberate upon this plan, and I must regret, that it is no longer in my power to reject it."

"It is too late," said Montoni; "but since it is so, I am pleased to observe, that you submit to reason and necessity without indulging useless complaint. I applaud this conduct exceedingly, the more, perhaps, since it discovers a strength of mind seldom observable in your sex. When you are older you will look back with gratitude to the friends who assisted in rescuing you from the romantic illusions of sentiment, and will perceive, that they are only the snares of childhood, and should be vanquished the moment you escape from the nursery. I have not closed my letter, and you may add a few lines to inform your uncle of your acquiescence. You will soon see him, for it is my intention to take you, with Madame Montoni, in a few days to Miarenti, and you can then talk over the affair."

Emily wrote on the opposite page of the paper as follows:

"It is now useless, sir, for me to remonstrate upon the circumstances of which Signor Montoni informs me that he has written. I could have wished, at least, that the affair had been concluded with less precipitation, that I might have taught myself to subdue some prejudices, as the Signor calls them, which still linger in my heart. As it is, I submit. In point of prudence nothing certainly can be objected; but, though I submit, I have yet much to say on some other points

of the subject, when I shall have the honour of seeing you. In the meantime I entreat you will take care of Theresa, for the sake of,

"Sir,
"Your affectionate niece,
"EMILY ST. AUBERT."

Montoni smiled satirically at what Emily had written, but did not object to it, and she withdrew to her own apartment, where she sat down to begin a letter to Valancourt, in which she related the particulars of her journey, and her arrival at Venice, described some of the most striking scenes in the passage over the Alps; her emotions on her first view of Italy; the manners and characters of the people around her, and some few circumstances of Montoni's conduct. But she avoided even naming Count Morano, much more the declaration he had made, since she well knew how tremblingly alive to fear is real love, how jealously watchful of every circumstance that may affect its interest; and she scrupulously avoided to give Valancourt even the slightest reason for believing he had a rival.

On the following day Count Morano dined again at Montoni's. He was in an uncommon flow of spirits, and Emily thought there was somewhat of exultation in his manner of addressing her, which she had never observed before. She endeavoured to repress this by more than her usual reserve, but the cold civility of her air now seemed rather to encourage than to depress him. He appeared watchful of an opportunity of speaking with her alone, and more than once solicited this; but Emily always replied, that she could hear nothing from him which he would be unwilling to repeat before the whole company.

In the evening, Madame Montoni and her party went out upon the sea, and as the Count led Emily to his *zendaletto*, he carried her hand to his lips, and thanked her for the condescension she had shown him. Emily, in extreme surprise and displeasure, hastily withdrew her hand, and concluded that he had spoken ironically; but, on reaching the steps of the terrace, and observing by the livery, that it was the Count's *zendaletto* which waited below, while the rest of the party, having arranged themselves in the gondolas, were moving on, she determined not to permit a separate conversation, and, wishing him a good evening, returned to the portico. The Count followed to expostulate and entreat, and Montoni, who then came out, rendered solicitation unnecessary, for, without condescending to speak, he took her hand, and led her to the *zendaletto*. Emily was not silent; she entreated Montoni, in a low voice, to consider the impropriety of these circumstances, and that he would spare her the mortification of submitting to them; he, however, was inflexible.

"This caprice is intolerable," said he, "and shall not be indulged: there is no impropriety in the case."

At this moment, Emily's dislike of Count Morano rose to abhorrence. That he should, with undaunted assurance, thus pursue her, notwithstanding all she had expressed on the subject of his addresses, and think, as it was evident he

did, that her opinion of him was of no consequence, so long as his pretensions were sanctioned by Montoni, added indignation to the disgust which she had felt towards him. She was somewhat relieved by observing that Montoni was to be of the party, who seated himself on one side of her, while Morano placed himself on the other. There was a pause for some moments as the gondolieri prepared their oars, and Emily trembled from apprehension of the discourse that might follow this silence. At length she collected courage to break it herself, in the hope of preventing fine speeches from Morano, and reproof from Montoni. To some trivial remark which she made, the latter returned a short and disobliging reply; but Morano immediately followed with a general observation, which he contrived to end with a particular compliment, and, though Emily passed it without even the notice of a smile, he was not discouraged.

"I have been impatient," said he, addressing Emily, "to express my gratitude; to thank you for your goodness; but I must also thank Signor Montoni, who has allowed me this opportunity of doing so."

Emily regarded the Count with a look of mingled astonishment and displeasure.

"Why," continued he, "should you wish to diminish the delight of this moment by that air of cruel reserve? — Why seek to throw me again into the perplexities of doubt, by teaching your eyes to contradict the kindness of your late declaration? You cannot doubt the sincerity, the ardour of my passion; it is therefore unnecessary, charming Emily! Surely unnecessary, any longer to attempt a disguise of your sentiments."

"If I ever had disguised them, sir," said Emily, with recollected spirit, "it would certainly be unnecessary any longer to do so. I had hoped, sir, that you would have spared me any farther necessity of alluding to them; but, since you do not grant this, hear me declare, and for the last time, that your perseverance has deprived you even of the esteem, which I was inclined to believe you merited."

"Astonishing!" exclaimed Montoni: "this is beyond even my expectation, though I have hitherto done justice to the caprice of the sex! But you will observe, Mademoiselle Emily, that I am no lover, though Count Morano is, and that I will not be made the amusement of your capricious moments. Here is the offer of an alliance, which would do honour to any family; yours, you will recollect, is not noble; you long resisted my remonstrances, but my honour is now engaged, and it shall not be trifled with. — You shall adhere to the declaration, which you have made me an agent to convey to the Count."

"I must certainly mistake you, sir," said Emily; "my answers on the subject have been uniform; it is unworthy of you to accuse me of caprice. If you have condescended to be my agent, it is an honour I did not solicit. I myself have constantly assured Count Morano, and you also, sir, that I never can accept the honour he offers me, and I now repeat the declaration."

The Count looked with an air of surprise and enquiry at Montoni, whose countenance also was marked with surprise, but it was surprise mingled with indignation.

"Here is confidence, as well as caprice!" said the latter. "Will you deny your own words, Madam?"

"Such a question is unworthy of an answer, sir;" said Emily blushing; "you will recollect yourself, and be sorry that you have asked it."

"Speak to the point," rejoined Montoni, in a voice of increasing vehemence. "Will you deny your own words; will you deny, that you acknowledged, only a few hours ago, that it was too late to recede from your engagements, and that you accepted the Count's hand?"

"I will deny all this, for no words of mine ever imported it."

"Astonishing! Will you deny what you wrote to Mons. Quesnel, your uncle? If you do, your own hand will bear testimony against you. What have you now to say?" continued Montoni, observing the silence and confusion of Emily.

"I now perceive, sir, that you are under a very great error, and that I have been equally mistaken."

"No more duplicity, I entreat; be open and candid, if it be possible."

"I have always been so, sir; and can claim no merit in such conduct, for I have had nothing to conceal."

"How is this, Signor?" cried Morano, with trembling emotion.

"Suspend your judgment, Count," replied Montoni, "the wiles of a female heart are unsearchable. Now, Madame, your *explanation*."

"Excuse me, sir, if I withhold my explanation till you appear willing to give me your confidence; assertion as present can only subject me to insult."

"Your explanation, I entreat you!" said Morano.

"Well, well," rejoined Montoni, "I give you my confidence; let us hear this explanation."

"Let me lead to it then, by asking a question."

"As many as you please," said Montoni, contemptuously.

"What, then, was the subject of your letter to Mons. Quesnel?"

"The same that was the subject of your note to him, certainly. You did well to stipulate for my confidence before you demanded that question."

"I must beg you will be more explicit, sir; what was that subject?"

"What could it be, but the noble offer of Count Morano," said Montoni.

"Then, sir, we entirely misunderstood each other," replied Emily.

"We entirely misunderstood each other too, I suppose," rejoined Montoni, "in the conversation which preceded the writing of that note? I must do you the justice to own, that you are very ingenious at this same art of misunderstanding."

Emily tried to restrain the tears that came to her eyes, and to answer with becoming firmness. "Allow me, sir, to explain myself fully, or to be wholly silent."

"The explanation may now be dispensed with; it is anticipated. If Count Morano still thinks one necessary, I will give him an honest one: you have changed your intention since our last conversation; and, if he can have patience and humility enough to wait till tomorrow, he will probably find it changed again: but as I have neither the patience nor the humility, which you expect from a lover, I warn you of the effect of my displeasure!"

"Montoni, you are too precipitate," said the Count, who had listened to this conversation in extreme agitation and impatience; — "Signora, I entreat your own explanation of this affair!"

"Signor Montoni has said justly," replied Emily, "that all explanation may now be dispensed with; after what has passed I cannot suffer myself to give one. It is sufficient for me, and for you, sir, that I repeat my late declaration; let me hope this is the last time it will be necessary for me to repeat it — I never can accept the honour of your alliance."

"Charming Emily!" exclaimed the Count in an impassioned tone, "let not resentment make you unjust; let me not suffer for the offence of Montoni! — Revoke —"

"Offence!" interrupted Montoni — "Count, this language is ridiculous, this submission is childish! — Speak as becomes a man, not as the slave of a pretty tyrant."

"You distract me, Signor; suffer me to plead my own cause; you have already proved insufficient to it."

"All conversation on this subject, sir," said Emily, "is worse than useless, since it can bring only pain to each of us: if you would oblige me, pursue it no farther."

"It is impossible, Madam, that I can thus easily resign the object of a passion, which is the delight and torment of my life. — I must still love — still pursue you with unremitting ardour; — when you shall be convinced of the strength and constancy of my passion, your heart must soften into pity and repentance."

"Is this generous, sir? is this manly? Can it either deserve or obtain the esteem you solicit, thus to continue a persecution from which I have no present means of escaping?"

A gleam of moonlight that fell upon Morano's countenance, revealed the strong emotions of his soul; and, glancing on Montoni discovered the dark resentment, which contrasted his features.

"By Heaven this is too much!" suddenly exclaimed the Count; "Signor Montoni, you treat me ill; it is from you that I shall look for explanation."

"From me, sir! you shall have it;" muttered Montoni, "if your discernment is indeed so far obscured by passion, as to make explanation necessary. And for you, madam, you should learn, that a man of honour is not to be trifled with, though you may, perhaps, with impunity, treat a *boy* like a puppet."

This sarcasm roused the pride of Morano, and the resentment which he had felt at the indifference of Emily, being lost in indignation of the insolence of Montoni, he determined to mortify him, by defending her.

"This also," said he, replying to Montoni's last words, "this also, shall not pass unnoticed. I bid you learn, sir, that you have a stronger enemy than a woman to contend with: I will protect Signora St. Aubert from your threatened resentment. You have misled me, and would revenge your disappointed views upon the innocent."

"Misled you!" retorted Montoni with quickness, "Is my conduct — my word" — then pausing, while he seemed endeavouring to restrain the resentment, that flashed in his eyes, in the next moment he added, in a subdued voice, "Count Morano, this is a language, a sort of conduct to which I am not accustomed: it is the conduct of a passionate boy — as such, I pass it over in contempt."

"In contempt, Signor?"

"The respect I owe myself," rejoined Montoni, "requires, that I should converse more largely with you upon some points of the subject in dispute. Return with me to Venice, and I will condescend to convince you of your error."

"Condescend, sir! But I will not condescend to be so conversed with."

Montoni smiled contemptuously; and Emily, now terrified for the consequences of what she saw and heard, could no longer be silent. She explained the whole subject upon which she had mistaken Montoni in the morning, declaring, that she understood him to have consulted her solely

concerning the disposal of La Vallée, and concluding with entreating, that he would write immediately to M. Quesnel, and rectify the mistake.

But Montoni either was, or affected to be, still incredulous; and Count Morano was still entangled in perplexity. While she was speaking, however, the attention of her auditors had been diverted from the immediate occasion of their resentment, and their passion consequently became less. Montoni desired the Count would order his servants to row back to Venice, that he might have some private conversation with him; and Morano, somewhat soothed by his softened voice and manner, and eager to examine into the full extent of his difficulties, complied.

Emily, comforted by this prospect of release, employed the present moments in endeavouring, with conciliating care, to prevent any fatal mischief between the persons who so lately had persecuted and insulted her.

Her spirits revived, when she heard once more the voice of song and laughter, resounding from the grand canal, and at length entered again between its stately piazzas. The *zendaletto* stopped at Montoni's mansion, and the Count hastily led her into the hall, where Montoni took his arm, and said something in a low voice, on which Morano kissed the hand he held, notwithstanding Emily's effort to disengage it, and, wishing her a good evening, with an accent and look she could not misunderstand, returned to his *zendaletto* with Montoni.

Emily, in her own apartment, considered with intense anxiety all the unjust and tyrannical conduct of Montoni, the dauntless perseverance of Morano, and her own desolate situation, removed from her friends and country. She looked in vain to Valancourt, confined by his profession to a distant kingdom, as her protector; but it gave her comfort to know, that there was, at least, one person in the world, who would sympathise in her afflictions, and whose wishes would fly eagerly to release her. Yet she determined not to give him unavailing pain by relating the reasons she had to regret the having rejected his better judgment concerning Montoni; reasons, however, which could not induce her to lament the delicacy and disinterested affection that had made her reject his proposal for a clandestine marriage. The approaching interview with her uncle she regarded with some degree of hope, for she determined to represent to him the distresses of her situation, and to entreat that he would allow her to return to France with him and Madame Quesnel. Then, suddenly remembering that her beloved La Vallée, her only home, was no longer at her command, her tears flowed anew, and she feared that she had little pity to expect from a man who, like M. Quesnel, could dispose of it without deigning to consult with her, and could dismiss an aged and faithful servant, destitute of either support or asylum. But, though it was certain, that she had herself no longer a home in France, and few, very few friends there, she determined to return, if possible, that she might be released from the power of Montoni, whose particularly oppressive conduct towards herself, and general character as to others, were justly terrible to her imagination. She had no wish to reside with her uncle, M. Quesnel, since his behaviour to her late father and to herself, had been uniformly such as to convince her, that in flying to him she could only obtain

an exchange of oppressors; neither had she the slightest intention of consenting to the proposal of Valancourt for an immediate marriage, though this would give her a lawful and a generous protector, for the chief reasons, which had formerly influenced her conduct, still existed against it, while others, which seemed to justify the step, would not be done away; and his interest, his fame were at all times too dear to her, to suffer her to consent to a union, which, at this early period of their lives, would probably defeat both. One sure, and proper asylum, however, would still be open to her in France. She knew that she could board in the convent, where she had formerly experienced so much kindness, and which had an affecting and solemn claim upon her heart, since it contained the remains of her late father. Here she could remain in safety and tranquillity, till the term, for which La Vallée might be let, should expire; or, till the arrangement of M. Motteville's affairs enabled her so far to estimate the remains of her fortune, as to judge whether it would be prudent for her to reside there.

Concerning Montoni's conduct with respect to his letters to M. Quesnel, she had many doubts; however he might be at first mistaken on the subject, she much suspected that he wilfully persevered in his error, as a means of intimidating her into a compliance with his wishes of uniting her to Count Morano. Whether this was or was not the fact, she was extremely anxious to explain the affair to M. Quesnel, and looked forward with a mixture of impatience, hope and fear, to her approaching visit.

On the following day, Madame Montoni, being alone with Emily, introduced the mention of Count Morano, by expressing her surprise, that she had not joined the party on the water the preceding evening, and at her abrupt departure to Venice. Emily then related what had passed, expressed her concern for the mutual mistake that had occurred between Montoni and herself, and solicited her aunt's kind offices in urging him to give a decisive denial to the count's further addresses; but she soon perceived, that Madame Montoni had not been ignorant of the late conversation, when she introduced the present.

"You have no encouragement to expect from me" said her aunt "in these notions. I have already given my opinion on the subject, and think Signor Montoni right in enforcing, by any means, your consent. If young persons will be blind to their interest, and obstinately oppose it, why, the greatest blessings they can have are friends, who will oppose their folly. Pray what pretensions of any kind do you think you have to such a match as is now offered you?"

"Not any whatever, Madam" replied Emily "and, therefore, at least, suffer me to be happy in my humility."

"Nay, niece, it cannot be denied, that you have pride enough; my poor brother, your father, had his share of pride too; though, let me add, his fortune did not justify it."

Emily, somewhat embarrassed by the indignation, which this malevolent allusion to her father excited, and by the difficulty of rendering her answer as

temperate as it should be reprehensive, hesitated for some moments, in a confusion, which highly gratified her aunt. At length she said, “My father’s pride, Madam, had a noble object — the happiness which he knew could be derived only from goodness, knowledge and charity. As it never consisted in his superiority, in point of fortune, to some persons, it was not humbled by his inferiority, in that respect, to others. He never disdained those, who were wretched by poverty and misfortune; he did sometimes despise persons, who, with many opportunities of happiness, rendered themselves miserable by vanity, ignorance and cruelty. I shall think it my highest glory to emulate such pride.”

“I do not pretend to understand anything of these high flown sentiments, niece; you have all that glory to yourself: I would teach you a little plain sense, and not have you so wise as to despise happiness.”

“That would indeed not be wisdom, but folly” said Emily “for wisdom can boast no higher attainment than happiness; but you will allow, Madam, that our ideas of happiness may differ. I cannot doubt, that you wish me to be happy, but I must fear you are mistaken in the means of making me so.”

“I cannot boast of a learned education, niece, such as your father thought proper to give you, and, therefore, do not pretend to understand all these fine speeches about happiness. I must be contented to understand only common sense, and happy would it have been for you and your father, if that had been included in his education.”

Emily was too much shocked by these reflections on her father’s memory, to despise this speech as it deserved.

Madame Montoni was about to speak, but Emily quitted the room, and retired to her own, where the little spirit she had lately exerted yielded to grief and vexation, and left her only to her tears. From every review of her situation she could derive, indeed, only new sorrow. To the discovery, which had just been forced upon her, of Montoni’s unworthiness, she had now to add, that of the cruel vanity, for the gratification of which her aunt was about to sacrifice her; of the effrontery and cunning, with which, at the time that she meditated the sacrifice, she boasted of her tenderness, or insulted her victim; and of the venomous envy, which, as it did not scruple to attack her father’s character, could scarcely be expected to withhold from her own.

During the few days that intervened between this conversation and the departure for Miarenti, Montoni did not once address himself to Emily. His looks sufficiently declared his resentment; but that he should forbear to renew a mention of the subject of it, exceedingly surprised her, who was no less astonished, that, during three days, Count Morano neither visited Montoni, nor was named by him. Several conjectures arose in her mind. Sometimes she feared that the dispute between them had been revived, and had ended fatally to the Count. Sometimes she was inclined to hope, that weariness, or disgust at her firm rejection of his suit had induced him to relinquish it; and, at others,

she suspected that he had now recourse to stratagem, and forbore his visits, and prevailed with Montoni to forbear the repetition of his name, in the expectation that gratitude and generosity would prevail with her to give him the consent, which he could not hope from love.

Thus passed the time in vain conjecture, and alternate hopes and fears, till the day arrived when Montoni was to set out for the villa of Miarenti, which, like the preceding ones, neither brought the Count, nor the mention of him.

Montoni having determined not to leave Venice, till towards evening, that he might avoid the heats, and catch the cool breezes of night, embarked about an hour before sunset, with his family, in a barge, for the Brenta. Emily sat alone near the stern of the vessel, and, as it floated slowly on, watched the gay and lofty city lessening from her view, till its palaces seemed to sink in the distant waves, while its loftier towers and domes, illumined by the declining sun, appeared on the horizon, like those far seen clouds which, in more northern climes, often linger on the western verge, and catch the last light of a summer's evening. Soon after, even these grew dim, and faded in distance from her sight; but she still sat gazing on the vast scene of cloudless sky, and mighty waters, and listening in pleasing awe to the deep-sounding waves, while, as her eyes glanced over the Adriatic, towards the opposite shores, which were, however, far beyond the reach of sight, she thought of Greece, and, a thousand classical remembrances stealing to her mind, she experienced that pensive luxury which is felt on viewing the scenes of ancient story, and on comparing their present state of silence and solitude with that of their former grandeur and animation. The scenes of the Illiad illapsed in glowing colours to her fancy — scenes, once the haunt of heroes—now lonely, and in ruins; but which still shone, in the poet's strain, in all their youthful splendour.

As her imagination painted with melancholy touches, the deserted plains of Troy, such as they appeared in this after-day, she reanimated the landscape with the following little story.

STANZAS

O'er Ilion's plains, where once the warrior bled,
And once the poet rais'd his deathless strain,
O'er Ilion's plains a weary driver led
His stately camels: For the ruin'd fane

Wide round the lonely scene his glance he threw,
For now the red cloud faded in the west,
And twilight o'er the silent landscape drew
Her deep'ning veil; eastward his course he prest:

There, on the grey horizon's glimm'ring bound,
Rose the proud columns of deserted Troy,
And wandering shepherds now a shelter found
Within those walls, where princes wont to joy.

Beneath a lofty porch the driver pass'd,
Then, from his camels heav'd the heavy load;
Partook with them the simple, cool repast,
And in short vesper gave himself to God.

From distant lands with merchandise he came,
His all of wealth his patient servants bore;
Oft deep-drawn sighs his anxious wish proclaim
To reach, again, his happy cottage door;

For there, his wife, his little children, dwell;
Their smiles shall pay the toil of many an hour:
Ev'n now warm tears to expectation swell,
As fancy o'er his mind extends her pow'r.

A death-like stillness reign'd, where once the song,
The song of heroes, wak'd the midnight air,
Save, when a solemn murmur roll'd along,
That seem'd to say—"for future worlds prepare."

For Time's imperious voice was frequent heard
Shaking the marble temple to its fall,
(By hands he long had conquer'd, vainly rear'd),
And distant ruins answer'd to his call.

While Hamet slept, his camels round him lay,
Beneath him, all his store of wealth was piled;
And here, his cruse and empty wallet lay,
And there, the flute that chear'd him in the wild.

The robber Tartar on his slumber stole,
For o'er the waste, at eve, he watch'd his train;
Ah! who his thirst of plunder shall control?
Who calls on him for mercy—calls in vain!

A poison'd poignard in his belt he wore,
A crescent sword depended at his side,
The deathful quiver at his back he bore,
And infants—at his very look had died!

The moon's cold beam athwart the temple fell,
And to his sleeping prey the Tartar led;
But soft!—a startled camel shook his bell,
Then stretch'd his limbs, and rear'd his drowsy head.

Hamet awoke! the poignard glitter'd high!
Swift from his couch he sprung, and 'scap'd the blow;
When from an unknown hand the arrows fly,

That lay the ruffian, in his vengeance, low.

He groan'd, he died! from forth a column'd gate
A fearful shepherd, pale and silent, crept,
Who, as he watch'd his folded flock star-late,
Had mark'd the robber steal where Hamet slept.

He fear'd his own, and sav'd a stranger's life!
Poor Hamet clasp'd him to his grateful heart;
Then, rous'd his camels for the dusty strife,
And, with the shepherd, hasten'd to depart.

And now, aurora breathes her fresh'ning gale,
And faintly trembles on the eastern cloud;
And now, the sun, from under twilight's veil,
Looks gaily forth, and melts her airy shroud.

Wide o'er the level plains, his slanting beams
Dart their long lines on Ilion's tower'd site;
The distant Hellespont with morning gleams,
And old Scamander winds his waves in light.

All merry sound the camel bells, so gay,
And merry beats fond Hamet's heart, for he,
E'er the dim evening steals upon the day,
His children, wife and happy home shall see.

As Emily approached the shores of Italy she began to discriminate the rich features and varied colouring of the landscape — the purple hills, groves of orange, pine and cypress, shading magnificent villas, and towns rising among vineyards and plantations. The noble Brenta, pouring its broad waves into the sea, now appeared, and, when she reached its mouth, the barge stopped, that the horses might be fastened which were now to tow it up the stream. This done, Emily gave a last look to the Adriatic, and to the dim sail,

that from the sky-mix'd wave
Dawns on the sight,

and the barge slowly glided between the green and luxuriant slopes of the river. The grandeur of the Palladian villas, that adorn these shores, was considerably heightened by the setting rays, which threw strong contrasts of light and shade upon the porticos and long arcades, and beamed a mellow lustre upon the orangeries and the tall groves of pine and cypress, that overhung the buildings. The scent of oranges, of flowering myrtles, and other odoriferous plants was diffused upon the air, and often, from these embowered retreats, a strain of music stole on the calm, and "softened into silence."

The sun now sunk below the horizon, twilight fell over the landscape, and Emily, rapt in musing silence, continued to watch its features gradually vanishing into obscurity. She remembered her many happy evenings, when with St. Aubert she had observed the shades of twilight steal over a scene as beautiful as this, from the gardens of La Vallée, and a tear fell to the memory of her father. Her spirits were softened into melancholy by the influence of the hour, by the low murmur of the wave passing under the vessel, and the stillness of the air, that trembled only at intervals with distant music:— why else should she, at these moments, have looked on her attachment to Valancourt with presages so very afflicting, since she had but lately received letters from him, that had soothed for a while all her anxieties? It now seemed to her oppressed mind, that she had taken leave of him for ever, and that the countries, which separated them, would never more be retraced by her. She looked upon Count Morano with horror, as in some degree the cause of this; but apart from him, a conviction, if such that may be called, which arises from no proof, and which she knew not how to account for, seized her mind — that she should never see Valancourt again. Though she knew, that neither Morano's solicitations, nor Montoni's commands had lawful power to enforce her obedience, she regarded both with a superstitious dread, that they would finally prevail.

Lost in this melancholy reverie, and shedding frequent tears, Emily was at length roused by Montoni, and she followed him to the cabin, where refreshments were spread, and her aunt was seated alone. The countenance of Madame Montoni was inflamed with resentment, that appeared to be the consequence of some conversation she had held with her husband, who regarded her with a kind of sullen disdain, and both preserved, for some time, a haughty silence. Montoni then spoke to Emily of Mons. Quesnel: "You will not, I hope, persist in disclaiming your knowledge of the subject of my letter to him?"

"I had hoped, sir, that it was no longer necessary for me to disclaim it," said Emily, "I had hoped, from your silence, that you were convinced of your error."

"You have hoped impossibilities then" replied Montoni; "I might as reasonably have expected to find sincerity and uniformity of conduct in one of your sex, as you to convict me of error in this affair."

Emily blushed, and was silent; she now perceived too clearly, that she had hoped an impossibility, for, where no mistake had been committed no conviction could follow; and it was evident, that Montoni's conduct had not been the consequence of mistake, but of design.

Anxious to escape from conversation, which was both afflicting and humiliating to her, she soon returned to the deck, and resumed her station near the stern, without apprehension of cold, for no vapour rose from the water, and the air was dry and tranquil; here, at least, the benevolence of nature allowed her the quiet which Montoni had denied her elsewhere. It was now past midnight. The stars shed a kind of twilight, that served to show the dark outline of the shores on either hand, and the grey surface of the river; till the moon rose

from behind a high palm grove, and shed her mellow lustre over the scene. The vessel glided smoothly on: amid the stillness of the hour Emily heard, now and then, the solitary voice of the barge-men on the bank, as they spoke to their horses; while, from a remote part of the vessel, with melancholy song,

The sailor sooth'd,
Beneath the trembling moon, the midnight wave.

Emily, meanwhile, anticipated her reception by Mons, and Madame Quesnel; considered what she should say on the subject of La Vallée; and then, to withhold her mind from more anxious topics, tried to amuse herself by discriminating the faint drawn features of the landscape, reposing in the moonlight. While her fancy thus wandered, she saw, at a distance, a building peeping between the moonlight trees, and, as the barge approached, heard voices speaking, and soon distinguished the lofty portico of a villa, overshadowed by groves of pine and sycamore, which she recollected to be the same, that had formerly been pointed out to her, as belonging to Madame Quesnel's relative.

The barge stopped at a flight of marble steps, which led up the bank to a lawn. Lights appeared between some pillars beyond the portico. Montoni sent forward his servant, and then disembarked with his family. They found Mons. and Madame Quesnel, with a few friends, seated on sofas in the portico, enjoying the cool breeze of the night, and eating fruits and ices, while some of their servants at a little distance, on the river's bank, were performing a simple serenade. Emily was now accustomed to the way of living in this warm country, and was not surprised to find Mons. and Madame Quesnel in their portico, two hours after midnight.

The usual salutations being over, the company seated themselves in the portico, and refreshments were brought them from the adjoining hall, where a banquet was spread, and servants attended. When the bustle of this meeting had subsided, and Emily had recovered from the little flutter into which it had thrown her spirits, she was struck with the singular beauty of the hall, so perfectly accommodated to the luxuries of the season. It was of white marble, and the roof, rising into an open cupola, was supported by columns of the same material. Two opposite sides of the apartment, terminating in open porticos, admitted to the hall a full view of the gardens, and of the river scenery; in the centre a fountain continually refreshed the air, and seemed to heighten the fragrance, that breathed from the surrounding orangeries, while its dashing waters gave an agreeable and soothing sound. Etruscan lamps, suspended from the pillars, diffused a brilliant light over the interior part of the hall, leaving the remoter porticos to the softer lustre of the moon.

Mons. Quesnel talked apart to Montoni of his own affairs, in his usual strain of self-importance; boasted of his new acquisitions, and then affected to pity some disappointments, which Montoni had lately sustained. Meanwhile, the latter, whose pride at least enabled him to despise such vanity as this, and whose discernment at once detected under this assumed pity, the frivolous

malignity of Quesnel's mind, listened to him in contemptuous silence, till he named his niece, and then they left the portico, and walked away into the gardens.

Emily, however, still attended to Madame Quesnel, who spoke of France (for even the name of her native country was dear to her) and she found some pleasure in looking at a person, who had lately been in it. That country, too, was inhabited by Valancourt, and she listened to the mention of it, with a faint hope, that he also would be named. Madame Quesnel, who, when she was in France, had talked with rapture of Italy, now, that she was in Italy, talked with equal praise of France, and endeavoured to excite the wonder and the envy of her auditors by accounts of places, which they had not been happy enough to see. In these descriptions she not only imposed upon them, but upon herself, for she never thought a present pleasure equal to one, that was passed; and thus the delicious climate, the fragrant orangeries and all the luxuries, which surrounded her, slept unnoticed, while her fancy wandered over the distant scenes of a northern country.

Emily listened in vain for the name of Valancourt. Madame Montoni spoke in her turn of the delights of Venice, and of the pleasure she expected from visiting the fine castle of Montoni, on the Apennine; which latter mention, at least, was merely a retaliating boast, for Emily well knew, that her aunt had no taste for solitary grandeur, and, particularly, for such as the castle of Udolpho promised. Thus the party continued to converse, and, as far as civility would permit, to torture each other by mutual boasts, while they reclined on sofas in the portico, and were environed with delights both from nature and art, by which any honest minds would have been tempered to benevolence, and happy imaginations would have been soothed into enchantment.

The dawn, soon after, trembled in the eastern horizon, and the light tints of morning, gradually expanding, showed the beautifully declining forms of the Italian mountains and the gleaming landscapes, stretched at their feet. Then the sunbeams, shooting up from behind the hills, spread over the scene that fine saffron tinge, which seems to impart repose to all it touches. The landscape no longer gleamed; all its glowing colours were revealed, except that its remoter features were still softened and united in the mist of distance, whose sweet effect was heightened to Emily by the dark verdure of the pines and cypresses, that over-arched the foreground of the river.

The market people, passing with their boats to Venice, now formed a moving picture on the Brenta. Most of these had little painted awnings, to shelter their owners from the sunbeams, which, together with the piles of fruit and flowers, displayed beneath, and the tasteful simplicity of the peasant girls, who watched the rural treasures, rendered them gay and striking objects. The swift movement of the boats down the current, the quick glance of oars in the water, and now and then the passing chorus of peasants, who reclined under the sail of their little bark, or the tones of some rustic instrument, played by a girl, as she sat near her sylvan cargo, heightened the animation and festivity of the scene.

When Montoni and M. Quesnel had joined the ladies, the party left the portico for the gardens, where the charming scenery soon withdrew Emily's thoughts from painful subjects. The majestic forms and rich verdure of cypresses she had never seen so perfect before: groves of cedar, lemon, and orange, the spiry clusters of the pine and poplar, the luxuriant chesnut and oriental plane, threw all their pomp of shade over these gardens; while bowers of flowering myrtle and other spicy shrubs mingled their fragrance with that of flowers, whose vivid and various colouring glowed with increased effect beneath the contrasted umbrage of the groves. The air also was continually refreshed by rivulets, which, with more taste than fashion, had been suffered to wander among the green recesses.

Emily often lingered behind the party, to contemplate the distant landscape, that closed a vista, or that gleamed beneath the dark foliage of the foreground; — the spiral summits of the mountains, touched with a purple tint, broken and steep above, but shelving gradually to their base; the open valley, marked by no formal lines of art; and the tall groves of cypress, pine and poplar, sometimes embellished by a ruined villa, whose broken columns appeared between the branches of a pine, that seemed to droop over their fall.

From other parts of the gardens, the character of the view was entirely changed, and the fine solitary beauty of the landscape shifted for the crowded features and varied colouring of inhabitation.

The sun was now gaining fast upon the sky, and the party quitted the gardens, and retired to repose.