## The Spectre

OF THE

## Mountain of Grénada;

A ROMANCE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

"Be thou a Spirit of Health, or Goblin damn'd;
Bring with thee airs from Heav'n, or blasts from Hell;
Be thy intent wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee.

SHAKESPEARE.

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### THE SPECTRE

# Mountain of Grenada.

### CHAP. I.

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF DON JUAN DE MANDINI.

On the arrival of the three friends at the parsonage, the unfortunate Jerome, unwilling to keep them in suspence respecting the sequel of his story, immediately recommenced his narrative in the following terms:

"The preparations for my departure being soon ended, I disembarked from my gondola under the walls of the palace de Porto. My faithful equerry had orders to await my arrival at that

spot, with three of my people, on whose zeal and valour I could rely; but it was not without uttering a heartrending sigh that Paolo consented to second my rash design. Imagining that I had foreseen all possible difficulties, and overcome every obstacle; I again entered the house of mourning and death to solemnize, under the most dismal auspices, that union, which was the sole object of my criminal views. I found the Count in a weaker state than when I had left him, and almost incapable of sustaining the slightest emotion; yet, in defiance of his perilous situation, he was resolved, in order to calm his paternal suspicions, to be witness of the awful ceremony which should place his daughter under the protection of a husband.

"The altar was already prepared, the chaplain was buried in profound meditation, poor Sarah remained drowned in tears, the whole family was assembled, and my absence alone retarded the performance of the mar-

riage. It was not long, however, ere I appeared. On beholding me, the Count seemed to experience a sensation of happiness, which for a moment shielded him from the attacks

of the tyrant death.

"In a few words he explained to all those who were present, the motives which rendered him desirous of conferring a benediction in his last moments upon the union of his daughter and his friend; and concluded by intreating the unfeeling Aurora to abjure every sentiment of hatred and jealousy against her sister, and to evince for her the same affection she had appeared to feel towards the author of her being.

"After addressing an impressive and pathetic prayer to Heaven in behalf of his children, the Count motioned the chaplain to commence his august functions. Sarah fell upon her knees, and I followed her example. Drowned in tears, and less occupied with her passion than the dreadful loss she was about to sustain, Sarah could only of-

fer up petitions for the welfare of her suffering parent. As to me, entirely devoted to my fatal passion, I could not pray, I could not weep; I beheld not God the punisher of perjury, I regarded not the awful scene before me, nor did the vengeance of Aurora, ready to burst upon my devoted head. for a moment occupy my mind. I thought only of the happiness of possessing Sarah, and of obtaining her in opposition to the will of a father. In the mean time the ceremony proceeds; the solemn vows are pronounced; and I became the husband of my adored Sarah.

"The Count, for the last time, smiles upon his children; we fall upon his bosom, he raises his trembling hands towards Heaven, and implores the benediction of the most high in our favour. The cry of vengeance, of infernal vengeance alone, replies to his dying supplication! Sarah, my hapless bride, in obedience to the commands of a father, attempts to bestow upon me the nuptial embrace; but,

O God! she totters, she turns pale; in vain are the arms of a husband extended to receive an adored mistress. -they are occupied only by a livid, cold, senseless corpse !- " My father, -I follow you !"-were the last words" that met my ear. I would not believe in the truth they conveyed; but O too true it was, that the Count de Porto ceased to breathe, that Sarah had been torn from me for ever !- Inthe midst of this scene of terror and dismay, Aurora appeared calm and undisturbed; and, without changing countenance, did she hear the fatal exclamation: "Sarah is no more!"-Stern as the retributive law, the implacable Aurora coelly directed that that assistance should be afforded her sister, though she but too well knew it must prove unavailing. My eyes followed herevery motion, and the excess of despair soon produced upon my ardent mind the same effect it had upon my ruthless foe, - an insatiable thirst of vengeance with a calm unruffled front. Astonished at my seeming resignation,

and thence supposing that I had no suspicions as to the authors of my misfortune, Aurora eagerly endeavoured to convince me of the interest which she took in my fate, and with perfidious tenderness besought me to leave fatal the apartment where nought but misery met my view. I obeyed with the tractability of an infant.

"The body of Sarah had been laid beside the mortal remains of the Count de Porto, and as I withdrew, I could not help expressing a hope that I should ere long bear them company. I kissed the cold hand of Sarah, and interiorly vowed to the gentle victim of hatred, that I would only survive her the time necessary to avenge her fall.

"As Aurora succeeded in varnishing over the sudden dissolution of Sarah, by attributing it to the excess of grief occasioned by the loss of her father, I found that, without my interposition, the heiress of de Porto must indubitably enjoy the fruit of her crime, and therefore resolved to hasten the

eonsumsuation of my vengeance. A moment's delay—and my victim would

have escaped.

" Night already advanced; Aurora, had proposed to me to quit that abode of woe and terror, where my anguish could only experience momentary augmentation. I feigned a willingness to obey her, and only asked once more to behold the remains of her whom I adored. Aurora cast a look of triumph upon me, and replied: · You will never see her again, Don. Juan; — dry up your tears, forget Sarah, and if the heart——. She did not conclude the sentence; but her ardent, yet dark regard, too plainly indicated the meaning of her observation. ' Laccept your heart!' said I, in a solemn tone. 'Is it possible!' she rapturously exclaimed. We were alone.

"The apartment to which Aurora had conducted me overlooked the sea, which happened to be agitated to an extraordinary degree, the waves running mountains high, and presenting

the finest possible type of the turbulence of my mind. Thrown off her guard by passion, the cruel enemy of Sarah had the temerity to approach, and thus address me: 'Ah! Don Juan, repeat, repeat that delightful avowal ;-you accept my heart?'-Yes,' I exclaimed, clasping her within my arms, 'but it is to pierce thy perfidious heart, and thus to avenge her whom alone I loved!"--As I spoke, I contrived, ere she was aware of my design, to bury my poniard in her bosom. The wretch instantly fell, and her last words were: Traitor, I am punished for having loved too well.

"For some moments I silently contemplated this spectre of vengeance and of death, when at length several of the domestics of the palace, alarmed at our absence, rushed into the room, in search of their mistress, and beheld her stretched lifeless upon the floor. I immediately addressed them to the following effect: Behold the body of the most culpable of woman kind: be careful that you do not assign it the same tomb as the innocent Sarah's; for even in death the murderer and the victim must be separate. Dure not to approach me! I can, without your aid, rid myself of the hateful burden of life!' Asl uttered these words, I threw up an adjoining window, and plunging into the sea that rolled beneath, sought a re-union with all I held dear, in the bosom of the deep.

"The Almighty, who, in prolonging my purgatory upon earth, wished to avoid the necessity of punishing me in the infernal regions; that great God of mercy, who still watched over the existence of a guilty wretch,graciously permitted that my faithful equerry should witness my rash act, and that he should plunge in to my assistance. The worthy fellow succeeded in saving my life, and immediately bore me to my gondola. Conceiving, from my desperate deed, that some dreadful misfortune had occurred, he had discretion enough not to convey me back to Venice; and, profiting by the state of insensibility I was in, followed the orders which I had

first given him.

"On my arrival at \*\*\* I recovered my senses. Finding myself alone with Paolo, a confused recollection of what had happened flashed across my memory; and I would fain have returned to Venice, to implore the death which I merited, to the end that I might be entombed in the same monument with Sarah. The faithful Paolo, however, would not obey me in this instance; but weeping in concert with me, intreated on his knees, that I would return to Spain, and impart the subject of my woes to my father. I listened to him without emotion; my resolve was taken; death was all I looked for; and being certain that I should find a tomb whithersoever I went. I consented to return to my native county.

"Delighted at the idea of having triumphed over my despair, Paolo hastened to prepare for our journey to Madrid. I suffered him to give orders, to direct, and to guide me during the whole of our progress. Insensible to external objects, I thought only
of the means of uniting myself to my
gentle bride, without awakening the
suspicions of Paolo; I wished to quit
this life without pomp, without noise,
and the means of my destruction appeared unimportant to me, provided
only that they conducted me to the

wished-for goal.

"Such, my dear Fernando, is the fatal effect of the passions and of atheism. Love leads on to perjury, perjury to vengeance, vengeance to suicide, and suicide to eternal damnation. Shudder, Fernando, at this monstrous gradation, the result of a total neglect of religious principles. Supported by this celestial prop, I should have been a respectful and dutiful son, a grateful friend, a constant lover, and ultimately a happy husband and parent. The remembrance of my first vows would have preserved me from the dangers of a new passion: I should not have caused the death of the hapless Sarah,

nor imbrued my hands in the blood of her sister, poisoned the last moments of my father, nor betrayed the confidence of Count de Mandax, whose heart had named me the staff of his old age. Senseless disseminators of the most dangerous of systems, impious innovators, behold the direful fruits of your detestable doctrine! crime, shame, despair, and death!

"On my arrival in Spain, such reflections as these, my friends, were indeed remote from my mind. Wholly occupied by my fatal project, nothing was then capable of dissuading me from its execution; but Providence so decreed it, that an unexpected event should tear the veil from my eyes, and present to my imagination the horrid crime I was about to commit, in all its hideous deformity.

### CHAP. II.

"I ARRIVED in my native land a fugitive and an outlaw. My bosom contained a conscience stained with the foul crime of murder, a mind alienated by despair, and a determination to render Count Mandini a witness of my last moments. He had declared me liable to his everlasting malediction, were I to persist in my passion for Sarah. I had persisted in it, and I lost my mistress! I now accused my unnatural father with the destruction of her whom I loved; and I resolved,

ere I united myself to her in the darksome tomb, to curse him in my turn who had called down eternal vengeance upon the head of Sarah, and upon mine.

"On my reaching \*\*\*, I found the people of the Venta, where I put up, in the utmost confusion. Consternation and dismay were visibly depicted in every countenance; and it was with much difficulty that my equerry could prevail upon them to conduct us to a room. Surprised at the indications of general terror, Paolo demanded of the master of the venta, what the matter was? 'Alas!' replied the man, 'two horrid crimes have been this morning committed in my house.

"A young hidalgol of Madrid, having carried off his mistress, whose hand his obdurate parents had refused to confer upon him, conducted her hither; but learning this morning, at break of day, that their retreat was discovered, and that they were on the point of falling into the power of the enraged relatives, the youth became distracted, and, after stabbing his mistress to the heart,

attempted to slay himself with the same poniard.'- Did he succeed in his noble attempt?' cried I. The host regarded me with an air of surprise, and repeated, in a severe tone; Noble attempt! a suicide! the most hideous of crimes! - Great God! have you any design of polluting my house in like manner?'-To this inquiry I made no reply, but quitted the room with an anxious desire to behold the two victims of love and despair. I mentioned this to my equerry, and asked him if the young man still lived? Paolo, hoping that such a dreadful spectacle might prove an useful lesson to me, consented to accompany me to the chamber of my unfortunate compatriot. We entered it accordingly; but, great God, what a sight met my view! A bed steeped in gore, a body perforated with stabs; whilst a clergyman vainly implored the clemency of the Almighty, in behalf of the expiring wretch! A sepulchral lamp cast a faint glare around, silence of the deepest kind reigning throughout the apartment, and not once broken by the sob of repentance. I shuddered involuntarily, and cold perspiration dropped from my brow, as I recognised, in the dying man, a friend of my heart; one who, like myself, had been educated in the school of atheism. Not unfrequently had we in criminal pastime blasphemed that Divinity, who now brought us together, in order that each might convince the other of the impossibility of being virtuous or happy, without believing in him.

"The expiring Antonio recognised, me, and adding calmness of mind to perversity of heart, began to satirize and ridicule the terrors with which he had been inspired in his infancy, concerning the dreadful journey he was about to take. The worthy religious raised his hands and eyes towards Heaven, and exclaimed: 'All powerful, yet merciful God! Suspend for a moment thy Divine vengeance, and suffer thy clemency to act. Grant, O grant but one ray of penitence to

the dying sinner, to the end that thou

mayest be enabled to save him !'

"This energetic supplication, the tears which accompanied it, the lively and ardent faith of him who pronounced it, the pure and angelic life which appeared before the throne of divine justice, to counterbalance the crimes of the guilty youth, such a combination of terrifying and affecting objects at first staggered my infidelity, and finally softened my obdurate heart. Since the dreadful scene which had been acted in the palace de Porto, I had not shed a single penitent tear; my heart had ceased to throb, and one idea alone, that of death, was ever present to my imagination. I would fain have had this idea clothed in terrors, and thus did it now appear before me, whilst I shrunk from its approach.

"I found myself overcome by a power superior to despair; and I now, at length, became acquainted with the dread of an inevitable state of futurity;

and I resolved to live, in order to ex-

piate my crimes.

"The modest religious, who could not read my mind, occupied as he was by the principal object of his solicitude, perceived that the efforts of his zeal had become useless,—that he was no longer heard,—that the infernal abyss.

had received its prey !

"The man of God; in consternation at the obduracy of Antonio, with tears in his eyes, upbraided himself for the non-success of his ministry; attributed it to his faults, and humbled himself before me. 'Oh father!' cried I, falling at his feet, cease to weep; Heaven still affords you an opportunity of doing good, of bringing back a lost wretch to the fold of Christianity.' After this introduction, I briefly related to him my melancholy story. Overcome by the allpowerful influence of humble piety, I bent my haughty head before him, and at length tasted the sweets of repentance.

"The venerable religious listened to my narrative without testifying indignation, poured the balm of Christian hope into my mental wounds, and reconciled me to myself, by presenting me, in the long career which I had still to run, with the means of atoning

for my guilty wanderings.

" After deriving from his simple, but affecting instructions, a desire to return to the path of honour and piety, I resolved to bid an everlasting adieu to the world and to my family. I had lost the only object that attached me to existence, the only one on whose account I coveted wealth and grandeur. - Sarah was no more. -I abandoned without regret all the goods upon which man places his affections, and in the monastery of the Escurial endeavoured to obtain a total disregard and distaste for mundane possessions. Situated between the sanctuary of the Almighty and the mausoleum of Kings, I hourly called. upon death to reveal to me the nos. thingness of worldly expectations.

"I passed some years in this retirement; by turns having recourse to the consolations of religion, and to the support of reason. I was not happy; but I began to find myself calm, and I imagined that I was now entirely disabused of the folly of terrestrialillusions. Great, however, was my error.

"Your visit to our monastery, my dear Fernando, began to renew within me the dangerous remembrance of those objects which had charmed me at the propitious dawning of my life; and in Father Jerome, such a remembrance was criminal. You were a lover of the arts, but a too prudent father, perhaps, had interdicted you their cultivation, as highly dangerous to the mind of youth. You murmured at this severe decree, and I was the more affected by your uneasiness, as I passionately admired those acquirements to which you aspired. You recollect that, profiting by the proximity of the castle of Talavera to the monastery, you were constant in your attendance upon me, and greedily re-

ceived my instruction.

"The master-pieces of painting which the Escurial contains were your first models; the language of Tasso and Ariosto constituted your delights; and the seducing art of moving every passion was imparted to you by him, who should have inculcated those pecepts of wisdom, best calculated to restrain the effervescence of imagination. O my son, my noble pupil! how often since our separation have I bewailed this fault, which influenced my own destiny, and which perhaps overturned the whole plan of yours."

"Be satisfied, my dear father," replied Fernando, "it is true that I have received from nature an ardent mind, a warm imagination, and somewhat of a romantic spirit; but those fatal gifts, if such you will denominate them, can have no sort of alliance with my education, which has been bestowed by friendship. Should I be miserable hereafter, the misfortunes of my life must be attributed to my father.

More of mildness and indulgence on his part, would have enabled him to master my passions, and have inspired me with a desire to obey him. exciting my gratitude, he would have shackled my rebellious will; but he was not desirous of subduing the heart of his son. My future life at least will not be subject to his dominion."-"Fernando, what do you mean?"-66 Conclude your interesting history, worthy Jerome, and I will hereafter explain my meaning."-" My sad adventures, my friends," resumed the pastor, " are nearly brought to a conclusion.-For the space of five years I bestowed all my cares upon the education of Don Fernando; and his success in every branch of science not only surpassed my hopes, but flattered my vanity.

"This passion, once awakened in my mind, brought all those which had formerly tyrannized over me into action; I loved the world and its tinsel appendages, I had abandoned them in a fit of despair, but I was not

completely enlightened as to their want of stability. I was yet young, of illustrious rank, favoured by the gifts of nature and of fortune, yet found myself enchained, as it were, to obscurity, and condemned, after the departure of Don Fernando, to impart the state of my mind to no human

being.

" Alas! how could I communicate to the holy monks, among whom I dwelt, the complaints of self-love, and the groans of pride. Deprived of eulogium, still haunted by a conciousness of my superiority, I found no heart to sympathise with mine, no thought, no idea which corresponded with any one of my own. In private did I still dream of glory, and hourly regret the world, whilst my virtuous brethren only bewailed their lives, and regarded death as the forerunner of their eternal reward. Thus tormented by my passions, I experienced no melioration of my pains, except from receiving your letters, my dear Fernando.

"The first, dated from Italy, from that country which had been so dear. yet so fatal to me, produced a salutary effect upon my mind, by recalling the remembrance of my poor Sarah. It was then I became conscious that the pains which I deemed so insupportable were trivial when compared to what I had formerly undergone; but, alas! the sensation of remorse which you regenerated soon vanished, and I once more turned my thoughts to that enchanting world, where I might have played so distinguished and honourable a part. That world contained a father, friends, a sovereign who loved me, a faithful mistress who bewailed my absence, and an indulgent patron, who, I doubted not, would pardon me.

"Nature, love, fortune, and honours, unavailingly extended a hand to me, and vainly called upon me; I could only reply to their seducing solicitations, by this cruel truth; I am stationary for life!"—This afflicting

reflection cast me into the depths of misery, and soon the fatal poison of jealousy was added to my bitter cup of woe.

### CHAP. III.

THE Count had not for a considerable period visited the Escurial, and hence I only beheld the pomp of grandeur through the prism of imagination. At length an order arrived from the king to prepare the mansion of peace for the reception of a powerful monarch. This intelligence completed the overthrow of my better sense.

"The king was coming to the Escurial; my father would doubtless be with him, and the Count de Mandax master. I should ere long find myself in the midst of objects so dear to
my heart, or be separated from them
only by a weak obstacle; which I
might readily surmount. Into what
a state of agitation did this idea throw
my mind! but, alas! it was doomed
to experience still greater torment;
all the inhabitants of the monastery
were occupied in preparing the simple
and modest dwelling of a brilliant
court, yet upon no visage did I discern
a trace of emotion.

"The approach of grandeur, and the vicinage of pomp did not awake a single irregular recollection in minds completely detached from worldly affairs. One religious only appeared somewhat disturbed; and, supposing him to be agitated by the same sentiments as myself, I ventured to inter-

rogate him.

"Brother Anselmo, replied to me with the utmost simplicity. 'Ah! it is not the idea of again beholding a world, which I have quitted without

regret, that makes me anxious for the arrival of our monarch : no-it is the hope of again being enabled to bless the generous being to whom I am indebted 'for my happiness.'- 'And who is he?' I demanded, with a sort of instinctive uneasiness, for which I could not account. ' Don Sancho de Mandini!' he replied. ' Don Sancho de Mandini at court !' I exclaimed, in a dissatisfied tone. 'Yes,' answered the young religious, 'he has returned about three years from the Indies, where he rendered his country some essential services; and as a recompense, he received, on his arrival at Madrid, the hand of Donna Seraphina de Mandax, and the situation of Minister of the Marine.

senseless into the arms of brother Anselmo. I was immediately borne to my humble cell, and the Prior being made acquainted with my accident, repaired thither immediately after me. On opening my eyes, I perceived that his anxious and paternal regards were fixed upon me as if he wished to divine the cause of the situation in which he found me. I made a sign to him that I would converse with him in private, and we were immediately left alone.

"Being thus permitted to commune freely with the friend of the unhappy, I ventured to open my whole soul to him, to make him acquainted with my hatred against the husband of Seraphina, my grief at having forfeited the wealth which devolved to Don Sancho, and the disgust which I felt towards the state I had embraced in a moment of desperation. The Prior hearkened attentively to me, and when I had given vent to my feelings, thus

addressed me:

What would you pretend to do,

my friend?-To abjure those vows. which your heart ratified, as your lips pronounced them ?- I will suppose for a moment, Don Juan, that so heinous a perjury will not be brought in judgment against you at the last day, that day of terrors; but, let me ask you, will it even contribute to your happiness on earth? You would again appear in the midst of a family upon which your unbridled passions have drawn trouble and dishonour ;recall to the mind of a woman, whose days you have embittered, a passion which formerly was unfortunate, and which now would be criminal; -disturb, by your unexpected appearance, the peace which reigns between father and son, husband and wife, and dash their cup of bliss by----' No more, no more!' I exclaimed, ' you transfix my heart; yes, I find that the husband of Sarah, the murderer of her sister, the faithless lover of Seraphina, the rebellious son of the Count de Mandini, can never hope to appear again before such dear and

sacred objects. But, since I am never again to behold them, point me out some wild and desert spot, where, remote from them, I may end my days; where their presence can never interfere with my cogitations. If I remain at the Escurial, I cannot answer for myself, for I find that divine faith will abandon me. Men will repel me with indignation; and what must then become of me, suspended, hopeless, between an avenging deity and a scornful world!

'Poor Juan!' exclaimed the Prior, with tears in his eyes, 'you are fated to be a sufferer. Hope is your only consolation, and this, I trust, you will not imprudently resign. I will watch over you; for the most unhappy child is ever dearest to the parent: once more I will watch over your fate.'—'You will remove me hence, then?'—'Ungrateful young man! would you die then remote from your father?'—'Ah! I only wish to shan Seraphina and her husband!'--'Strange inconsistency of the human heart!

you rejected her when she was free, and even promised to you. —I cannot support the idea of knowing her to be the wife of Don Sancho. — And when remote from them and me, will you be less unhappy? — I think I can then bear my destiny like a man. — That is enough: farewell, Don Juan.

"On the day subsequent to that on which the above colloquy took place, the Prior publicly announced that he had received a letter from his friend the Pastor of the Mountain of Grenada, in which the latter demanded to have a successor whom he might instruct in the duties of his station ere he departed life. 'I have been thinking,' continued the Prior, 'that this situation is peculiarly suitable to father Jerome, and I have chosen him accordingly to assist the worthy pastor of the mountain in the discharge of his onerous functions.'- Every person present applauded this choice; but, alas! had they known the motive in which it originated, what would those angelic beings have thought of me?

"In the course of a few days I set out for Grenada. As I quitted the Escurial, my heart was torn by contending emotions; I could not help reflecting, that on the following day, at the same hour, my father, the Count de Mandax, Don Sancho, and Seraphina, would arrive there, surrounded by pomp, glory, and love ;whilst I quitted the retreat in the humble garb of a poor pilgrim !-Oh, human passions, such is your effect! He who becomes your slave sows. wind, -and tempests are his harvest !

64 I arrived at this rustic dwelling, where I expected to find nought but old age, decrepitude, and the rigid austerity of a severe master; but great indeed was my surprise at recognising, in the pastor of the mountain, the feeling and indulgent Velasquez: that generous friend, whom I had so basely abandoned at Venice, bewailed my wanderings in this solitude, and here consecrated entirely to Heaven the last hours of a tempestuous, but ever pure, life.

"My anguish was somewhat assuaged on beholding him; it seemed to me as if Heaven were disarmed of its wrath, since it restored to me the friend, in whose bosom I could

deposit my woes.

" Velasquez informed me that the Countess de Porto had not been killed by the wound she received at my hands; that she still lived, bitterly lamented the crime, to the commission of which she had been urged by hatred and vengeance; and, in fine, that she had entirely abandoned the world, leaving the whole of her immense fortune to her cousin, the Count Fabiani de Porto. This news relieved my mind of a great burden, no less than that of a murder; and as I became more tranquil, after confiding the whole of my story to my friend, he employed our leisure hours in cultivating my understanding, in moderating my passions, and in creating within me the true spirit of that state which I had embraced in the moment of despair. His mild persuasion, his sage

eloquence, his truly Christian virtues, and the marvellous power of example, completely restored peace to my bosom. I knew my duties, nay more, I loved them; and I may renture to say, I have hitherto practised them, in a manner calculated to reconcile me to myself in a great measure.

"Velasquez, after having enjoyed the sight of his hely work for some time, in my arms, sank tranquilly into that state of blessed repose, which is accorded to those who lead the life.

of innocence.

"His death left me alone on this mountain; I was not, however, isolated. The remembrance of the virtues of my guide, the benedictions bestowed upon his memory, and the hope of one day or other meeting him again in the abode of the blessed,—all these ideas people my desert. Your arrival, Don Fernando, and the hope of being useful to your friend, have animated it in a manner not less interesting to my heart. You have desired to be made acquainted with

the history of my whole life: you now know it; may my faults guard you against plunging into similar errors! may my misfortunes never fall upon your heads! and oh, may my sincere repentance render my foibles deserving of every indulgence that pity can afford! Such are the utmost wishes of Jerome,—such will be the substance of his final cogitations!"—

### CHAP. IV:

The history of Don Juan was so far from producing that effect upon the mind of Fernando, which the former expected it would, that, if possible, it still more enflamed his ardent imagination. Youthful, wealthy, and master of his own actions, the Marquis of Talavera persuaded himself that, by giving the rein to those passions which had been the ruin of his friend, he would not experience a similar fate.

"My will," thought he, "is free

as air; and what earthly power, then, can separate me from the woman whom my heart shall cull from the multitude? I am capable of making her happy, and I have not to dread a refusal on the part of a parent." Such was the tenor of those sentiments which Fernando adopted on that day when death robbed him of a parent.

The Marquis had hitherto been solely occupied in seeking after that enchanting object, which he supposed was destined to subjugate his affections, but he had not met with it. Italy presented him with seductive beauty, Spain with unbridled love, England with conjugal fidelity, and Germany with implicit obedience; but he had not found those qualities united in any one being; and it seemed to him that, upon such a combination only, depended the happiness of his life.

In journeying over the principal countries of Europe with Count Osma, Fernando had not concealed from his friend, that the chief object of his per-

egrinations was to meet the woman whom love destined for him, and who was alone capable of enflaming his heart. Hearkening only to the voice of passions, occupied with none but amatory sensations, and perusing, no other books beside romances and novels, the imagination of the young Marquis became so heated, that a plain and uniform mode of life appeared to him absolutely insipid; and, in short, the only cause of his attachment to Count Osma, arose from a belief that the latter was the victim of an unhappy passion. 'Although the Count was much older than he, Fernando could not imagine that there was any other cause for his melancholy, than the perfidy or disdain of a beloved mistress. Full of this chimerical opinion, he so highly respected the mysterious veil which hung over his friend's destiny, that he considered it a sort of a crime, either to attempt to prevail upon the Count to open his heart, or, in the event of a refusal, to abandon him.

From the time of his little adventure in the church, Fernando's mind was wholly occupied with the image

of Almedorina.

The singular manner in which he had met with this young female, the fears which the pastor testified respecting her, his mysterious prohibitions, and enigmatical replies, all tended to excite the curiosity of Fernando, and to interest his feelings. He would not trust to the justness of the portrait, which father Jerome had given him of Almedorina, nor believe the story of her sudden departure from the mountain.

"Doubtless," thought Fernando, 
"my friend, having been himself the victim of love, trembles, lest I should fall into the snares of so dangerous a passion; and, in order to crush the seeds of attachment, endeavours to impose upon me. It is he, however, who is the dupe of his own artifice, if he thinks to make me abandon my projects with respect to the angelic and mysterious beauty, who appeared.

before me environed with the twofold charms of holy retirement and mournful despondency. Almedorina wept. -she must possess feeling then; she was not insensible to the accents of pity, and must, therefore, feel the want of a supporter: in short, she prayed devoutly, and must be virtuous, for it is not thus that the slaves of passion pray. It is left for me to soothe her anguish, to inspire her with the tenderest of sentiments. Almedorina, Almedorina, you shall be the gentle mistress, the tender companion of the happy Fernando; thou delicate and weak plant, sheltered from the storm of adversity by a protective arm, shalt adorn my retirement; born, perhaps, in solitude, the scorching sun of grandeur has not absorbed thy pure mind; I alone am destined to collect, to enjoy its celestial sweets."

Thus reasoning, or rather deliberating alone, and without a proper adviser, Fernando thought only of the best mode of evading the vigilance of Jerome, and passing the boundaries prescribed by the latter. This did not appear very difficult to effect. Jerome vainly endeavoured to prevail with the travellers to proceed to Grenada; Chunt Osma and his friend seemed as if chained to the mountain

by some magic power.

Hernando had not yet returned to his hermitage, and had even quitted the new habitation which he had chosen at Grenada, informing Don Emanuel d'Opedo that, in all probability, he would be absent a twelve-month, and that the two friends might remain at the hermitage as long as they pleased. This intelligence was far from being agreeable to Jerome; but it highly gratified Count Osma, and not less so Fernando, who, however, was careful not to betray his sentiments upon the occasion.

A week after the perfect re-establishment of Count Osma's health, Emanuel d'Opedo returned to Grenada, which he determined not to quit in future; his frequent visits to the mountain had drawn off his attention

from his numerous pursuits; he resolved to resign a pleasure, which interfered with the performance of his duty. No person having reminded him of the promise he had made to recount his history in his turn; and the modest Emanuel, conceiving that the narrative was but ill calculated to interest his friends, left them, without disclosing the train of sorrows which had

embittered his early days.

Fernando, solely occupied with the image of Almedorina, and the desire of once again beholding her, was not pressed to continue a connection which infringed upon his liberty, and accordingly each member of the party returned to the resumption of his accustomed occupations. Emanuel flew on the wings of charity to console suffering humanity; Jerome confined himself to the summit of the mountain, and thence distributed the bread of life, and the counsels of wisdom, among a tractable and faithful flock; whilst Count Osma, buried in solitude, yielded to all the bitter pangs of reflection. A prophetic voice seemed to have revealed to him that the motive of his peregrinations no longer existed; that he had found the object of his researches on the mountain of Grenada; and that the vicissitudes of his life were at an end. The young Marquis, on his side, being convinced, by the suggestions of his turbulent imagination, that the object of all his desires was still near him, literally adored his solitude, and was only desirous of freedom, in order to pursue the traces of one, whom his fancy had depicted an angel. Fernando had at length discovered, what he conceived to be the original of the charming portrait, which his imagination had. created; and there was nothing wanting to his felicity, except to contemplate it unclouded by mystery and concealment: to this did all his wishes, all his desires, all his proceedings tend.

From the last conversation which Jerome had had with his pupil, he conceived that the latter was entirely

disabused of his wild chimera, and therefore troubled himself very little about his long walks in the interior of the mountain.

Fernando feigned to be occupied in the study of botany, and went so far as to form an herbal, in order to convince the too credulous Jerome, that the acquirement of rare plants was the sole object of his pursuits. But, it was indeed a widely different object that deprived him of a considerable share of his ordinary repose; for, scarcely did the sun, seated majestically in his luminous car, gild the mountain's top, ere Fernando commenced his daily course.

For the space of several days the researches of Fernando proved absolutely fruitless; no trace of a human habitation presented itself throughout the dreary waste. In vain he had trespassed upon the limits prescribed by the prudent Jerome; nothing appeared calculated to justify the fears of the worthy recluse, till at length the powerful genius that

watches over the destiny of romantic beings, came to the aid of our hero, and recompensed his constancy with semething like an adventure.

#### CHAP. V.

FERNANDO having one evening prolonged his walk to a greater extent than usual, became entangled in the windings of a devious path, bounded on either side by hideous precipices. Buried in a delightful reverie, the young enthusiast did not perceive that he momentarily wandered farther and farther from the habitation of Hernando, nor did he reflect that his friends would be rendered uneasy by his unusual absence. A secret voice

seemed to whisper to him: "Proceed but a few paces more, and thou wilt discover the mysterious asylum, which the prudence of Jerome has forbidden

thee to seek."

In effect, after proceeding the whole length of the path, our hero found that it terminated by a steep declivity, leading to a charming vallev, shaded with majestic trees, and watered by the streams of the Zenil: this was the commencement of that superb Vega, so celebrated in the amatory records of Grenada. The romantic spirit of Fernando hailed with a joyous exclamation that happy spot of earth, upon which nature has lavished her choicest gifts, and love his fondest recollections; - and we may add, where war has poured its furies, and ambition perpetrated its blackest crimes; for it is not a little remarkable, that in this new Eden, which an eternal spring smiles upon, more human blood has been heretofore spilled, than in any other country in the known world !- For two cen-

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turies of uninterrupted war, the rivers which water it were dyed with blood, and almost choaked up with dead bodies. This heavenly spot, ever clad in shining verdure, where the trees, sacred to Venus and Minerva, spring spontaneously; this happy spot, which fills the mind of the traveller with the most rapturous sensations, was, by contending heroes, converted into an immense cemetery, the receptacle of entire generations!

Fernando was too well acquainted with the melancholy history of his country's woes, not to unite in his mind, at this moment, gloomy and awful reflections with the dreams of

passion.

As he pondered upon the strange vicissitudes to which bodies politic are exposed, his eager eyes discovered a neat habitation seated in the most picturesque part of the valley. At this sight, Fernando uttered an exclamation of rapture: the wars of the Moors and the Spaniards, the feuds of the Gegris and the Abencerages,

the hatred of the Ommiades and the Albasides, all vanished from his sight; and his whole soul was centred in the expectation of meeting Almedorina, of becoming acquainted with the mysterious being, whose sighs alone had usurped so strong an influence over his mind. "A few minutes more," he exclaimed, "and she will recognise the fond, but humble suitor, who promised to watch over her, ere he knew that she was deserving of his attention."

Impelled by the romantic charm which swayed his imagination, Fernando bounded into the valley, and with mingled sensations of fear and delight approached the isolated dwelling. He now imagines that he hears harmonious sounds; he hearkens with redoubled attention, and finds that his imagination does not deceive him a celestial voice chaunts those well-known verses, the offspring of Montemayor's pastoral muse:

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What woes thy reign succeed!

How slow are thy approaches made;

How quick dost thou recede!"—

This tender complaint, expressed by the most enchanting of voices, filled the mind of Fernando with rapture and agitation. "Jerome has deceived me," said he internally: "Almedorina does possess the art of moving the passions. He has, no doubt, imposed upon me too respecting her features; for, convinced am I, that nature has lavished upon her all her gifts, and the arts bestowed upon her the choicest favours!"

Buried in a profound, but delicious reverie, the Marquis still remained in a listening posture, although the celestial voice had long ceased to be audible. On a sudden the door, against which he leaned, and which was not fastened, gave way, and our hero found himself unexpectedly initiated into the mysteries of solitude

and beauty.

He beheld a youthful female seated

at a music-desk, and holding in the loveliest of hands that favourite instrument of the Spaniard,—the guitar; while no envious veil now cloud. ed the features which he had so long burned to behold .- But, gracious Heaven! what beauty, what majestic grace, pervaded her form ! Her long ebony locks fell in undulary ringlets adown her alabaster neck; a plain mourning-dress, whilst it displayed the elegance of her figure to the best possible advantage, seemed to harmonize with the sweet melancholy that encompassed her; some traces of recently shed tears still glistened in her levely eyes, and, by tempering their splendour, contributed to their marvellous power.

Motionless with surprise, yet incapable of harbouring a sentiment of fear, the fair stranger seemed to await Fernando's explanation of his most

sudden appearance. A comment of the total

The Marquis himself was conscious that his seeming intrusion required some apology; but he found a sort of repugnance to entering upon the

He has now, at length, discovered Almedorina; he is in her presence; yet the impression which he receives on his first interview, is widely different from what he hoped to experience. He no longer beholds the timid virgin whose sighs pierced his very soul; he sees a majestic beauty, uniting in herself every grace, and the most commanding dignity, but not seeming in the least suprised at the effect produced by her charms. Fernando sighed.

Almedorina, in the mountain-church, praying and weeping beside the tomb, boasted a different influence over the heart of Fernando, to that which the lovely recluse of the delicious Vega.

had acquired.

The fair unknown, perceiving that Fernando still continued to gaze upon her in silence, stood up, and approaching him with unspeakable dignity, demanded what singular chance had conducted a traveller to her retreat-

" Since I have dwelt here," continued the amiable recluse, " you, sir, are the first person who has broken in upon my meditations."-" I had, possibly, a right to do so," replied the Mary quis, warmly .- "I do not think, so," returned the stranger haughtily; " a person like you, unknown to me cannot assume any such prerogative. Misfortune, want, or danger could alone, by affecting my feelings, induce me to afford shelter to the person who should ask it in the name of charity." " Forgive," exclaimed Fernando, falling at her feet, "forgive the wanderings of a wretched being, whose ideas, I clearly perceive, you are destined to overturn. Your error will cease, Madam, when you are informed that, since our meeting in the church of the mountain, all my thoughts, all my wishes, all my desires, have tended to one point, that of discovering the divine---

Fernando could not finish his declaration. He found it impossible to utter the name of Almedorina; how often, since his conversation with Jerome, had he made the mountain echo with it; how often, as he wrote, did this name drop involuntarily from his pen, yet at this moment his, lips re-

fused to repeat it.

The lovely recluse raised the captive whom love had subdued, but testified neither resentment nor anger, and motioning him to be seated near her music-desk, thus addressed the enamoured youth :- "It was you, then, sir, whom I met a few days ago at the church, whilst I prayed beside the tomb?"-She paused, and blushing in her turn, a few tears fell from her beauteous eyes. Fernando, the passionate Fernando, beheld them flow with rapture inexpressible; Almedoerina, haughty and majestic, had repulsed him; but Almedorina, feeling and tender, won his heart anew. "It was you, then," she repeated, in a less firm tone, " whom I saw in the mountain-church?-The thick veil which concealed my features from you, likewise hid your's from me; but I must

acknowledge that what you then uttered was indelibly engraven on my heart,"-" Heavens! can it be possible? Have I been so happy as to acquire any share of interest in your bosom?"- "The interest which you testified in my behalf, surely entitled you to my gratitude."-" You are too good."-" No, sir, it is what in justice I am bound to return you, and I fulfil the duty with pleasure!"-" Will you, madam, allow the most ardent of your admirers to inquire how long your charms have been buried in this solitude?"-" The period is sufficiently long to bind my affections to this delightful country."-" Do you purpose sojourning here much longer?"-"I do intend remaining here some time longer; but I cannot name a period."- "You have doubtless sustained some heavy loss in this retreat ?".---"I here received the last sighs of one whose destiny powerfully influenced mine, and the remembrance of whom alone keeps me on this side eternity." 66 Good God! are you not free!"- My heart and my hand are p but my actions are, and will be, for some time, shackled."—" Is Father Jerome acquainted with the events which have conducted you hither?"-" He is, sir; but he has promised not to impart those particulars to any person in existence; and you would give me unutterable pain, were you to let him know that you had discovered my retreat."-"Be assured, madam, that no person in the world shall know that this solitude contains so rare, so precious a treasure."--" That is enough; now let me intreat that you will re-turn to the parsonage."-" I do not inhabit that hospitable mansion; the hermitage of Hernando is at present the abode of a friend of mine and myself."-"Who is Hernando, pray?" -"A young man, whom misfortune seems to have conducted to this mountain, and who has generously ceded his residence to us."

At this answer the fair stranger seemed to reflect for a moment; after which, bowing to Fernando with infi-



nite dignity, she exhorted him no longer to retard his return home, lest he should encounter any danger during the darkness of the night. The Marquis obeyed with regret; yet not before he had solicited, and obtained, permission to repeat his visit.

## CHAP, VI.

Os his return to the hermitage, Febando found unte difficulty in prvaring upon humself to donced froi his friends what solely occupied his lanagination; for he would have suffered severely, had the Count desired to be introduced to thinedorina. Although Osina was nearly forty, his figure was remarkably fire, his features noble, and his appearance

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#### CHAP. VI.

On his return to the hermitage, Fernando found little difficulty in prevailing upon himself to conceal from his friends what solely occupied his imagination; for he would have suffered severely, had the Count desired to be introduced to Almedorina.

Although Osma was nearly forty, his figure was remarkably fine, his features noble, and his appearance majestic; and hence the Marquis would have had some reason to fear

a formidable rival, had not his own inclination and the wishes of the lovely recluse prevented him from making any mention of her retreat, or even her existence.

At an early hour on the following morning, Fernando repaired to the Vega, and was received by the recluse as if he were an old acquaintance; she conversed with him even more freely than on the preceding evening, and in the course of her conversation, gave numerous indications of mental superiority.

The Marquis of Talavera now thought proper to acquaint her with his name and rank; and, in return, she informed him, that she was a French woman, that she was born upon the banks of the Durance, and was the widow of

the Count de Solunge.

This intelligence appeared to astonish Fernando. "How!" he exclaimed, "and has Hymen already caused you to weep?"—"I sincerely regretted," replied the Countess, "a husband, whom necessity alone compel-



ded me to receive. His virtues merited my esteem, and his tenderness my utmost gratitude; but, married as I was, at an extremely tender age, to a man of sixty, I well knew that, even from my wedding-day, I should prepare myself for an early separation."

After this short explanation of her circumstances, Madame de Solange descanted upon general topics. The fine arts and travels were the chief subjects of conversation. She next. showed Fernando her solitude, with which he of course was delighted. It was very tastefully decorated, and most of the apartments were embellished with beautiful drawings, all of which were the production of the Countess, who took infinite pleasure in thus depicting the most interesting passages of Spanish history, and the most picturesque views in that beautiful country.

The discourse of Fernando and his lovely friend now turned upon literature and music, and the Marquis found that Madame de Solange had

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viewed those subjects with the eye of a connoisseur, and treated them with the ability of a master. In short, he left this astonishing woman with a full conviction, that, in point of understanding, talents, and acquirements, she was infinitely superior to most of her sex.

Profiting by the permission which Madame de Solange had granted him, Fernando did not suffer a day to pass without paying her a visit; and at every interview he discovered in her a

new talent, a new grace.

Fernando was passionately fond of music; by turns he chaunted the compositions of Madame de Solange; and she, the pieces which the youthful Marquis composed. The pencil of Apelles, the lyre of Orpheus, and the divine art of Apollo, successfully employed their leisure hours. Sciences, the most foreign to the pursuits of females, had been successfully cultivated by Madame de Solange; she was unacquainted with nothing, and seemed only to have contemned the

Marquis would sometimes rally her upon this subject; and she never failed to meet his attacks with equal

grace, modesty, and ingenuity

As the Marquis was one day harping upon the old string, Madame de Solange suddenly exclaimed: "You are extremely fond of seeing a woman as capable of wielding the needle as the pencil?"—"I am, Madam."—"If so, then, I suppose you are a judge of the performances peculiar to our sex:—what think you of that?"—"Saying this, Madame de Solange produced a small picture, worked in hair, representing a bunch of pansies, with the following inscription: "All for filial affection!" and the name of All MEDORINA.

This dear and magical name produced its customary effect upon the heart of Fernando; for a moment he felt a wish to imprint a kiss upon the beloved name; but fearful of betraying his emotions, he concealed his sentiments within his bosom, and con-

rented himself with extolling the delieacy of the work. "It is well enough," replied the Countess negligently, at the same time folding up. the piece, " more especially for a first attempt. You see that women succeed in whatever they undertake."-"I am not reprehensible, then," returned Fernando, "in regretting that you, who possess such splendid talents, talents which would do honour to our sex, should seem to disdain the simple and modest occupations of your own."-Madame de Solange made no reply, and during the remainder of the evening she even appeared to be out of humour. Fernando sighed. "Alas!" thought he, "the first woman of her sex is not fond of truth! I thought that Almedorina was an exception to the general rule !"

Hurt by this discovery. Fernando shortened his visit, and even determined ed neither to descend into the Vega, nor to see Madame de Solange on the following day; but alas I how tedious did this day appear to Fernando I

Towards evening he could not resist the desire of visiting the lovely recluse. He thought her now more beautiful than ever; a slight tinge of melancholy, which pervaded her visage, tempered the splendour of her charms, while it rendered their influence still more powerful over a feeling mind. Her books lay negligently open, her music was scattered around, her pencils thrown about in different directions, -and, in short, the whole appearance of things indicated that poor Madame de Solange had spent the day in anxious expectation. Fernando secretly remarked this, and his selflove, still more than his heart, was flattered by it.

The charming widow shewed the young Marquis a picture which she had begun to work; it represented the interior of the mountain church. The altar, the tomb, the female form engaged in prayer, and the contemplative Fernando, were all introduced.

The Marquis observed the piece was worked in silk, and asked Madame

de Solange why she did not execute it in hair?—" Because," said she with a sigh, "I shall only use that material when a mother occupies my thoughts." "At least," said Fernando, with earlnestness, "you will not forget to place the name of Almedorina at the foot of the piece?"

Madame de Solange regarded Fernando in evident surprise, and involantarily turned pale; then, as if endeavouring to hide her agitation, she replied: "That name, if you wish it, shall be engraven on the tomb-stone."

This unexpected reply made Fernando start in his turn; the expression actually threw his mind into chaos; it seemed as if there was something prophetic in it; and recollecting what Don Juan had said respecting the delicate state of Almedorina's health, he appeared in a manner annihilated. At length, however, he endeavoured to resume his fortitude, and taising his eyes, beheld so much youth, beauty, and grace, in the charming figure of the Countess, that he felt

himself perfectly reassured .- The picture was no longer thought of, nor was any mention made of the slight discussion of the preceding evening. Madame de Solange seemed to have . recovered all her ordinary grace and amiability; and Fernando quitted her more than ever delighted with her talents and her understanding, He was totally ignorant, of the particulars of her life, of the motives which had led her into solitude, and of the period she meant to pass in her retreat; but still he did not cease to repeat his vow that he would become the husband of Almedorina, if she would deign to accept his heart and hand. It was not that the character and temper of Madame de Solange perfectly accorded with the wishes of Don Fernando, nor with the ideas which he had at first formed respecting Almedorina; he had supposed her to be much younger, more timid, a prey to grief, conscious of the want of a supporter, and ignorant of her own talents: less of superiority in the object of his

choice would have completely subjugated the restless and jealous mind of Fernando; but in fine, notwithstand ing the veurinuns of self-love, he found his affections enthralled by the romantic manner in which his connect tion with Madame de Solange was formed; and imagined he beheld in it a decree of fate, by which they were irrevocably dibed ... I have internally vowe molinhe, "that the feeling and un oman, whose sight re-echced mine in the temple of the Almighty, should receive my hand in the same sanctuary; and if the heart of Almedorina will but sympathize with mine, we shall be united."

Each day did Fernando repeat the same praise in the place where he first beheld Almedorina; and each evening, as he hung upon the accents of Madame de Solange's tongue, he could not help acknowledging that such an union would be far from con-

summating his wishes.

Time thus passed away almost imperceptibly, and the prudent Jerome never once interrogated Fernando upon his long and frequent absence from the hermitage.

During the walks of his young friend, Count Osma visited the ruins of Generaliff and Alhambra at Grenada.

Mernando did not appear; Emanuel pursued the course of his useful labours, and no person was inquisitive enough to ask the two travellers when they designed to continue their journey.

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Don Fernando still persisting in his projects with respect to Madame de Solange, became desirous of learning her story and the state of her heart, in order that he might not continue to deceive himself by a vain hope.—It was, however, easy for the young Marquis to perceive that he was not wholly indifferent to the beautiful widow. If his absence was protracted beyond the usual time of meeting, he was sure to find her uneasy and thoughtful;

and though generally pertinacious in her opinions, and absolute in her wishes, she lost all desire to rule, when in the society of the Marquis; what he condemned ceased to please her,what he praised soon obtained her suffrage. This species of empire, whilst it flattered the self-love of Fernando, did not make him happy; and he had too much discrimination not to perceive that the mind of Madame de Solange, formed by nature to astonish and subjugate others, would not long remain under the dominion of passion; and that, ill calculated for feelings of an amatory kind, she would, sooner or later, throw off a voke, to which her pride yielded with reluctance.

This was not the model of a woman whom the Marquis desired to have as a companion, and whom he had so long sought for; but she was Almedorina; and the recollection of their first meeting in the church was ever between him and the contemplation of Madame de Solange's imperfections.

In the mean time the lovely widow

made no mention of her future designs, but seemed to await Don Fernando's making a tender avowal, in order to

merit her confidence.

Each day did the Marquis repair to the Vega with a full determination to enter upon an explanation; but, restrained by a sort of indefinable dread for which he could not account, he still continued to defer the avowal of

his sentiments.

At length, it happened, that on his arriving one day, earlier than usual, at the residence of Madame de Solange, he found her agitated and uneasy. She held a letter in her hand, which she appeared to read with marked attention; but, on perceiving the Marquis, seemed eager to fold it up as quickly as possible. In her hurry she let the epistle fall, and Fernando, of course, stepped forward to pick it up. It was open; and exhibited the beloved name of Almedorina. He started; but concluded, that Madame de Solange corresponded with some friend, whom she allowed to sign a name sacred to

friendship. Fernando would fain have been permitted to call his lovely mistress Almedorina; for it seemed to him that this sweet appellation would generate mutual confidence and love between them; but the widow inspired him with such sentiments of distent respect, that he would not venture to impart even so trifling a wish to her. The haughty and disdainful look of the Countess was destructive of all those pretty nothings which constitute the felicity of tender minds; to please her, it was necessary to possess superior talent, rigid virtue, or sublime genius. Mediocrity in any shape was insupportable to her, she dreamed only of glory, exploits, and successes; in a word, it might be truly said that nature, in forming her mind, had misconceived her sex, and that the soul of Madame de Solange should have animated the person of one of those beings who are destined to rule over their fellow-creatures.

Fernando was indulging in reflections to this effect, when the Countess, in a sort of authoritative tone, demanded what had brought him to her retreat before the usual hour of meeting.

This question, simple as it was, much embarrassed the Marquis, yet seemed to require a positive and di-

rect reply.

Fernando had, in fact, come to obtain the long wished for explanation: but, on the eve of opening the subject of his mission, his courage seemed to abandon him. At length, however, after a tedious silence, and undergoing inexpressible confusion and embarrassment, the Marquis, with all the timidity of a vouthful suitor, declared his ardent passion for the Countess. The latter, with a triumphant air, listened to this declaration which she had so long expected, but which she secretly considered nather tardy; and her pride, previously restrained by apprehension, having now nothing to dread, was awakened with such force as actually to scare the Marquis.

He feared that, whilst he imagined he was choosing a companion for life,

he was only subjecting himself to the sway of a despotic ruler; and he now found that superior talents in a female are not unfrequently a misfortune both for her who possesses them, and for

him with whom she is united.

Madame de Solange, accustomed to peruse the heart of Fernando, quickly divined the nature of his present sensations, and their origin; and tempering the splendour of aspiring superiority with self-love, endeavoured to banish his well-grounded alarms, by displaying all the blandishments of her sex.

Fernando, by turns uneasy and reassured, calm and agitated, repulsed and courted, scarcely knew a moment's rest; remote from Madame de Solange, he counted each instant with regret; in her presence, he was dissatisfied and unhappy. Ere he had met the Countess, he was the most assiduous cultivator of arts and literature, and would have conceived himself the most wretched of mankind, if doomed to dwell with an uneducated

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being: chance now presented him with a companion, gifted with all the attractions of genius and erudition; yet this splendid union did not satisfy him. When the pastor of the mountain depicted Almedorina in colours so winningly simple, so truly natural, Fernando lamented that education had not shed its bright beams into her mind; in Madame de Solange, he found all that he had wished for in Almedorina, yet Madame de Solange did not satisfy the vague desires of his agitated bosom.

Convinced, from this train of circumstances, that happiness was not destined to be his portion upon earth, and that it would never cease to shrink from the mobility of his desires, the Marquis finally resolved to adopt

some specific line of conduct.

The Countess was young, handsome, and inclined to favour his passion; and he being free in his choice, and conceiving her worthy of fixing his affections, once more, yet with redoubled solicitation, besought her to share his

fortune with him. Madame de Solange proudly smiled upon the offer. "I will cheerfully receive your addresses," said she, "if, after hearing the history of my former life, you still persist in desiring to be united to me.

"My story contains some chequered events, as does that of my family; and I am well convined that the incidents which have been instrumental in conducting me to, and retaining me in, solitude, will excite your interest. Listen to what I shall relate, Fernando, and then you will be able to judge of my present situation."

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## THE HISTORY OF

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## Countess de Solange.

"I BELIEVE I before mentioned to you, that I was born on those delightful banks watered by the river Durance. In the country of Trouveres, the native land of French poesy, I first beheld the light; and my cradle, placed amidst the flowers, the canticles, and the tales of love, was as smiling as the picturesque scenery which surrounded it. My early infancy was felicitous, and, till lattained

the age of six years, happiness and nature seemed alike to smile upon me; at this epoch my lot was changed ;-I lost my mother, and with her my

felicity vanished.
"I was destined to inherit her immense fortune, and in her will she expressed the sum she had designed to expend upon my education, as well as the nature of that education, the number of my masters, and the time I should remain under their tuition. She likewise directed that on my attaining to my eighth year I should be put in possession of my own house, and that thenceforward I should have nothing in common with my father.

"All these mandates, however eccentric they may appear, were punctually executed. My father, on finding himself deprived of all authority over me, and forced to bow in this respect to the will of my nucle and tutor, the Baron de Courval, was so incensed, that his paternal affection was totally estranged from me, and gave place to

coldness and apathy.

men, and the superintendance of my uncle, he set out upon his travels, and, after being absent for some time, wrote to the Baron from Florence, stating that he had there married a very amiable young lady, named Signora Salvegy, who, though but little favoured with the gifts of fortune, was endowed with graces and talents in an eminent degree. I learned this intelligence without being in the least dissatisfied, not then knowing the influence which a mother-in-law might have over the destiny of her husband's child.

"The new Countess d'Ericie, being fond of travelling, was not very anxious to return to the country whence she derived her title, but journeyed over Italy, England, and Switzerland with her husband. It was in the latter country, on the borders of the lake of Geneva, that she gave birth to a daughter, who was named after her mother."—'And she was called ——?' cried Fernando, interrupting the narrative.—'That name,' returned

Madame de Solange, 'has exercised so arbitrary a power over my existence, that I cannot pronounce it without shuddering: I do not entertain any hatred towards her who bears it, but ————I know, Don Fernando, you will pardon this childish weakness in a being who has long been oppressed by envy and detestation; by naming an innocent sister, I should be necessitated to name her mother also.'—

The Marquis of Talavera made no reply; and after a short pause, occasioned by the agitation of Madame de Solange, the latter resumed her history in nearly the following terms.

## CHAP. VIII.

"When the Countess d'Ericie had finished her travels, she returned with her husband to the castle of our ancestors. It was then that I saw my father, for the first time, after so long an absence; he was more tender, and more indulgent to me than before, and seemed to overlook the pangs of self-love in order to enjoy unalloyed his paternal happiness. The birth of his second daughter had disposed his heart to receive such sentiments, and

I found that I participated all his af-

fection with my sister.

"The Countess, like her husband, loaded me with caresses; extolled my talents, my figure, my precocious understanding, and seemed desirous that I should dwell under the same roof her.

" My mind and my heart retained a lasting remembrance of my mother's. fondness; I had been happy indeed under her care, and disregarding the appellation of mother-in-law, and being ignorant of the odious name of step-mother, and its usual import, I vainly imagined that the wife of my father would entertain the same affection for me as for her own daughter. and that in her society, I should be restored to that felicity of which my poor mother's decease had deprived me. The Baron de Courval, who knew the human heart better, did not think as I did; he strongly opposed the wishes of the Countess in this respect, and seemed to consider my

inclination to comply with them. as the mere effect of childish folly.

"This opposition highly incensed me: I loved my father, and the idea of living apart from him sensibly affected my feelings; in short, such was my anxiety upon the occasion that it produced a severe illness. The Countess at this critical period lavished the most tender and assiduous attention upon me; her generous devotion to my welfare, which I conceived nothing was capable of recompensing, still more firmly attached me to her; and I so earnestly conjured my uncle to permit me to pass the spring at the castle d' Ericie, that he was at length obliged to yield to my pressing in-This victory, which cost me so dear, appeared to me the presage of future felicity.

"Unhappy mortals that we are! we walk, as if blindfold, in the path of life, and not unfrequently do our own improdent hands weave the web

of our destruction.

"On the eve of the day, which I looked upon as so propitions, that day which was to unite me to my father, and restore to me, as I imagined, my long lost maternal blessings, my worthy tutor entered my spartment. He was sorrowful and pensive, and regarded me with a countenance full of uneasiness and dissatisfaction.

"To-morrow, my dear child,' said he to me, 'you quit a peaceful asylum, where my cares have been exert ed to render you happy; your wishes lead you to the bosom of a father; and these wishes are in truth too gentle, too natural, for me to aim at making them appear criminal in your eyes; but your poor mother, even on her death-bed, formed widely different projects concerning your future life; - and these I will impart to you. Rich, young, and beautiful, my sister, at the age of eighteen, preferred her cousin, the Count d'Ericie, though unsupported by fortune or interest, before all the wealthy and powerful suitors who aspired to the possession

of her hand. Proud, yet sensible, and tender-hearted, she aspired to be passionately loved; and conceiving that gratitude would the more firmly bind her husband to her, she took him whose happiness she herself created, and rejected those who offered her a participation of their splendid destiny. I will not detail to you in what manner her fond hopes were deceived; you will one day or other, perhaps, know mankind, and you will then be convinced how fugitive and unstable is their gratitude.

'The Count, your father, was passionately fond of the arts, of pleasure, and of travelling; his tender companion, solely occupied with love, and connubial bliss, imagined that she should be able to engross the affections of a man, upon whom a taster for dissipation had taken so strong a hold; but on learning the painful truth that she was not beloved, grief and regret nipped the fair blossom of her youth, and she expired in my arms, vainly calling for the return of

that heart which had fled from her

I have since learned that during his first visit to Italy, (ere he married your mother,) the Count had fixed his affections upon the Signora Salvegy: but that the mediocrity of their fortunes had alone prevented their union from taking place; and I was well convinced that when once at liberty, and enriched with the property of my sister, he would renew his former connection. Your mother was of the same opinion; her tenderness for you gave her a foresight of what might occur; and dreading lest her only child should have the misfortune to become dependent upon the caprices of a stepmother, she, on her death bed, signed that will, which is a masterpiece of maternal affection, and of social prudence; and in which, while she provides for the husband, she is careful that the daughter shall be shielded from the injustice of a stranger.

One part of this will only appears to me to savour of absurdity, and my

sister never would inform me of the motives which induced her to dictate it. It was her wish that you should. one day or other, be united in marriage to my son; and she strictly charged me to see this part of her will punctually executed; and the better to insure your submission in this respect, she leaves you her immense fortune on one condition only ; -- namely, that you become the wife of Edmund de Courval, her nephew .--Should you ever cease to be worthy. of Edmund, or should my son prove undeserving of your hand, you are both responsible for the faults of each other, -one half of your fortune falls to the lot of your father, - nor will you be put in possession of your splendid inheritance till the day on which you become Baroness de Courval. My being acquainted with this strange and fanciful string of injunctions led me to wish that you should never become an inhabitant of the castle d'Ericie prior to your marriage. My son will soon return from his tra-

vels. He is truly deserving of you, and seems formed by nature both to please and to be beloved. I must own to you, that I dread the ambition of the Countess d'Ericie; she has an only daughter, and should she procure that hand for your sister, which, from your infancy, has been destined for you, think into what an abyss of misfortune, envy, and jealousy, might plunge you. Let me intreat you here to abide the return of Edmund; I may confidently assert, that when you see him, you will love him; once your hearts are united by the tenderest of ties, I shall have the satisfaction to think that I have accomplished the last wishes of my poor sister, by uniting you for life with one of her own kindred; and, satisfied as to your future felicity, I shall then triumphantly lead you into the presence of a father.'

"As he uttered these words in an affecting tone, the Baron regarded me with a look of supplication; but finding me still pertinacious, he be-

sought me, almost on his knees, to shun the abyss which was on the eve of swallowing up my happiness and hopes. Unfortunately, I withstood the efforts of friendship, and disregarded his prudent fears; I thought the conquest of Edmund's heart absolutely certain, and I even wished that my whole family should witness

my triumph.

"Little was I acquainted with the snares which depravity can form, little did I know the dreadful force of hattred; and hence I entertained not a single suspicion respecting the designs of the Countess. My sister was so little favoured by nature, that I could not for a moment look upon her as a rival; and satisfied with the idea of being under a father's protection, I flew gaily and unsuspectingly to an abode destined to be so fatal to my peace of mind.

"My arrival at the castle had more the appearance of triumphal pomp, than a return to the paternal mansion. My sister, at the head of twelve young virgins all clad in white and crowned with garlands of roses, met me at the gates, and dancing to the sound of the most harmonious instruments, presented me with the keys of the pavilion destined for my reception, whither I was conteyed, encompassed with the splendour of a sovereign.

"How little did I then suppose that I should soon be compelled to fly thence, an outcast and a criminal!

" I found the interior of the pavilion decorated with exquisite taste; copies of my portrait were hung in every direction; the books which I most admired, the drawings which I myself had executed, the harp of my mother, her portrait, and the furniture which had exclusively appertained to her, were all brought together to animate this delightful spot, and to recall the fondest remembrances. I was enraptured with the felicity which surrounded me, and with the promise -of future bliss which my flattering reception seemed to announce. I fell at the feet of my father, and vowed to

gild his declining years with the mild beams of tenderness and filial duty; I endeavoured to express the gratitude I felt towards the Countess for all her bounties; and whilst my sister lavished upon me the most affecting caresses, I promised ever to entertain the affection of a mother, and the tenderness of a friend, for that gentle creature.

"Alas! this was the only one of the vows which I then pronounced that I was enabled to fulfil; to it at least I was faithful

"The remainder of this day of festivity was employed in visiting the whole village; each of the rustics seemed eager to catch the slightest of my regards, and the vassals of my poor mother would fain have discovered whether I resembled her, whether my features presented the likeness of their benefactress. Theliveliest, the sweetest emotions seemed united in order to embellish this happy day, which, alas! was the only one I can reckon in the whole course of my progress through life.

was restored to order, and the whole household resumed their accustomed

occupations.

" My guardian returned to his own residence, stating that he would not again return till he should be enabled to present his son to me, and converse with my father on the subject of our union. I cannot express the regret and sorrow which M. de Courval's absence occasioned me; but still I was prepared for it; I knew that his residence at Ericie was always short: this place, which had once charms for him, now only filled his imagination with a gloomy retrospect. My first steps in the paternal mansion were marked by misfortune. Scarcely had I arrived at Ericie, ere the governess, who had watched over my infancy, and superintended my education, unexpectedly, I may almost say suddenly, expired in my arms, "Patronised by my mother, and re-

"Patronised by my mother, and refieved by her beneficence from the state of dependence to which she had been reduced by reverse of fortune, Mademoiselle Dupre had received numberless favours from my family, and endeavoured to discharge the debt of gratitude, by testifying even more than fifial regard for the daughter of her benefactress. In losing her, I sustained an irreparable injury. Young and inexperienced as I then was, my mother-in-law became my sole direc tress, — that mother-in-law against whom my guardian had inspired me

with such strong prejudices.

"When remote from Ericie, the talisman of imagination had created the most pleasing illusions in my mind, and had taught me to dream of happiness; but a short residence in that castle at once overturned my fairy prospects. The observations of the Baron incessantly tormented my mind; I looked suspiciously upon my sister, I narrowly watched every motion of my mother, stood in fear of every body and every thing, and concerted I beheld a snare in each eulogium uttered by them.

TO Fernando! how terrible is the situation of a youthful heart, created only to be affectionate, sensibly experiencing the want of love, and for the first time feeling the pangs of distrust, and the necessity of dissimulating!-In vain did my father and the Countess endeavour by the most tender caresses to dissipate my deep melancholy,-nothing seemed capable of restoring tranquillity to my agitated mind. I saw the Count wholly absorbed by his blind attachment to his wife; and I could not help perceiving that I owed the few tokens of paternal regard which I occasionally received, to the charity of the Countess, who still allowed her husband to act the part of the father. This thought alone poisoned all the pleasure that I might otherwise have derived from the society of my family. O why did I not then obey the secret voice which urged me to ahandon the habitation where I tasted nought but misery! What still more cruel agomies should I not thus have saved myself! I would fain have taken this step; were it not that fatal self-love retained me on the brink of that precipice, which was destined to engulph my youth and expectations. "What would the Baron de Courval

say to so sudden a change in my sentiments? What reason should I allege for so eagerly abandoning the place after which I had so long sighed? Of whom, of what, should I complain?—Most certainly I was at liberty to return home, seeing that the will of my deceased mother rendered me independent; but as my fatal obstituacy had loaded me with chains, it was necessary that I should assign some cause for demanding emancipation, ere I attempted to burst my bonds.

"Gloomy forebodings, vague inquietude, and an unaccountable distrust in the wife of my father, were all that I had to object to my present situation; but I would rather

have suffered any thing, nay death itself, than to have touched upon those points: Alas! the Baron de Courval, in endeavouring to secure my felicity, had entirely overthrown it; he had destroyed a too fond illusion without assigning me any certain cause for his suspicions; and had involved me in the most unpleasing of situations, that of being constantly in dread, without having the means to define my fears, nor the sad resource of imparting them to a friend. This situation, irksome as it was, will, ere long, Don Fernando, appear enviable to you, in comparison to what I subsequently underwent.

## CHAP. IX.

"For a considerable time I endured, alone and unsupported, all the torments of a disturbed imagination, when at length the arrival of a new inmate wrought a slight alteration in the melancholy uniformity of the castle of Ericie.

"The Signor Alberti de Montano, a relation of the Countess, had craved permission of my father to pay his respects to his beautiful cousin, as he styled me. This proposition was

gladly acceded to, and the Count Al-

berti made his appearance.

"At the first glance I had of this man, his figure displeased me, and I imagined that there was something dark and designing in his countenance, which could inspire no other sentiment than distrust. I afterwards, however, reproached myself, for forming this hasty opinion; and attributing it to the prejudices with which I was assailed, as it were in spite of myself, I determined to observe the Count more narrowly, ere I formed a final judgment concerning him.

father's house had great influence over my destiny, I must crave your permission, Don Fernando, to dwell a little upon this part of my history. The Countess, who was a native of Florence, entertained a boundless affection, not only for her country, but for the Italians in general. Unceasingly did she regret the clear atmosphere of Tuscany; her native tongue was the only one she could bear to utter; and it was with difficulty she could console herself at the idea of her daughter having been born in Helvetia; for it seemed to her that if at her birth she had inhaled the perfumed gales of Italy, and felt the mild influence of an Italian sun, her soul would have been more alive to filial tenderness and affection. Hence I perceived that the sole cause of the excellent reception which she gave the Count, arose from his having quitted the smiling plains of Italy to visit her, and from the circumstance of his being capable of conversing with her in the language of her natal land.

"Madame d'Ericie wished to instruct me in this language; but my mother had expressly excluded it from my literary pursuits, and had charged me never to visit Italy, or to connect myself with any family of that country. Faithful to her mandates, I found myself necessitated to decline a compliance with the Countess's desire in this re-

spect.

"A strict and blind attachment to one's native land is certainly a foible; ret such an one as I could readily overlook, were it not that it had so terrible an influence over my fate; for it was the origin of the favourable reception which the Count de Montano met with.

My father, perceiving how delighted the Countess was at the appearance of Montano, experienced infinite pleasure himself upon the occasion; and three days after his arrival at the castle, the new guest seemed to have fixed his future residence there. He was pleasing, gentle, and learned; his flattering and insinuating discourse met with universal approbation; yet I, whilst in his society, could not divest myself of an air of coldness and reserve, which, however, seemed neither to displease nor to surprise him. He had superior talents for the arts, and I cultivated them with some success: this coincidence in our tastes and occupations seemed likely enough to bring us together; but, wherefore I could not tell, a secret mistrustfulness and doubt constantly stood between me and the amiable Italian.

He would frequently extol my performances, express his admiration of my voice, and endeavour to intoxicate me with the purest and most delicate incense; but nothing could overcome my prejudices, or acquire him a par-

ticle of my confidence.

The Countess, though an Italian, was not an admirer of the arts; she was insensible to the charms of music and poetry; painting did not possess any greater influence over her mind; and she had even strictly forbidden her daughter to cultivate those attractive branches of education. Hence it was, that, notwithstanding her accustomed sweetness of temper, she testified some dissatisfaction at our frequent concerts, and our long conversations on the subjects of painting and poetry. She secretly requested that I would not speak on those topics in the presence of her daughter, as she had determined to give her an extremely limited education, and to inspire her with the simplest of tastes, to the end that her only child might not be exposed either to the torments of envy or to the dangers of pride. 'I have always thought,' said my mother-inlaw, that extraordinary talents are a heavy misfortune to a woman; and I would willingly shield your sister from the calamity. It may possibly be a mere weakness; but it is my firm opinion, that if she were ever to attain to your superiority, it would cost her her mental repose, and endanger her future felicity; I, therefore, trust to your natural delicacy to second my views in this respect.'-- I promised this fond mother to comply with her requisition; but, as you may suppose Don Fernando, it was not without secret regret that I found myself obliged to suspend our interesting and delightful evening-recreations. They flattered my self-love. My father seemed to delight in the eulogiums hestowed upon his child; I perfectionated my talents under the auspices of friendship, and its suffrages were the reward of my labours.

"This pleasing enchantment had

interrupted those distressful sensations which had so lately harrowed up my soul; but now the unaccountable capute of the Countess totally dispelled the delightful vision, and once more left me a prey to mistrustfulness and

agitation.

"The Count de Montano seemed highly dissatisfied at this innovation, and so bitterly complained of it, that I had the imprudence to assign him the real motive whence it proceeded. He censured the conduct of my mother-in-law, lamented the situation of his youthful cousin, and urged me not to suffer myself in future to be subjected to the caprices of others.

"These ideas of independence were but too deeply engraven upon my mind; indulgence and good-nature alone could have made me renounce them; but mere opposition to my inclinations only tended to strengthen and confirm them. Nevertheless, I still might have been happy, were it not that some evil genius, bent upon any destruction, still endeavoured to

harl me into the abyss.

"Baron de Courval, whom I had not seen for a considerable period, came one morning to the castle, and informing me of the arrival of Edmund, stated the wish of the latter to be permitted to visit me. I assured my tutor that I should feel infinite pleasure in receiving him, whom the will of my mother destined to be my partner.

through life.

that the moment my son has the happiness to know you, he may receive your hand, and that you forthwith abandon a residence, which has become hateful to me since a stranger has usurped the place of your poor mother. I have already told you, and I again repeat, my child, that, on your account, I much dread the weakness of your father, the dominion of a stepmother, the jealousy of your sister, and the presence of this Alberti, whom I detest, though I do not know him.'—I would not venture to ask the Baron

the cause of the hatred which my mother and he testified towards a nation half favoured by the gifts of nature and genius; but, in spite of common reason, I felt the influence of the same prejudice, and was well satisfied to meet with a husband and a protector, in a native of my own country, attached to me by ties of consan-

guinity.

"A few days after this conversation took place, M. de Courval was introduced to me. He was in his twentythird year; his appearance noble, candid, and expressive; his figure and his elegant and majestic deportment bestowed dignity, unalloyed by hauteur, upon his every motion. At first sight I beheld him without emotion, but not without pleasure; he did not appear before me under the appalling semblance of an imperious master, nor under the enchanting form of a passionate lover. I looked upon him in the light of a feeling friend, about to receive a sacred authority to protect me through the vale of life, and to

watch over a felicity not flowing entirely from him; for I was well aware that Edmund would never be "all the world to me." I was then unacquainted with that imperious and exclusive seatiment which rules at present over my whole being, and it was not in the power of M. de Courval to reveal to me all the mysteries of the heart."

Here Madame de Solange uttered a deep sigh, and regarding the happy Marquis de Talavera with a penetrating eve, seemed desirous of reading in his countenance, what passed in his mind. Fernando divined her object, but he did not utter a syllable. The lover of romance must surely feel indignant at this! - Alas ! if the heart of Madame de Solange had long been the depositary of mysteries. unknown even to herself, the self-love of Fernando had also its share of enigmas, and was destined to sway his future conduct in no inconsiderable measure.

The haughty and sensitive beauty, who



had almost humbled herself so far as to let a tender declaration escape her lips. I whed at her weakness, on perceiving the chilling silence observed by the proud Spaniard; and wishing at once to conceal her confusion, spite, and indignation, stated, that as the hour of parting was arrived, she would defer the continuation of her narrative to the following day. Fernando consented with infinite reluctance to this delay, for his curiosity was strongly awakened by the first part of Madame de Solange's history; but being sensible of the justness of her suggestion, he took his leave without murmuring, yet not without regret.



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## ta daw 1 CHAP. X.

At an early hour on the following day, Fernando repaired to the Vega, and found Madame de Solange more lovely than ever; a slight shade of melancholy rendered her doubly interesting, without detracting from the splendour of her charms. The Marquis was enraptured; his vanity taught him to believe that his apparent coldness had shed a gloom over the mind of the loveliest of women; and he experienced a sensation of delight in think-

ing that a single look of his could instantaneously brighten the countenance

of Madame de Solange.

The customary compliments being passed, the Countess proposed to resume her narrative: Fernando eagerly acceded to the proposition, and Madame de Solange proceeded to the following effect: "The report of my intended marriage with the Baron de Courval soon spread throughout the castle; every body was informed of the projected match, and the time appointed for its solemnization was the only secret in the family. All were eager to felicitate me upon the occasion, nor did my congratulators forget to mention numerous traits in Edmund's character, annunciative of the happiness destined to be the portion. of his bride; one extolled his goodness of heart, another his sweet temper, a third his beneficence: some spoke of his valour; and the greater number, of his attachment to his. moral and religious duties; in short, the public voice presaged me a lot equally splendid and felicitous.—Still, however, I could not trust to those forebodings; and a secret voice told me—' Happiness is not for thee;' and shouldst thou ever become the bride of Edmund, it will only be at the ex-

pense of all thine illusions !'-

My guardian himself felt uneasy as to our intended designs, and urged the solemnization of our union, as if he foresaw what was to happen. At length the day and the hour were fixed; my father had given me his consent; Edmund seemed to idolize me; the Baron de Courval appeared proud of calling me his daughter; and Madame d'Ericie loaded me with testimonies of the liveliest affection; and, in fine, nature, love, and friendship seemed combined to emblazon my wedding-day, -when the Baron was summoned to \*\*\* on business of the utmost importance. This unexpected event deranged all our projects. Baron left us, with a promise that the term of his absence should not exceed a week; but he requested of my father, in case he were obliged to remain away for a longer period, to solemnize our union without his presence. This request made my blood curdle; for it seemed to me that the circumstance of my husband's father not being present to bestow the nuptial benediction was an evil omen for our marriage. Alas! I was doomed to have neither protector, nor husband, —hatred robbed me of both.

"The Baron departed, accompanied alike by our regret and felicity. On the day subsequent to his departure I found a note upon my dressingtable, written in English. There was no person in the castle, with the exception of myself, as I supposed, who understood this language, and I, therefore, opened the note without being able to surmise by what hand its unknown characters were traced. The contents ran thus: 'Your destruction is decreed, for hatred and jealousy have conspired against your peace: dread their fury, avoid their snares, and as

you prize your safety, do not shew these lines to any human being.'--

"On reading this fatal scroll, I became petrified with surprise and horror. What motive could any person have to plan my destruction? Who were the enemies I had to dread? and what was the nature of the snares laid to entrap my too credulous innocence? Such were the questions which I rapidly propounded to my imagination; and the impossibility of replying to them redoubled my consternation. Not knowing how else to proceed, and being unwilling to alarm the fears of Edmund, I wrote to his father, and, inclosing the dreadful note in my letter, earnestly demanded the aid of his advice, and the succour of his experience.

"Having taken this step, I found myself more tranquil than before; and descended to the drawing-room, where I met the whole family assembled. Edmund seemed thoughtful and sad; whilst Count Alberti, more gay and amiable than ever, was using every effort to amuse the party For some time his endeavours proved unavailing:

but at length, his ever ready wit and insinuating conversation so completely 'usurped the dominion of our ideas, as to banish all unpleasing recollections. Edmund seemed to listen to him with pleasure, and even I yielded to the influence of the spell, when suddenly, after uttering an observation which threw the company into immoderate fits of laughter, Alberti flew out of the room, striking his forehead violently, and exclaiming: Wretch !- I have forgotten her, and may be the cause of her death!'-Motionless with astonishment, we regarded each other in silence, totally unable to divine the origin of so unexpected an exclamation, when at length Madame d'Ericie observed: Good God! I now guess the reason of the Count's behaviour; on his return vesterday from hunting, he shut up poor Phillis in the pavilion of the forest, and is doubtless afraid lest the faithful animal should have died of hunger and fatigue. It would, indeed, be a pity; for Phillis is a beautiful and faithful dog.'-It seemed to me somewhat strange that the Count should quit his friends so suddenly, and in such a manner, merely to re-

lease a favourite dog.

" A few minutes after, M. de Courval left the room, as I imagined, to join Alberti in the forest, and I was not, therefore, uneasy at his long absence. The gentlemen aid not, however, appear at the supper-table; but under my cover I found a note, superscribed by the same hand that had written the other fatal scroll. I put it up as hastily as possible, and on returning to my chamber, opened it in trembling expectation, and read as follows : -- If honour and life are dear to you, repair this very evening to the little gate of the park, behind the clump of laurel-trees, where you will learn the only means that now remain to preserve one and the other. Fear not to follow this advice, which proceeds from an old friend of your mother, who will not make herself known to you till she shall have had the happiness to preserve the daughter of her Aglae from the dreadful fate to which hatred and jealousy have doomed her.'

"This mysterious note threw me into a situation that baffles the powers. of description. I could not conceive who this friend of my mother was, how she had obtained information of the danger that menaced me, nor by what means she had obtained ingress to the castle, without exciting suspicion, or attracting the notice of the domesties. - My senses were almost bewildered in perplexing conjectures upon these points, when, on looking at the note, I perceived that there were some faint characters between the lines; and on applying it to the fire, the following words became perfectly legible: 'Confide in the person who writes this note, and follow her; she will lead you to a lunsband, whom envy vainly endeavours to deprive you of.

"These characters I recognised to be the hand-writing of Edmund; and of course, I conceived my preservation to be certain. All that the Baron had told me of the obstacles likely to be thrown in the way of my union with his son now recurred to my mind; I accused my mother-in-law with endeavouring to rob me of Edmund's affections, and concluded, that as she had not been able to succeed, she meant to use force in order to our separation; I blessed the discretion and foresight of Edmund, whom I supposed to have unravelled her schemes, and prepared to follow the counsels of the unknown friend who addressed me.

"Doubtless, Don Fernando, you are surprised at the credulity which I testified on this important occasion, and at the facility with which I fell into the snare laid for my destruction. Alas! consider my inexperience, the dreadful situation in which I found myself, and the mistrust with which I had been taught to reward those who might have disabused me of my erreneous suppositions. My guardian was absent, and so was Edmund. I ima-

gined I ought to stand in awe of Madame d'Ericie; my father was completely her slave, and my sister a mere child. To whom then should I apply for counsel, from whom expect to receive succour, or in whom could I place my confidence?-May those who would judge me with rigour upon this occasion, never be placed, at so tender an age, in a similar situ-

ation!-

"After duly weighing every circumstance in my mind, deeply reflected upon my situation, and bitterly bewailed my impending fate, terror so completely seized upon my imagination, that I determined to yield to destiny, and blindly deliver myself up to the power of my enemies. The appointed hour of meeting having struck, I softly quitted the pavilion, and entered the park. The night was the most glorious, perhaps, that ever graced the Heavens; the firmament, besprinkled with millions of stars, shone with nocturnal splendour, far superior to the broad blaze of day,

while the pale moon shed its silvery rays around, and served to guide my

trembling steps.

express what I felt on finding myself, lonely and unattended, in a sort of wild waste; and every leaf, that the wind shook from the umbrageous bough, caused me involuntarily to pause and shudder. Alas! a secret voice, the voice of conscience, whispered to me, that what I was about to do, would appear culpable in the eyes of a world, which judges only from appearances; that, situated as I then was, my conduct was rash, and could not but expose me to the most galling suspicions.

"Trembling, and nearly driven to despair, it was with difficulty that my tottering limbs supported me, yet still I advanced towards the fatal spot of rendezvous. I had not been there many minutes before I heard the park-gate open, and this sound, for which I ought to have been prepared, actually froze the blood in my veins.

The dreadful consequences likely to result from my indiscretion now for the first time flashed across my mind; and I can safely assert, that at this moment death appeared to me to be preferable to the torments I endured.

"When the film which had veiled my eyes was somewhat renovated. I perceived by the light of the moon a woman seated near me, holding one of my hands in her's, and lavishing the fondest caresses upon me. I repelled her advances, and weeping bitierly, exclaimed: 'Let me return to the castle; I perceive, by the remorse which lacerates my mind, that punishment ever attends a dereliction of duty; however dreadful may be the fate which an unjust step-mother has doomed me to experience, I would rather live unhappy and wretched under the roof of my father, than taste ideal happiness at the expense of honour and virtue.' - 'Be calm,' returned the stranger, in an under tone, and hearken to me for a moment. I can ruin, or preserve you, deliver you into

the hands of your foes, or enable you to unravel and defeat their schemes. If you will banish your unjust suspicions, and rely upon my fidelity, I promise to \_\_\_\_\_. Before she could finish the sentence, four men disguised in vizards rushed in through the park gate, which, either from inadvertency or design, she had left open. On perceiving them, she feigned the utmost consternation, and "exclaiming: 'Hapless victim of hate!' suddenly disappeared.

" I was now left completely in the power of my ravishers; who put a bandage over my eyes, and stopping my mouth, in order to hush my screams and cries, bore me through the thickest part of the forest, in the bosom of which my father's castle is situated; having previously, however, taken the precaution to attach the key of the park-gate to

my girdle. "I did not then fathern the dark

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motive of this latter proceeding; which, alas! was designed to form the basis of the most atrocious calumny, the vilest of suspicions!

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## CHAP. XI.

"AFTER pursuing many windings in the forest, we arrived at the entrance of the pavilion, which served the sportsmen as a resting-place; the chief of my ravishers had the key of the door. He ordered me to enter, and I imagined that he and his myrmidons were about to follow me. Great, however, was my surprise, to find myself suddenly relieved from their hateful presence, and confined alone in my father's pavilion. Inca-

pable of divining the cause, or guessing what would be the result of so mysterious a rape, I began carefully to examine my prison, and found it entirely deserted, there being no inhabitant in any part of it, save myself. I vainly endeavoured to regain my liberty, but I was too well secured. and soon became convinced that my utmost efforts would be inadequate to the breaking open the massy door, which was firmly fastened by a double lock. Not knowing what to think of so strange an adventure, I impatiently awaited the dawning of morning, when I trusted that kind fortune would conduct some bunter or woodcutter beneath the windows of the pavilion, through the medium of whom I might inform my father of my cantivity. Somewhat tranquillized by this expectation, I seated myself under the most conspicuous window of my prison, and determined resignedly to await the moment of my deliverance.

"Alas! little was I aware that what I then experienced was but a

prelude to the most dismal of tragedies, the commencement of the darkest and most detestable of plots!

"At break of day, I attempted to open the window of the pavilion, and readily succeeded in my design. On looking round, I saw Alberti in the dress of a hunter, walking at some distance from me, and followed by his faithful Phillis. At this sight, I deemed my deliverance certain; and calling in a loud voice upon the name of Count Montano, I had the satisfaction to find that he heard me. He immed? ately raised his eyes towards the pavilion, and, with signs of evident surprise and distress, flew to the window at which I stood. In as few words as possible, I related to him the substance of my adventure on the preceding night: he appeared thunderstruck with astonishment and indignation, and, when he could speak, thus addressed me: "Fortunately it has so happened, that having left my poor Phillis here by mistake, I came hither yesterday to seek her, and I have the

key of the pavilion still in my pocket. I can, therefore, Madam, with equal pleasure and facility, restore you to freedom.'-Having uttered these welcome tidings, he opened the door of my prison, and immediately appeared before me. I thanked him in the warmest terms for the service which he had rendered me, and then inquired why he had not supped at the castle on the preceding night. 'Having reached the pavilion rather late,' said he, 'I chanced to lose my way in the forest, and was necessitated to pass the night in a woodman's hut; and when I had the good fortune to hear you calling upon me for assistance this morning, I was on my return to the castle of Ericie.'- Let us, then,' said I, return thither together, in order to dispel the fears which the Countess and my father must doubtless entertain on my account.'- 'If I might be permitted to advise you,' said Alberti, with seeming embarrassment, 'it would be to endeavour to conceal your adventure from their

knowledge: chance having so decreed it, that I too was absent from the castle, it might be imagined, -- calumny might suggest -- ?' -- ' What, sir?'-I demanded in a haughty tone. - Madam, you are young, and beautiful, deficient in experience, abounding in talent, virtue, and candour. Such a combination of perfections is surely calculated to excite envy, to awaken jealousy; --- the too happy Edmund might believe--. Go on, sir; you almost annihilate me with fears and suspicions.'- No,' cried the "Count, falling at my feet, ' no, thou adorable woman, I will not wound that noble mind, that generous heart, by disclosing

"Here Alberti paused. I fixed an expressive regard upon him; alas! it was not indicative of love;—how could Edmund misconceive it to be such?—It depicted the anguish of a tortured imagination. — I trembled from head to foot, my senses had almost deserted me; when Alberti, seizing my hand, emphatically exclaimed:

\* She is then mine!'-At this moment an exclamation of horror reached my and shook my frame to its centre. I instinctively turned round, and beheld Edmund, pale and ghastly, standing motionless at the door of the pavilion, and contemplating, with a haggard eye, his rival Alberti at the feet of his mistress. No sooner did I perceive M. de Courval, than the horror of my situation rose in dreadful array to my disordered imagination! I was innocent, yet appearances condemned me ;- Edmund would believe me guilty; and this idea alone extinguished all my native pride, whilst it seemed to regenerate that of Alberti.

"I snatched my hand from the latter, and falling at the feet of de Courval, exclaimed in the accents of despair: 'Oh Edmund! do not condemn your destined bride; I am guiltless,—I call Heaven to witness my innocence! appearances only are hostile to me!'—'Madam,' replied he, with evident constraint, and vainly endeavouring to smother his rage; 'it'

is necessary that I should still believe in your virtue, if I hope to support the burden of life; but the opinion w' I shall form respecting you, will depend upon the frankness of your declarations. Is it true that you yesterday received an anonymous note, appointing an assignation with you in the park at a certain hour?'- 'Yes,'-'Is it true that you kept the appointment?'—'It is.'—'Is it true that you have passed the night here?'- Edmund, Edmund, you wring my heart with agony; -that too is true; yet, Tam innocent !'- Tell me no more, exclaimed Edmund; 'I knew it all, yet my puerile heart still doubted! Farewell, Madam, for ever,seek an asylum in the arms of that infamous seducer, who will one day or other avenge my cause !'-- Count Alberti did not permit Edmund to continue his opprobriums; words ran high between them,-I heard, I saw no more, - but fell senseless upon the floor.

60 On being restored to life, or rather

to a sense of my woe, I found myself lying under a canopy, Madame d'Eritseated near me; and my father standing at some distance, with a severe look and a rugged brow, gazing pitilessly upon me. I closed my eyes once more; I saw neither indulgence nor commiseration on any side; I courted instant death; and secretly accusing Madame d'Ericie with being the origin of my misfortunes, I said to her in a broken voice; 'Leave me, Madam;—the sight of you only tends to aggravate my grief;—I can quit life without the aid of your bestul presence.'

"My father heard this reproach.
Guilty, ungrateful girl! he exclaimed: 'Is it thus you reward the generous kindness of her, who, since the discovery of your crime, has incessantly aimed to disarm paternal vengeance! Her solicitations would have been availing; but now your obduracy seems to merit my malediction only,—and may it fall upon your devoted

head!

"This dreadful imprecation froze my blood anew, and my senses once more abandoned their distracted truement. For the space of a week, my fate hung in suspense between time and eternity; but, at length, Heaven, reserving me for still greater trials, restored me to a painful existence.

"On recovering my strength and reason, I found myself surrounded only by my women. I called for my father; I inquired for Edmund, and invoked the presence of my beneficent opardia. Silence and tears were all

t. Juld obtain ..

"When Fidelia, my favourite attendant, conceived that she might venture to acquaint me with all the horror of my situation, she presented me with a letter from my father, couched in the following terms: 'Your abominable conduct has broken the ties which once united you to our family; we discard you; the world, which ever regards your sex with a jealous eye, casts you off; the cloister offers you an asylum, and there alone can

you bury the remembrance of your crime. I cannot constrain your inclinations; but if you adopt the line of conduct which I suggest, I may possibly forgive the disgrace you have entailed upon my declining years. The dissolution of your contract with young de Courval deprives you of half your fortune; the consequent augmentation of my income can never compensate the anguish your conduct has occasioned me; - that conduct has cost the unfortunate Edmund his happiness, -his father, -and his country! Bewail the evils you have sioned, in solitude, and endeavour to obtain pardon from the Almighty for the blood you have caused to be spilled.

"I was unable to comprehend the meaning of those heart rending lines, till Fidelia informed me, that after a severe altercation, the Count de Montano and M. de Courval fought a duel, in which the unfortunate Alberti was left for dead; that Edmundhad, in consequence, been obliged to fly his country; and that the intel-

ligence of those disasters having reached the ears of his father, threw the latter into a fit of apoplexy, which carried him off in the course of a few hours. Scarcely able to breathe, and dreading to hear of some new misfortune more terrible than the rest, I demanded, in a low and faltering tone, if any thing had transpired concerning Alberti; and was somewhat relieved at hearing, that his wounds being less severe than was at first imagined, he recovered apace, and had returned to the light out, however, taking leave of the counters.

After so many fatal catastrophes, and having nothing further to expect from my family, nor from the world, in which I had lost every thing, I resolved to betake myself to a convent, and accordingly addressed the following note to my father: "As it would be useless for me to attempt a justification of my conduct, I will not devote my time to so unavailing a task; I was imprudent, but not culpable; credulous, but not base, Heaven alone

is acquainted with my innocence, and will perhaps manifest it to mankind when I shall be no more. Then, even you, my father! will bestow the tribute of a tear on the hapless fate of a child, whom you fling from your bosom when your paternal arms are her only asylum. I now fly to the cloister which you offer me; I am ready to seek refuge in the shade of the sanctuary, where I shall beseech the God of mercy, not to overlook my crimes, for I have committed none, but to pardon my foes.'

letter, my father sent me to the abbey de \*\*\*. A relation of my mother was the abbess, which office she had held for nearly forty years, during which period, her conduct had never excited a murmur, or caused a tear to flow in the community. Kind, indulgent, and gentle, Madame Decvillie ever supposed that others possessed the same virtues as herself, and those foibles which she could not correct, she never failed to everlook. In con-

formity to the public voice of accusation, she concluded that I was culpable; but her natural goodness of heart led her to treat me as if she imagined I was merely unfortunate. It is certain, that the perceptions of the heart; are far superior to those of the mind; and the virtuous man, who founds his judgment upon the former, is indubitably further removed from error than the philosopher, who makes his deductions from the latter .- Conceiving me to be guilty of the crime laid to my chare, Mudame Decvillie, in the elicate terms, but with due firmness, told me that it was the intention of my family I should lead a perfectly retired life; and that she herself trusted I would not endeavour to form any connection with the pious inhabitants of her monasfery. I replied, that I should not subject my inclinations to restraint, by avoiding every thing like mental abstraction; that I was fond of solitude; and that having irrevocably lost the hope of being happy, I desired nothing beyond rest and oblivion.

44 On hearing this reply, the Abbess seemed to regard me with equal pity and surprise: 'It is an early age, daughter,' said she, ' to become insensible to the charms, and conscious of the torments, of worldly illusions. You, perhaps, mistake disgust for resignation, and apathy for philosophy? - No, Madam, I replied, 'condemned as I am to taste misfortune. cast off by my own family, and loaded with accusations by the very persons who have planned my ruin ;- I find myself, in the very morning of life, consigned over to that telass of males, whose guilt and obduracy have stamped their names with everlasting opprobrium ;-yet still I am innocent. Yes, Madam; I call upon the sainted shade of my poor mother to witness the truth of my assertion. Could she look down upon me from her celestial abode, she would afford protection to the wretched child whom her death has rendered an orphan, left without a single earthly prop, for O! my father \_\_\_\_ ' Here my

tears interrupted my words; while the Abbess, deeply affected, folded me to her bosom. 'Yes,' she exclaimed, 'in spite of the world that condemns you; in spite of every unfavourable appearance, my heart pronounces you not guilty. Unfortunate, hapless child! you have not invoked the shade of your mother in vain; in me you shall find all her tenderness, her vigilance, and her sympathy in your misfortunes!'—I fell at the feet of Madame Decvillie, and in my turn vowed to entertain for her filial respect, ever chedience, and boundless gratiunde.

"From this moment my situation was altered, and honoured as I now was by the marked attention of the Abbess, every member of the holy community seemed eager to render me forgetful of my misery, and to minister consolation to my mind.

"I had a most delightful apartment assigned me, the most pleasing and innocent society, charming walks, excellent books, and the leisure ne-

"Were I not an outcast and an exile from my family, I might have been perfectly happy in the abbey; but the idea that my father deemed me guilty, and that the Baron de Courval despised me, embittered even the comforts which friendship and charity endeavoured to bestow upon me.

"In the mean time, Madame Decvillie, well knowing the real cause of my too evident chagrin and dissatisfaction, used every possible means to re-establish my reputation, to gain tidings of Edmund, and to restore to me the affectionate tenderness of a father. Her efforts, however, proved unavailing. The Count d'Ericie, governed, as I then supposed, by his wife, obstinately persisted in asserting that I was guilty, and in proscribing me his presence. As to the Baron de Courval, he had not again returned to France, and all the endeavours of the Abbess to discover the place of his

residence were totally fruitless. It would seem, therefore, as if Iwere condemned to pass the remainder of my days in the solitude of a cloister, when an incident, contrived by Madame Decvillie, but which I imagined to be the sole result of chance, wrought a total change in my situation.

## CHAP. XII.

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"I had resided for a considerable period in the abbey de \*\*\*, without any part of my family, or any person connected with it, having deigned to inquire into my fate, or seemed to trouble themselves about what became of me, when one day, as I sat buried in reflection upon the caprices of fortune, a lay-sister came to inform me that a gentleman desired to see me. Surprise, for a moment, bound up my faculties; I thought of Edmund, and

flew to the grate, expecting to behold a friend. Alas! I only saw a person who was a total stranger to me. Cast down by the annihilation of my hopes, I found myself incapable of uttering a single word, while my tears flowed abundantly. The visitor appeared affected at my situation, and, addressing me with some emotion, said; "I. perceive, Madam, that the presence of a stranger has had an unpleasant effect upon your feelings. Has any mistake occurred as to the lady for whom I inquired; are you not Madame d'Hermicie?'- 'Ah!' cried I sorrowfully, I well knew that it was not I whom a beneficent friend had come to console under an insufferable weight of woe.

'Happy Athanasia! though you have lost your husband in a foreign land, you still find a protector in his friend!'—'It is true, Madam,' replied M. de Solange, 'that when I received the last sighs of my valiant and noble brother in arms, in the field of battle, I faithfully promised, that so soon as my duty would permit, I should re-

pair to the retreat of his widow, and endeavour to afford her consolation

under her heavy misfortune.

Perhaps, Madam, some slight similarity in the names has occasioned the lay-sister to make a mistake.'-I mentioned my name, and Count de Solange acknowledged that the error was certainly very likely to occur. The religious, who accompanied me to the grate, being rather more curious than myself, asked the Count if he were acquainted with the widow, when he replied in the negative. Sister Melaine could not refrain from expatiating with some humour upon the misunderstanding which might have taken place, had not the mistake been timely cleared up; whilst I retired, leaving the widow to converse with her friend.

"When he was gone, Athanasia, with whom I had formed a strict intimacy, began to speak of her late husband's friend; highly extolling his virtues, his sensibility, and the excellent character he bore; and concluded

by stating, that he possessed a very fine fortune. He had taken a most charming estate in the vicinity of the convent, in order, as she said, to be near his young friend, whom he made it a point to visit every day. On these occasions, the arch Athanasia pretending that I had no small share in the Count's attentions, would insist upon my accompanying her to the parlour; and indeed I was not unwilling to com-

ply with her inclinations.

"I had conceived a very great esteem and a high respect for M. de Solange, whose very appearance seemed to restore to me the natural protection of which I had been so basely deprived. The Abbess and Athanasia had imparted to him the story of my misfortunes. The Count, as considerate as he was virtuous, never once thought of metamorphosing credulity into a crime, and found no sort of difficulty in believing me to be perfectly innocent. He began by lamenting my lot, and concluded by interesting himself in my fate. This was exactly what ge-

nerous friendship had planned. The Abbess and Athanasia knew that M. de Solange had long been anxious to form a matrimonial alliance: for that purpose he had cast his eyes upon the widow of his friend, and that he only now came to the monastery with the design of offering the beautiful Athanasia his fortune. The latter, however, determining to take the veil, had endeavoured to transfer the Count's attentions to me; and it was with this design that she and the Abbess had planned the seeming error relative to the name.

"Every thing succeeded to their utmost wishes. M. de Solange, learning the unalterable intention of his fair friend to take the veil, made me a tender of his hand and fortune. I had certainly no taste for solitude; Edmund was fled from me for ever; and I had never felt a passion for him which could throw any obstacle in the way of a fresh alliance: I had lost the half of my fortune by the breaking off of my first match: the sudden death of

my guardian had caused so much embarrassment in the remainder of my property, that I had little hope of ever being opulent; I was bereft of every friend, of every support; and now a generous man steps forward, offers to unite his fate with mine, and to restore to me all that I had lost. Could I hesitate a moment as to how I should act? - My only fear was, lest I might make Count de Solange a participator of the unfavourable prejudice which operated against me: but the instances of my suitor, the counsels of Madame de Decvillie, the intreaties of Athanasia, and, more than all the rest, the secret pleasure of humbling my enemies by producing a decided testimony in favour of my innocence, at length brought me to a determination, and I became the wife of the worthy Count de Solange.

"A few days subsequent to my marriage, I returned to the monastery, in order to witness the ceremony of my amiable friend Athanasia's profession. I did not weep upon the oc-

easion, for happiness and peace seemed

to accompany her to the altar.

"I forgot to state, that M. de Solange having repaired to Ericie, in order to solicit my hand from my father, met with a very cool reception. I had not the consolation to see the hymeneal altar encompassed by my family, the Count baving declared, that, in the course of three days, he should set out for Italy, whither he was called by some matters of great importance; but that he would willingly give his consent to my marriage, and even add a paternal benediction to it.

"Alas! at this felicitous period I vainly solicited a single look of tenderness and love; my father departed without deigning to accord me one, and I was destined never again to behold him. Madame Decvillie supplied the place of family and friends in my regard; it was she who consigned me to the arms of the most feeling of men, and exacted from him

a solemn promise that he would endea-

vour to render me happy.

"Ah! Don Fernando, he would faithfully have fulfilled this promise, had not my wretched destiny snatched him from me; he is no more, -and I am once again a solitary outcast!" - You cannot be so, cried Fernando. 'whilst I exist; can you suspect that I would ever abandon you?'-· Fernando, Fernando, replied Madame de Solange, - I have read your heart, and find it impossible to calculate with certainty upon futurity. I loved Edmund as a husband whom duty presented to me; I loved M. de Solange as a generous friend, a benefactor; but it remained for you to make me acquainted with still more tender sensations. Perhaps you will punish me for having laid my mind open to deceptive illusions; perhaps you will one day-

"Madame de Solange could not proceed, the excess of her feelings impeded utterance. Fernando was much affected at her agitation, and endea-

voured to reassure her; but his consolatory expressions were cold, his protestations of fidelity wanted force and ingenuousness; and it was easy to perceive that some secret sentiment shackled the affections of the Marquis de Talavera .- What the nature of this sentiment was Madame de Solange could not possibly imagine. - After a pause of a few moments she resumed

her history.

" Subsequently to my union with M. de Solange, the sunshine of happiness seemed for a moment to smile upon me: beloved by a virtuous husband, mistress of an ample fortune, admired for my talents, and my society courted on account of my rank, nothing seemingly disturbed the serenity of my hours; but, alas, ! it was written in the book of fate, that happiness and content should never be my portion.

" My father had now been absent some time, and I had not received any tidings concerning him since his departure; when at length, to my great

surprise, I received a letter from Italy, bearing a black seal. At the sight of the latter, I immediately surmised the loss I had sustained. Alas! my fears were but too just; my poor father was no more; he had quitted life without being convinced of the innocence of his child, without bestowing a blessing upon the daughter who still loved him, notwithstanding his unaccountable rigour.-I was in utter despair at this new calamity; it rendered me insensible to the loss of fortune I had sustained, for, alas! I only thought of the privation of paternal affection. The will of my father totally disinherited me, nominated Count Alberti de Montano the guardian of my sister, and endowed Madame d'Ericie with the whole of his fortune. It was Alberti himself who sent me a copy of the Count's will. His letter was couched in the coldest terms, and was such only as might have been expected from an utter stranger; him, alas! I knew too well; his acquaintance it was that cost me my reputation and

honour. Madame d'Ericie likewise wrote to me; her letter was certainly very different from that of her relation; it expressed a most affecting sense of the loss we had mutually sustained, and stated, that if my marriage with M. de Solange had not put me in possession of a brilliant fortune, the Countess would never have consented to receive that which my father had left her, to my prejudice. Pre-possessed as I was against my motherin-law, accusing her as the origin of all my misfortunes, and fully convinced that she had leagued with the perildious Alberti to impose upon my father and poor de Courval, I was not, as you may suppose, the dupe of the artful expressions contained in her letter; I neither credited her grief, nor trusted to her disinterestedness; I readily judged that my poor father had fallen a victim to the schemes of two wretches, and I could not help shuddering when I reflected upon the situation of my un appy sister.

" Not long after the death of my

father, Alberti wrote to acquaint me of his being married to Madame d'Ericie. I was neither surprised nor indignant at this piece of intelligence; for I deemed the wretched pair capable of perpetrating any deed. He gave me his address at Florence, and requested a reply to his letter; but with this request I did not think fit to

comply.

"New calamities, still more dreadful than those I had already experienced, were yet in store for me. War broke out upon our frontiers; -I had in vain solicited the Count de Solange to quit the army at the period of our upion, and he promised to comply with my wishes; but he was too fond of the service readily to abandon it. To retire at such a moment as the present would have been disgraceful in the extreme, and I was too jealous of my husband's honour to advise him to such a step. He quitted my side for the field of honour and there surrendered an existence consecrated solely to his country, to virtue, and to friendship. And now once more did I become an isolated being. What I endured upon this occasion cannot possibly be expressed; and indeed I owed the conservation of my sad existence to the kird offices of Madame Decvillie, and to the affectionate attention of Athanasia. Alas! this tender friend had vainly endeavoured to insure my felicity; I was destined never to taste felicity on this side the grave.

"I passed the first year of my widowhood in the abbey de \*\*\*; and determining to devote the remainder of my days to solitude, I took the resolution to bestow the splendid fortune which the Count had left me, upon meritorious objects. Disabused with regard to the illusions of life, and that ere I had attained my eighteenth year, -what had I to do in the world? -I had experienced its injustice, lost its esteem; over its vast expanse I could not descry a single friend; I knew the hollowne of its suffrages, and the inanity of s expectations: if for a moment I had caught a glimpse of true felicity, it was only in solitude

that the bright phantom crossed my path.—I resolved then never to quit the monastery of Madame Decvillie, and to terminate my boisterous career under the protective shadow of the alter of the God of peace.

"O Fernando! why did not heaven ratify this holy engagement? Why did it again permit me to be torn from the bosom of hallowed solitude, and cast upon the turbulent bosom

of the sea of life?"

'That you might meet with Fernando, that you might contribute to his felicity!' replied the Marquis of Talavera.—'And then only to live for others?' sorrowfully demanded Madame de Solange, 'and will no human being, in return, watch over my happiness?'

Deeply affected by her anguish, and the uneasy solicitude which her countenance expressed, Fernando fell at the feet of the woman whom he supposed he load and in the most passionate terms, again renewed his declaration of una terable attachment.

The lovely widow smiled through her tears; her smile appeared like the sun emerging from a dark cloud, and for the moment Fernando thought Madame de Solange the loveliest woman in the creation. He told her so, and found her accessible to consolation. Who is the woman that is capable of resisting the two-fold influence of love and flattery? Even among the most prudent, the tenacity of discretion cedes to the illusions of self-love, more especially with the youthful part of the sex;—and Madame de Solange had not yet attained her twentieth year.

When her emotion had in some degree subsided, she resumed her his-

tory in the following words.



### CHAP. XIII.

the loss of a husband, who had been to me a benefactor, and equally bewaiting that of a father, I still remained at the abbey de \*\*\*, without once turning my regards upon the brilliant theatre of the world. If occasionally self-love whispered to me that I might still maintain a distinguished rank in the busy crowd, reason soon suggested that celebrity is not unfrequently purchased at the ex-

pense of repose; and that if happiness is to be found on earth, it is not in the vortex of worldly pleasures, nor amid the splendour of greatness, that it ought to be sought for. The sage counsels of Madame Decvillie, and the mild consolation afforded me by Athanasia's society, had begun to make me relish this system of morality. an and to support solitude, when unlooked for event once more deranged my views. I had not hitherto received any letter from my motherin-law, since her marriage with Court Alberti, and I supposed myself entirely forgotten by them, when one day, to my great surprise, a stranger asked to see me; and, on being introduced, delivered me a letter, dated from Spain; it was in the hand-writing of the Countess, and its contents ran thus:

# THE COUNTESS D'ERICIE TO THE COUNTESS DE SOLANGE.

"The wretched victim of the most detestable of mankind, being on the eve of quitting the world, and resigning a miserable life, ventures on her death-bed to address a petition to you, Madam, whom her fatal influence has precipitated into an abyss of misery. Did I hearken to the dictates of pride, I should die without uttering a comtlaint, and carry my dreadful secret to the grave; but I am a wife and a mother, and it is possibly in your power still to preserve what I hold most dear. How can I be silent ?-At'my decease my only child will be left alone, will be left helpless. O fly to her protection! come and receive so dear and sacred a deposit; it is in my power to recompense you for so generous an act -rely upon the assertion of a dying sinner.

"I have seen him, he is here-

Come, come, -he shall be restored to you; -my husband too -- My expressions must appear strange and incoherent to you; yesterday I could have connected them, but the discovery of the dreadful secret has overturned my reason. I cannot trust it to paper. Once more, come-; do not fear any deception on my part; I was innocent of all your misfortunes, and I am ready now to attest your virtue and my regard for your poor father. I loved you too, Madam; for a considerable period I believed you to be guilty. Oh! the barbaria, how he has deceived me; into what a dreadful gulph has his ambition plunged us; I find I am dying; my ideas fade away; haste, haste, lest the feeble lamp of life be for ever extinguished. Rinaldy will conduct you to me, -he is not a traitor.

"Celestial powers, lead thine angel. hither, to the end that I may reveal all the mysteries of the guilty wretch's heart! then, then will I, without regret, lay down the burden of existence."

"I could not divine many of the mysterious expressions contained in this singular letter. I put several questions to the bearer of it, who seem. ed entirely devoted to the Countess. He had entered into her service at the period of her leaving France for Italy. He informed me that Alberti, after having totally ruined his unhappy wife and my sister, had conducted them to Grenada, where, becoming tired of their complaints and their society, he pitilessly left both of them at a small cottage situated in the Vega, and then abandoned them .- " My lady," continued the faithful Rinaldy, "did not, however, seem to consider herself absolutely miserable; I cultivated her garden; my young lady attended to the household concerns, and the Countess spent a great part of her time in visiting the poor cottagers of the vicinity, and rendering them what assistance she could.

"Thus far every thing went on well, for our cruel master did not appear, and the very winds seemed to respect

the roof which sheltered fallen greatness. I hoped that this calm would have continued; but alas! as my poor mistress was one day taking her customary walk, she met an adventure, which, as Miss told me, shocked her exceedingly. A pilgrim afterwards came to demand a night's lodging at the cottage; my lady recognised him; he disclosed some horrible secret to her, and from that moment her health has rapidly declined, and she lias done nothing but weep, groan, and call upon death to relieve her. Alas! I fear her prayer is heard !- Finding herself bereft of every other resource, she wrote that letter, and sent me to intreat that you would not refuse to witness her last moments."

"The simple narrative of Rinaldy gave me but a trifling sketch of what I had such an interest in desiring to learn: the letter of my mother-in-law afforded me no better information, but merely invoked my presence as being necessary to her dying in peace. She called Heaven to witness her in-

nocence, and acknowledged it herself; could I then hesitate to comply with her last request?—Besides, her death was destined to leave a young female without any sort of protection in a foreign country, and this unhappy female was related to me by ties of

consangunity.

"Could I refuse her my protection? In her infancy I had promised to be a mother to her; she was about to lose her parent, and then was surely the moment to fulfil my engagement. I did not make any unnecessary delay, but with all due expedition proceeded to the Vega of Grenada, in company with Rinaldy, and abandoned my country in order to shelter the child of misery,—to protect the hapless orphan!"— "Nobly, generously done!" exclaimed Don Fernando, "it is to your virtue that I am indebted for the happiness of knowing you!" -" Madame d'Ericie," replied the widow with a smile, " promised me a recompense; but I was far from imagining that I should receive it

from the hands of love."—The Marquis kissed the beauteous hand which his charming mistress extended to him, and she continued: "Madame Decvillie did not at all approve of my going into Spain, and in the warmth of friendly disquietude suggested that my old persecutors might only be lay-

ing another snare to entrap me.

" Athanasia did not endeavour to alter my resolution, but she wept bitterly on learning it. I was not insensible to her grief, nor to the attachment which the worthy Abbess evinc. ed towards me; but, notwithstanding my feelings with respect to them, I could not case-harden them against the attacks of humanity. Frigid minds, and the votaries of apathy, will perhaps condemn my conduct :- but an unfortunate, a suffering fellow-creature implored my pity! - Never, Fernando, have I been insensible to the claims of compassion. Formed as I was of the most sensitive atoms, I could not be deaf to the cries of agony. I accordingly quitted the monusters of \*\*\*,

and led by the faithful Rinaldy, and followed by the youthful Fidelia, arrived at the opulent city of Grenada. Insensible to the charms of the climate, to its imposing ruins, to its historical recollections, and to all the gifts which lavish nature had bestowed upon it, I thought only of hastening to the couch of Madame d'Ericie, consoling her by my wished-for presence, and, if possible, snatching her from the grasp of death. I only stopped a few hours at Grenada, and in the interim dispatched Rinaldy to acquaint his mistress with all possible precaution of my arrival.

"I dreaded the effects which surprise might produce; and the alarming situation to which my presence, although previously announced, reduced her, proved the necessity of such a

proceeding.

"I will spare your feelings, Fernando, the detail of the heart-rending scene which ensued with Madame d'Ericie, and my unbappy sister; the bare remembrance of this dreadful

moment even now fills my mind with terror. Oh! how barbarous was the guilty villain, who, to gratify his ambition, sacrificed so gentle a victim to his hateful projects. It was only at the moment when I lost my poor motherin-law, that I was enabled justly to anpreciate her worth, and to acknowledge the injustice of the Baron de Courval's suspicions. Ah! wherefore, in communicating them to me, did he stifle the fond inclination which I experienced towards her! Were it not for his suggestions, I should have regarded her with filial deference; she would have known me better, and painful distrust would not have interposed between us and criminality, by rendering us suspicious of each other; it could not have disunited us; but an unhappy prejudice, by closing my heart against her, led her to believe in the faults attributed to me, which circumstances converted into reality. Alas! fate had decreed that we should only know each other at the period of our eternal separation.

that I became conscious of the justness of my father's affection for her, and how truly deserving she was of being beloved. One part of the mysteries of her life and mine was now also revealed, at this fatal moment; and I learned the motives of Count Alberti's conduct; but some circumstances of the last importance to me still remained enveloped in the veil of ob-

scurity.

"From the moment of my arrival, the unfortunate Countess, who was but the shadow of herself, and seemed to have retained the last gasp of life only to breathe it in my bosom, lost all recollection, and recovered her senses only at intervals; even then, indeed, her expressions were incoherent, and her thoughts seemed to proceed from a bewildered imagination. She declared she had seen my father since her residence in the Vega; spoke of Edmund, conjured him to appear once more, that he might hear the avowal of my innocence from her lips;

and concluded with reprobating the ambition of Alberti, and conjuring me to save her daughter from the fangs. of that monster. - In fine, Fernando. (how shall I describe it!) Madame d'Ericie lingered for the space of three days, during which period she presented us with a spectacle the most humiliating to towering humanity; but, ultimately, Heaven seemed affected by our woes, and afforded her a lucid interval ere she expired. She recognised us; blessed her daughter and the child of her husband, conjured me to be a mother to her poor orphan, and earnestly intreated that we would never permit ourselves to be disunited by hateful passions. We solemnly promised to comply with this requisition; and I vowed that I would sacrifice every thing for the happiness of my sister, -and I can aver that I have kept my promise hitherto, and that I will keep it, though it were to cost me my fondest hope.'

"Then you would sacrifice me to the felicity of your sister?" said Fernando, rather pettishly .- "Yes." replied Madame de Solange, "and without a moment's hesitation."-" Without regret?'-added the Marquis .-"Rather say, without murmuring."-What stoical firmness !- Ah I madam, you have never loved !"-" Possibly not;" replied Madame de Solange with dignity, "and as I have never known what love is, it may be that the sentiment with which you inspire me is a mere illusion, and that I imagine that to be an attachment which is nothing more than the pleasure resulting from society; the more agreeable, because met with in a desart, remote from the haunts of men. It, however, seems to me, sir, that the extreme love, the most lively affection. should, in an upright mind, ever give way to a sense of duty; and that a felicity which can only be acquired by betraying the dictates of honour, should possess no charms in the estimation of a virtuous heart."

The Marquis made no reply; he was not quite pleased with Madame

de Solange; but he was fearful of angering her by a disclosure of his sentiments, and he therefore held his peace. The Countess followed his example; but, after a pause of a few moments, thus resumed her interesting narrative.

## CHAP. XW.

"AFTER complying with the last injunctions of Madame d'Ericie, and depositing her remains in the peaceful grave, I conceived myself at liberty to return to my native country with my sister. It happened, however, that, in arranging some papers, I discovered a manuscript written in the hand-writing of Madame d'Ericie, and bearing this superscription: 'A Journal of my Life, dedicated to the Countess de Solange.' On questioning my

sister, I found that she was wholly unacquainted with the existence of such a document, which I now began to peruse with uncommon avidity. With your leave I will read the most interesting, passages of the rative, ere I proceed to the conclusion of my history."

### THE JOURNAL

# Madame d' Ericie.

Twas born at Florence. The Countess de Montano, my aunt, educated me with Alberti, upon whom she designed to bestow my hand. Ambition alone directed her choice on this head; my cousin possessed neither fortune, nor expectations of one, and my property, on the contrary, was immense. From his very cradle, Alberti was taught to believe that my hand would lead him on to wealth and honour; and this persuasion, added to the few charms with which nature had gifted

me, inspired him with a violent passion for me, which I never participated, which obstacles only tended to inflame on the part of Alberti, and which originated all the misfortunes of my life.

On attaining the age or sixteen, Madame de Montano expressed her intention of uniting us; I had not, it is true, any inclination for her son; but I was also a stranger to love, and therefore contemplated the approach of our hymeneal fete with the utmost

indifference.

'Alberti now conceived that he had gained the very pinnacle of his ambition, when a rich and powerful man commenced a lit gious suit against me, which ultimately deprived me of my whole fortune. This incident retarded whole fortune. the nuptials. The law-suit, like most others, was tedious, and was ably and strongly supported on the one part and the other; but whether justice was on the side of my adversary, or that the interest of his family swayed the decision of the court, certain it is that I was defeated, and my prospects were utterly destroyed. In justice to Alberti, I must say, that his conduct at this crisis was equally noble and generous. He lamented the annihilation of my hopes, but declared, at the same time, that my misfortunes wrought no sort of change in his sentiments, and that he should still consider himself happy in the possession of my hand.

'Had the Countess de Montano listened to the supplications of her son, had she not cast off the unhappy girl who had lost her all, Alberti would still be virtuous. Had I become his wife, his requited passion would never have degenerated to fury, and the gratitude resulting from his generosity would have supplied the place of love in my heart; but the ambition of the Countess de Montano was equally the cause of my misfortunes and of Alberti's crimes.

This haughty woman imagined, that as her son was youthful, agreeable, of illustrious birth, and formed by nature to please the sex, he could readily win the heart of some rich heiress; and she therefore commanded Alberti to think no more of me. In fine, that he might entirely cease to remember me, she pitilessly banished me from the house where my infancy, if not crowned with felicity, has tainly marked with tranquillity. Her barbarous conduct rendered the Countess and her son equally hateful to me, and I resolved to renounce them both, and to seek shelter in a cloister, where I might uninterruptedly bewail the annihilation of my brilliant expectations.

A female relative of my father, and a namesake of mine, was touched by my misfortunes, and conceiving that there was a sort of cruelty in suffering me at so early an age to resign the pleasures of life for the austerities of a convent, offered me an asylum under her own roof, with the affection of a sister. For some time I declined acceding to her generous proposition. My independent spirit shrunk at the idea of receiving favours even at the hands of a relation; but at

length the intreaties of the Duchess de Salvegy, the hope of lessening my misery, and, above all, the influence of misfortune, which had destined me to be one of its victims, combined to move my compliance with her wishes.

"I took up my residence at the palace of Camilla, and was received as a beloved friend after a regretted absence. The feeling Duke, his amiable consort, and all their acquaintance. received me with testimonies of the tenderest friendship. Camilla and I were inseparable companions; and I can with truth aver, that the days I passed in the society of that charming woman, were never once clouded by bitterness, regret, or dissatisfaction. Alas! so happy a state was not long destined to be my lot; and love soon appeared to trouble that repose, and embitter that felicity, which I tasted in the bosom of friendship.

'The Duke de Salvegy's palace was ever open to the nobility of Florence, and to those respectable foreigners,

wnom the beauty of the atmosphere and the mildness of the climate attracted to that happy country. Of this number was the Count d'Ericie. your grand-uncle, who visited Florence in company with the amiable Ramire, who subsequently became heir to his name, and was then the favourite of his heart. The Count designed him to be the husband of his lovely and interesting daughter, Aglae; nor was I unacquainted with this project .- The first time I beheld Ramire, notwithstanding my knowledge of his situation, my affections became irrevocably fixed upon him; and, alas! the flame which raged in my bosom communicated a spark to his. We loved without imparting our passion to each other, without being aware of the mutuality of our affection, and our love lasted during our lives. At length, a tender declaration escaped Ramire in the presence of the Duchess, and my tears informing him hat I shared his emotions, he imagined himself the happiest of mortals.

Camilla, however, soon dispelled the enchanting vision; she spoke of the youthful and interesting Aglae, of the assion which she was reported to feel towards her betrothed husband, of the splendid advantages which Ramire must derive from such a connection, and, finally, of the sorrow which the ingratitude of his nephew and the despair of his daughter would draw upon the grey. hairs of the Count d'Ericie. To these timely observations Ramire could only oppose the weak sophistry of sentiment, whilst I, though I could not but weep resolved to resign the object of my affections, rather than involve him in misery. The headstrong Ramire determined to make one effort, in order, if it were possible, to reconcile love and duty; and accordingly made a frank and open avowal of his sentiments to his father. This proceeding served only to hasten his removal.

'The Count d'Ericie firmly adhered to the project of uniting his daughter to the heir of his name, and the tears

and supplications of Ramire offended, without mollifying him .- He tore the unhappy youth from Florence, nor would he even permit him to see me Prior to his departure, however, Ramire wrote me a note, rendered nearly illegible by his tears, and which has since been frequently watered by mine, acquainting me with the fruitlessness of his attempts to move the sympathy of his uncle, and with the irrevocable sentence of our woe; and concluded by conjuring me not to bestow my hand upon any other person for the space of four years, at least. "The companion whom my uncle destines for me," he observes, " is extremely youthful, and of a delicate constitution. Should death burst the bonds which ohedience alone forms; having acquitted myself of my duty towards my uncle, I will then, my only life, return and lay my heart and fortune at your feet."-

'Improbable as was this hypothesis, I was unwilling to deprive poor Ramire of the only idea which could inspire him with the fortitude necessary to the fulfilment of his duty. I promised to comply with his every requisition; and indeed this promise did not cost me much; for I was fully determined, since I could not become the wife of him who alone had affected my heart, never to bestow my hand upon another. Alas! I did not then foresee that violence and perfidy were one day destined to annul this fatal vow.

On his return to his native country, Ramire became the husband of his cousin. You, madam, were the only pledge of their union, and for the space of six years, the happy Aglae knew not but that she possessed the heart of him who had won her affec-

tions.

'The cares, the precautions, and the respect, which Ramire entertained for her, lasted during her life; he gave her not the slightest cause for suspicion, would not even write to me, and refused himself the satisfaction of ascertaining whether I were still faithful to a hopeless passion. The term which

he himself had fixed was expired; he might have imagined me in the arms of another, separated for ever from him by the barrier of duty,-yet he had fortitude sufficient to refrain from making an inquiry even on this head. What a soul did Count d'Ericie possess! What a husband have I lost in

him !

· Notwithstanding his scrupulous delicacy in regard to Madame d'Ericie's peace of mind, she, being naturally of a jealous temper, could not smother suspicion. She had art enough to dissemble her ruling passion, and the Count being persuaded, after an union of five years, that she was exempt from it, used no pains to screen his private papers from her inspection. The too suspicious Aglae took advantage of this, and chancing to light upon the only letter I had ever written to the Count, discovered, for the first time, that she had a rival. From that moment she was a stranger to happiness and repose; she languished for the space of a twelvemonth, and at length fell a victim to groundless suspicions, after acquainting your father with the real cause of her dissolution. Your father was in despair at a loss of which he reproached himself with being the origin; the mother of his child was dear to his upright mind, and the hope of still finding me faithful to my love professions, was incapable of meliorating the first gust of his sorrow.

One thing, however, tended to arrest the course of his tears, and that was the will of Madame d'Ericie, which deprived him of all authority over his daughter, as though he were likely to abuse it. This it was, that robbed you of his paternal affection. Ramire readily ascertained the cause of Aglae's aversion to Italy and its inhabitants, and the motives which induced her to put you beyond the controul of a parent.

'The unmerited injury which it did me was not overlooked by the feeling Ramire; and he felt indignant that a jealous rival should confound me with the herd of females who hate every thing but themselves. From this period, he endeavoured to exclude you from his heart. This is the only at of injustice, with which I can reproach the Count d'Ericie. Even my endeavours, and the eulogiums which I bestowed upon you, could not entirely remove his prejudices against you, and this it was that gave the perfidious Alberti so many powerful advantages when he framed his horrid plot. The Count had also some reason to be dissatisfied with the Baron de Courval, your uncle.

'The latter had married Adrienne, the younger sister of your mother, and by her he had young Edmund, destined from the cradle to become your husband. Having lost his wife at the end of two years, the Baron could derive consolation only from the society of Aglae; to whom he was tenderly attached, and from whose lips he had learned the cause of her sorrow and

disquietude.

"This declaration greatly abated his

regard for the Count, nor did he hesitate to express his sentiments upon the subject in rather harsh terms: the Sount was hurt at his conduct, and thenceforward all friendship and intimacy dropped between them. The will of your mother, by giving her brother absolute authority over you, completed your father's disgust; the union with Edmund displeased him; the plan of your education, which he conceived to be absolutely unfit for a female, wounded his feelings; and, in fine, that he might not be deemed a monument of discontent, he resolved upon travelling into Italy. His heart conducted him to the banks of the Arno, and though he did not expect to find me disengaged, he found that he could not exist without gaining some intelligence respecting his mistress, from the generous Camilla. His joy and surprise in meeting with me at the Duchess's, may more readily be conceived than described.

'My sentiments were still the same. The Countess had died some years before, and Alberti being then left to follow the bent of his inclinations, offered to share his small fortune with me. I did not endeavour to conceal my passion for Ramire from the Count; but he only mocked what he termed

my forlorn constancy.

Hurt, at length, by the firmness of my refusals, he discontinued his addresses, and till the arrival of the Count d'Ericie, I had seldom an opportunity of seeing him. I will not attempt to express the happiness which I felt at again beholding the object of the tenderest, yet the most unfortunate of sentiments;—a sentiment which haddefied absence, and withstood the solicitations of Alberti; which hope could not augment, which pleasure could not shake, and which death alone was capable of exterminating.

Ramire, on finding his mistress faithful to her original vows, testified his liveliest gratitude and the warmest love. He made me an immediate offer of his hand; observing that I had long had sole possession of his heart.

We were united under the auspices of the amiable Camilla and her noble lord; and after testifying our graticude for all the favours they had conferred upon us, we quitted Italy, chiefly in order to avoid the presence of Count de Montano, who had appeared almost driven to desperation on being informed of my marriage.'

"The remainder of the first part of Madame d'Ericie's journal," observed the lovely widow, "contains nothing interesting; dwelling principally upon the mutual love which existed between my father and her, upon the birth of my sister, and the species of education which they designed to give their only child. Suffice it to state, that the latter was exactly the reverse of that which my mother directed I should receive. In short, literature was to be wholly excluded from the pursuits of my sister, and her acquirements to be centred solely in the needle and the spindle .- "We now proceed to the second part of Madame d'Ericie's journal, which commences at the epoch of re-union with my father, at the castle of our ancestors."

## CHAP. XV.

## Second Part of the Journal of Madame d'Ericie.

"When the all-powerful charm of nature had restored to you the affections of your father, he was truly grateful for the wish which you testified to take up your residence with us; but still he feared that the splendour of your personal perfections, the superiority of your talents, and more particularly the independence of your character, might tend to defeat our

plans with respect to the education of your sister. I too was conscious of the danger of introducing to a timid and simple child, a being formed of the same materials as herself, yet so widely different from her; and I more than all dreaded the eulogiums which you could not fail to obtain. The enthusiasm which you must excite, the envy that would necessarily pursue you whithersoever you turned, gave me great cause for uneasiness; for I well knew the inconsistency of the human mind, and how great its thirst of praises; insomuch that man often prefers being tormented by the jealousy of his fellow-creatures, rather than pass through life wholly unnoticed. O happy Mediocrity! did the world but know how many agonies thou art a stranger to !- Kindly Obscurity! thou art dreaded by all, yet thou alone art the spring of peace!

Your father, however, could not resist the attacks of nature; they completely subdued his heart; and soon were you pressed to his bosom, beneath the paternal roof. Alas! the felicity which attended your entrance into the castle was but of short dura-Con! I could not help observing that you met my advances with chilling reserve; I knew not that hateful prejudices against me had been instilled into your mind; and I therefore concluded that your heart not being at ease was the cause of your dissembling with the wife of your father. I suspected that you entertained some hopeless passion; but the arrival of Alberti undeceived me in this respect. He seemed to please you, and I thought I could perceive that he loved you.

'This imagined discovery gave me great uneasiness; I was acquainted with the tenor of your mother's will, relative to your union with Edmund. I feared lest the world should imagine that I had favoured the passion of Alberti merely to rob you of your fortune, and for the aggrandisement of my husband, and I resolved to make my cousin acquainted with the delicacy of the situation in which you stood.

In soliciting permission to pass some time with us, Alberti had pretended that an unfortunate attachment obliged him to leave Florence; and hence concluding that the passion he formerly entertained for me was quite extinct, I consented without reluctance to receive him as a temporary visitor. Alas! it was this unhappy acquiescence that caused all your misfortunes, and dragged me into that abyss from which I shall never again emerge!

duty to impart to the villainous Alberti, only served to confirm him in his horrible designs. He did not love you, for the monster never experienced a fine and delicate sentiment; neither did he love me,—but he wished to invade your rights, to destroy my happiness, to take vengeance for my former rejection of his suit, and to murder the rival whom I had preferred to him. Alas! too well has he succeeded in these diabolical schemes.

'The arrival of Edmund at the castle, and the news of your approaching

marriage, seemed likely to deprive him of all hope; but it was the character of Count de Montano's proceedings to turn to account those very obstacles, which would totally have impeded the

plans of another.

· He gained absolute ascendancy over the naturally jealous temper of young de Courval, removed his father from the castle by a most ingenious artifice, filled your mind with horrible suspicions, and so well contrived the plot for carrying you off, that no person suspected him of being in any wise concerned in it. Edmund himself fell into the snare, and imagined he beheld a formidable rival in Alberti. The latter was prepared for the duelling scene, and had so well concerted his measures, that poor Edmund should suppose him to have fallen a victim to his wrath, and be thus obliged to My his country.

'The unfortunate Baron, who had only been removed in order that you might be left defenceless, perished by means of poison, which the infamous Alberti had administered to him; and that confusion in his papers, which deprived you of the remaining share of your inheritance, was the work of the same detested hand! So far the plot succeeded to admiration. My credulous husband, convinced that you branded his name with disgrace, cast you off for ever from his presence, and without reluctance profited by that part of the fortune which devolved to him in virtue of the will; notwithstanding this, however, he paid a large annual pension, without your knowledge, to the abbess de \*\*\*.

'On learning the flattering offers of the Count de Solange, (though he did not, like that worthy man, believe you to be perfectly innocent,') he was much pleased to think that you had thus found a protector at last, and went so far as to offer to bestow a dowry upon you; but this offer was haughtily rejected by M. de Solange. He was, in fact, burt at the rigour with which your father had treated you; and, like the rest of the world, attributed your misfortunes to my intervention. You likewise, Madam, brought a similar accusation against me; but alas! you know me not!

'As Alberti had resolved not to give us any cause to suspect the part he had taken in his too successful plot, he left the kingdom without seeing us, pretending that he did not wish to renew painful recollections by his

presence.

Previously to his departure for Italy, he declared, that if the honour of a female, equally imprudent and culpable, had been susceptible of reparation, he would have sued for her hand; but that there was an insurmountable obstack with which you were well acquainted; adding, that most certainly the hope of meeting some other person than him, had conducted you to the pavilion at so unseasonable an hour.

This fresh calumny, with the villany of which we could not then be acquainted, completely destroyed you in the opinion of your father. He lamented that the Count de Solange had been weak enough to marry you; and in order to avoid any acquaintance with him, proposed that we should confinue our travels, which had been impeded by the cares that the education of my daughter demanded.

'M. d'Ericie was extremely fond of bustle. I had some business of importance to transact at Florence, and I hoped that a journey thither would tend to dispel that gloom with which late events had overcast his mind.—Fatal, fatal journey! destined to produce his destruction, and to plunge

me into an abyss of woe!

'On our arrival at Florence, I made inquiry respecting. Alberti, and was informed that he had not been seen there for some time; having quitted the place, after squandering away a property which had been left to him by a distant relation. Camilla likewise told me, that his conduct had not been wholly exempt from censure; and that the public voice branded him a traitor, a bravo, a debauchee, and a

gamester. Time intelligence deeply affected me; I thought of you, madam, and already began to suspect that Alberti might have had some hand

in your destruction.

After remaining for some time at Florence, Ramire, ever anxious for a change of situation, proposed to me to visit the Alps; to which I readily consented. We arrived at Sandrio, without experiencing any accident, and on the following day prepared to quit the plain, and mount into the clouds by ascending the wild, romantic Al-

pine heights.

A Florentine equerry, whom M. d'Ericie had lately hired, was our guide. This man was perfectly acquainted with the country; it was he who first inspired his master with a desire to visit the Alps, and who removed the chief obstacles thrown in the way of the expedition. I know not how it was that I could never entertain the same opinion of Urbanio as my husband did; and indeed the latter often observed to me that my

valet-de-chambre, Rinardy, was the only domestic whom I seemed to regard. Alas! both one and the other have given me reason to know that I justly appreciated their separate worth.

'We had not proceeded many paces in the rugged path-ways of the Alps, ere we were assailed by a dreadful tempest. The lightning seemed to rend the vault of Heaven, while the peals of thunder shook the very foundation of those enormous masses, apparently designed to support the globe; and, in short, all nature seemed about to fall into chao. Never had I before witnessed so dreadful a storm; for the first time in my life I was intimidated; your sister trembled; and Ramire himself seemed somewhat disturbed.

Perceiving that I was terrified, Urbanic proposed to leave us in order to seek after some cot where we might be sheltered from the hail, which fell with unusual violence. Ramire approved of his villainous proposition;—every thing had been concerted for our de-

struction, and nature's self seemed to league with man in seconding the

hatred of Alberti.

'After an absence sufficiently protracted to remove suspicion from our minds, Urbanio returned, with information of his having discovered a nearly deserted castle, the keeper of which, in the absence of his master, consented to give us a lodging for one night only. "For," added Urbanio, "he is in momentary expectation of the return of Signor Mantini; who is such a rude and savage fellow, that he would instantly discharge any of his domestics who would offer to harbour a traveller in his residence."

'As we did not intend to tarry at the Castle of Mantini, we were not much alarmed at the character which Urbanio gave of the owner; and therefore eagerly repaired to what we conceived to be a hospitable asylum, under our circumstances.

\*Rodolpho, the keeper, received us with the utmost respect, caused a large fire to be made for our accom-

modation, and prepare supper for us, requesting at the same time that we would excuse the homeliness of the fare he was obliged to offer. This repast, which, alas! between poor Ramire and me, was a farewell one, was partaken of with unusual gaiety.

The unexpected pleasure of meeting with so opportune an asylum, the keen air of the mountain, and the hope of recommencing our picturesque journey on the morrow, contributed to restore to M. d'Ericie his usual sewity. My daughter seemed happy, her father perfectly at leisure, -yet I was agituted by a secret disquietude, which I could neither account for, nor

divest myself of.

'I did not relish the idea of passing the night in the castle, for something whispered to my mind that it would be fatal to me. Alas! the event but too fully justified my fears. Just as the cloth was removed, Rodolpho again appeared, holding an inkstand and three sheets of paper in his hand, and addressing us in a grave tone of voice, stated that the Duke

de Mantini, great grand-uncle to the present heir, had built the castle to serve as a refuge for such travellers as might visit the Alps, and that the only condition which he imposed upon them in return for the exertion of his hospitality, was, previously to their departure, to sign a paper stating, that they had been well entertained and that they were satisfied with the reception given to them. "This usage," continued Rodolpho, in an emphatical tone, "has been continued without interruption to the present perical Whilst you were at supper, my lord, I wrote out the important deed, and now come toknow if your lordship wishes to hear it read?" -- "Oh by no means," replied the Count, "we are too much fatigued to listen to it now; I can readily perceive, by the length of the roduction, that you have not omitted any material point."--" Your lordship must be well aware," returned Rot slpho, in a dissatisfied tone, " that accuracy is the first duty of my situation."-" And mine," said M. d'Ericie, "is to sign the paper, and to

recompense you for your civility;—you see how readily I fulfil it," he added, putting his purse into the hand of Rodolpho, after having subscribed his name to the fatal scrall, without ever thinking of perusing it. I did the same, and your sister followed my example. Rodolpho left us with an

air of triumph.

'In the course of a few minutes. however, he returned once more, and conducted us to our apartments. With terror I perceived that the chamber 6. Ramire was very remote from mine; I intreated of my husband not to abandon me, but he only ridiculed my fears; observing that as my daughter, her governess, and Rinaldy, were with me, I had nothing to dread. I besought him to think of himself; his reply was, that he could equally confide in his arms, in the fidelity of Urbanio, and in his individual courage; in short, I could not prevail upon him to remain with me.

'I have since discovered, that in order to remove him from his family,

a story had been fabricated of the appearance of spirits or the southern tower, and that Rod Ipho, seeing his bravery, had prevailed upon him to assist on that night in (lucidating the cause of such mysteriot) apparitions. It had been settled that Rinaldy, on account of his presumed cowardice, should not be of the party; but the real cause of his rejection arose from his attachment to me, whence Rodolpho and Urbanio concluded that he would not answer their infernal purpose.

'Ramire did not breathe a sentence of his project to me, but quitted the apartment with the utmost gaiety, after wishing me a good night's rest. Alas! this I was destined never again

to enjoy.

Left alone with my daughter, instead of seeking repose, I repelled the davances of sleep with detestation, as if my wakefulness were capable of average the catastrophe that menaced ac. Your poor sister, overcome with fatigue, soon fell into a profound slumber. When I perceived that she was perfectly composed to sleep, I arose so tly, and stepping into an adjoining cle st, opened the window which, to my surprise and dismay, I found secure, with iror bars. The moon shed a pale and awful light on the battlements of the castle, the flashes of lightning still continued to dark across the wide expanse of Heaven, and the roll of distant thunder added

to the solemnity of the scene.

'After gazing round me for some time, I returned to my chamber; all there was quiet and hushed;—taking up the lamp which glared upon the hearth, I determined to proceed to the apartment of Ramire, who, I trusted, would not ridicule my terrors; but ere I had passed the threshold of the door, the recollection of my daughter made me pause. If I had any thing to dread in my own apartment, ought I to leave her there without protection?—I returned again;—by as time the sound of my feet har awoke her, and stretching forth her arms to

me she, exclaimed: 'Oh! Mama, how good you are to lave awoke me; rour heart, doubtless, whispered to you what mine suffered! Oh! I have had such a frightful dream !"-At this moment a dreadful crash of thunder shook the castle to its very foundations, whilst its tremendous roar was echoed by each surrounding hill, and rumbled through the subterraneous vaults of the building. Rinaldy now reshed into the apartment; and regarding me with a look of terror, exclaimed: . "Ah! madam, we are lost; this hateful castle is inhabited by ghosts, I have no doubt!"-" Who has put such folly in your head?" I demanded in a severe tone. "Appolina has seen them, my lady; she is deserving of credit, at least, for she is the grandmother of Signor Rodolpho." "And what part of the castle do the hobsoblins reside?"-" In the southern ver, my lady, as they tell me.'

story o. Rinaldy terrified my daughter, I motioned him to be silent. The

poor fellow o reyed. I then ordered him to repair to his master, and him know, that as we were much alarmed at the storm, we intreated or him either to ome to our chamber, or to suffer us to pass the remainder of

the night in his.

Rinaldy obeyed in silence. He returned back in a few minutes, with a visage as pale as death, and trembling in every joint. "Oh! my lady," criedhe, " the door of your anti-room is fastened on the outside. I have tried without effect to open it, and indeed I do not think the strength of tea men would be capable of forcing it. I attempted to call for assistance out of the window, but that I found completely barricaded. In short, my lady, we are all prisoners in this cursed castle, and I will lay a wager that the ghosts of the southern towe are out jailors."

At this dreadful piece of intelligence my daughter swooned by; and I should certainly have at my reason, had I not been supported by

meternal firmuess. If I w to the sucper of my poor child, who no sooner opened her eyes than she exclaimed: At least, mama, we will die together!—but, oh! my poor father! what will become of him!"—At this affecting exclamation I could not help mingling my tears with those of my child. The night passed thus between the storm of nature which momentarily increased, and that which roved in our bosoms with scarcely less tolence.

At break of day the tempest aboved somewhat of its fury, but our situation underwent no sort of change; not a stir was to be heard throughout the castle, and the silence of death seemed to reign around me.—Suddenly, however, a loud tumult of voices, some of which I recognised, became audible. I now thought my deliverance at hand, and flying to the loor, I loudly called for assistance. A di-known voice replied to my demand it was that of Alberti.—The door op ned, and I now distinctly

heard the Count de Montano say to Rodolpho: "The mode which you adopted was highly improper; uncertainty is the most dreadful of evils; and Madame d'Ericie would have thought herself less unhappy in learning the accident that has happened to her husband, than in imagining she was a prisoner in this terrific place."—The latter part of Alberti's observation did not reach my ear; I heard no more than those dreadful worder than those dreadful worder the accident that has happened to her husband," when, like my daughter, I fell upon the floor utterly bereft of sense and motion!"

## CHAP. XVI.

On recovering the use of my faculties, I found myself surrounded by my daughter, drowned in tears, by Count Alberti; pale and trembling, and by all my people, who wept bitterly, but preserved a solemn silence. I questioned Count de Montano with an eagerness bordering upon frenzy, when he replied: "I am a triveller has ourself, and chance alone led me, her last night to seek shelter from the torm.

" On my arrival I found the whole household in a dreadful state of and on inquiry learned, that a French nobleman, who had come to the castle in the evening, being informed that some popular stories went abroad respecting the southern tower being haunted, had determined to visit that part of the building; and it being unfortunately in a dilapidated state, a large portion of the wall became detached by the violence of the tempest, and fell upon the unhappy victim of cur osty. The domestics added, that a great part of the night had been spent in digging him out of the ruins; but that such was the mutilated state in which he was brought forth, that it would have been utterly impossible for his nearest relative to have recognised him. I instantly flew to the chamber where they had placed the unfortur de stranger;" continued Alberti, but judge, madam, how great was hy horror and astonishmen behold Urbanio standing beside the body of his master, and to he that it

as my beloved friend, the Count Ericie, who had been the sufferer." Then he is dead!" I exclaimed in a transport of agony. Alberti hung his head, and let fall some tears .- " Why was I locked into my chamber?" I again cried out, in the fulness of despair: "Guided by my horrid forebodings, I should have saved him .-I am sure I should have saved him, ere the lapse of this fatal night which has robbed me of my all! Sleep did rut for an instant rest upon my eyeh ls; and I wandered round my pris son like a restless spirit. Barbarians! what have I done that you should deprive me of the sorrowful consolation of perishing with him! Hope no long, now that Iam free, to hinder me from weeping o'er his dear remains! I will see them! I will be convinced f the reality of my misery, and then will follow him to the grave !

'I rushed forward, and would fain have eached the apartment in with Ramine body lay; but they withheld me. In he struggle I experienced

a severe fall, which accident, adde to the agitation of my mind, occasioned me a most serious illness; sthat for the space of a fortnight my life was despaired of. Oh! why did not Heaven even then terminate my unprosperous career? I should have died worthy of Ramire, and a culpable acquiescence to guilty propositions would not have poisoned the declining years of my life! That destiny, which seemed to favour every impious wish of Alberti's black hear, prolonged my existence.

'The shafts of woe were not yes blunted, and as I recovered my reason, their poignancy constituted my torment. Vainly did I now call upon the name of Ramire!—His unbeavy daughter informed me, that on the first day of my illness the Count do Montano vas so much affected by her tears, that he permitted her to visit her expiring father. She had been conducted to an immensely dark character; where, from his death-bed, he poor father, in a sepulchral tone, and given

her his blessing; but that, on hearing those melancholy sounds, excess of grief had robbed her of her senses, and that she afterwards ineffectually demanded to hear her wretched sire speak again. Alberti told her that all was over, and that death had seized his victim.

In conjunction with my poor child, I now bewailed the loss of my unfortunate husband, and as soon as the first burst of grief was past, prepared to return with her to Ericie .t was on this occasion that the rigour of my fate was developed. The Count de Montano, on learning that I was about to set off for France, seated himself opposite to me, and ding me with an air, which his attempts to meliorate only tended to render suspicious, said: "Does my lovely cousin, then, imagine that I will be fool enough to restore hat li-Perty of which she herself has ade me e depositary?-No, madan; do not entertain so mistaken an idea; you are the prisoner of the tender-

hearted Alberti, and you do not quit his hospitable mansion, ere you have recompensed his constancy!"-This declaration made me shudder. I assured the Count that I never would assign any man that place in my heart which Ramire had held. He very coolly replied, that I was not at liberty to reject his offers : adding, that it was true, my husband had left me, by his will, all his fortune, to the prejudice of his children; but that, in virtue of a joint agreement entered into among the parties, the will could only be valid in case I married him, the Count Montano. My feelings could only find vent in complaints and reproaches; - I denied the validity of the agreement, but Alberti contended that it was a perfectly authentic document. - But, in what language shall I relate the sequel?

'After a most rigorous captivity of six menths duration in the castle of his mi, after suffering every possible persecution, torment, and outrage, my constancy became shalen, my

rourage exhausted, my health detroyed, I consented,—in order to terminate my daughter's woes, to give my hand to the vilest of mankind. I was not then acquainted with the extent of his perfidy; but what I had seen of his character too justly foreboded the dreadful fate he had prepared for me.

'A few days subsequent to the solemnization of the fatal union, the remorseless Alberti ordered me to accompany him to Florence; I obeyed; and now did I appear in that city, noe the scene of my happiness, as a rembling slave attending upon a de-

spotic tyrant.

Our stay at Florence was not ong. The Count pretended that winess called him to Turin, thence is live, and finally to the county of anaissin. Thus did I travel over the southern part of Europe with him bearing my galling fetters whithersoever I went. My daughter shared my woes, and experienced the effects of the tyrant's capitalius temper. Her angelic mildness,

her endearing graces, her unalterable patience, were wholly incapable of disarming Alberti, or shielding her from the ebullitions of his rage when he happened to be unlucky at play.

Some motives, which he did not think fit to impart to me, carried him into Spain; and there likewise did we lead that wandering life, which seemed destined to be my portion upon earth. At length, after I had endured, for the space of ten months, all the outrages that hatred could inflict, and all the miseries that tyranny was cape ble of framing, the Count de Montan conducted me to this retreat, where he told me, I was doomed to pass the remainder of my wretched life. I nov threatened to seek redress from the laws of my country, not on my own account, but for the sake of my un fortunate shild; upon which Alberti convinced me that he had totally ruined us, dissipated the whole of our proverty, and that nothing remained but ha cottage in which I stood, -my only asylum upon the face of the earth.—I found it was in vain to contend against fate: my daughter seemed perfectly satisfied with her lot, and hoped to find happiness and repose even in the desert. Inured to a simple life, industrious, and unassuming, obscurity had no terrors for her; she knew not what lassitude meant, and only coveted the pleasures of the mind,

contentment and resignation.

"The service of ber God, the care of her mother, and the fulfilment of her duties, constituted the grand obect of her ambition. Oh Madam, low frequently, since the annihilation of my happiness, and the loss of my ortune, have I felicitated myself upon aving brought up my daughter in the ra- of industry, virtue, and retirerent; had I inspired her with a taste for society, an attachment to worldly splendour, a desire to move in the cirdes of gaiety, a thirst after sublunary bonours, and a devotion to the arts, -what would have been her situation in the obscure asylum of misfortune.

"Here," said the widow, laying down the manuscript, "I will terminute the history of Madame d'Ericie. The remainder of her Journal consists merely of philosophical and moral reflections upon the dangers of frivolity. and on the necessity of early inspiring females with a relish for industry, and a love of retirement. She also expiatates pretty freely upon the advantages to be derived from meditation, and or the need in which our sex stands o. ability to make a right choice of our confidential friends. Those reflections, which are no doubt very useful for my sister, would not, of course in terest you; I shall, therefore, suppress them, and hasten to arrive at the main object of my narrative, -namely the motive which induces me to prolong my residence in this cottage.

After the decease of Madam.

The I found a note addressed to me, immediately after, the maun-

nuscript from which I have just read the substance of her melancholv story, the contents of which were as follows:—'I conjure you, in the nam of Heaven, not to duit my retreat fo six months after my death; that period will serve to develope an import-

ant mystery.

The paster of the Mountain, who is acquainted with the whole of my melancholy his ory, will reveal to you, when I am more, some part of the awnit the remainder is invisible to the man eye; but if I may trust to the forebedings of my mind the moment draws near when guilt will be punished, tirtue rewarded, and innocence recognised.

"As you may suppose, Don Fernando, I I st no time in making the necessary application to the venerable Jerome, after reading this letter; he informed me of some surprizing act, and led me to expect still note

wonderful discoveries; but at the see a wonder

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till the period appointed for the entire elecidation of the affair should arrive. Permit me, therefore, to conceal those facts alone from you; and suffice it to state, that whilst they are calculated to grant are the fruition of my fondest hopes, they can work no sort of change in my situation, my fortune, or my sentiments. I have revealed to you whate er personally concerned myself,- whitever might rend to influence the passion which

you profess to entertain now behold my whole see the detestable calumny which so tong clouded my juvenile laturs, the purity of my life, the improduce of my too sensitive mind, - nothing tenanus hidded from your view. You can now judge, Marquis, whether the hand of the Countess de Solange is or is not

worthy your consideration.'

Don Fernando assured the Countess, that the happiness of beginning her husband ares the first wish or his heart. Then replied the Course that hand witch you so cagerry

coret is yours; I bestow it upon you with equal pleasure and alacrity. It is not a sentiment of amatory intoxication that governs my choice; reason presides over it, religion will sonetion it, and happiness will, I trust, cement the bond of union."-Fernando, ever enthusiastic, carnestly demanded that the ceremony, which was to renter him the happiest of mortals, by be performed in the rustic of the mourage. Madame wished it to take place in the catherral of Gregada, and to be solemnize by the Archbishop; a was desirous that the ceremons should be attended with all the pomp and splendour of ecclesiastical grandeur. The Marquis was givered at the difference of their sentiments : " It was in solitude," said he, "that I became your suitor ;-it was in the mountain church that your plous sorrow enchralled my heart; -and it is upon the rustic altar that I would pronounce. the solemn vow-to love you for ever.

Madame de Solange smiled at

the importance which Fernando scemed to attach to a mere trifle; it was the smile of contempt, and it wounded the Marquis to the quick. She yielded the point to him, as if she were granting a petty indulgence to a frowand boy ;--the self-love of rernando was hart, and he could not suppress a sigh. "Our minds," said he, "will assimilate, but our heart He would not venture complete the sentence. Madame d oge regarded him hang buly garded bim nace, conderness, in so lovely a composition of but Tocheld nothing save an assumption superiority, and he trembled as he

Fearing a rupture, or disagreement, Don Fernando timidly demanded of Madame de Solange, if she saw no further obstacle to their union.—
"No,"—was her reply.—"On what day, Madam, is my happiness to be consummated?"—"My sister, who has left me to accompany the Duchess e Salvegy to Grenada, should return

hither by to-morrow at furthest; at least so the letter which I have just received from her states,"-Fernando was struck motionless; could the letter signed Almedorina be---: He rejected the unfinished surnise, and addressing Madame de Solonge, said : "Then, to-morrow will restore to you a beloved sister?"—"Yes —and although the nystery which confines me to this place is not yet cleared up, I will consent a pass the number of vow in har presence. I shall then be yours."

Should I abuse my empire over your person so far as to detain you in this solitude?"-" I do not think you will find it more agreeable than I do." - With the sole object of one's adoration, can it be termed a desert waste? -Love embellishes every situation, and tempers every clime."-" That is the chimera of a romantic imagination. You are an enthusiast, Don Ternando."-" Your imagination is perhaps only cold, because your heart ---"Hold, Fernando, you are not yourself to-day. Return to your hermit-

age. Happiness has deranged your ideas, but reflection will restore them to order again. Renew your visits to-nierrow; you will find my cottage the abode of friendship, esteem, and prudence. You will see my sister, whom you will shortly call your own. Reflect that I promised her dying mother to watch over her youth, and to protect her at a maturer period, of life: this duty, my frierd, likewise recard my tosband; will what confidence shall I by upon your aid not me in the discharge of so charitable, so praiseworthy an office? I find I am affected, Fernando :- I have still need of mental strength; I imagined that felicity was within my reach; but alas! I too clearly perceive that my probation is not yet terminated."-The voice of Madame de Solange faitered as she uttered the last words; tears gushed from her eyes, and she stood a levely statue of woe.

The Marquis was affected; the dissatisfaction which he lately felt gave place to pity; and he perceived what

influence such a voman as Madame de Solange could exercise over bis

fechings.

Unwilling that she should perceive this, he was slowly retiring, when she called him back. Don Fernando," said she, "we shall ere lung be united, and every thing we possess must of course be in common between us ;- you have a friend, and I do not vet know him. To morrow you will see my sister; can wan not then introduce the companion of your journey?" - Fernando remained in utter confusion for some moments; to refuse so simple a request was impossible; to acknowledge his jealousy would be hamiliating :- in fine, be promised to introduce Count Osma to to Madance de Solange, on the following day; but thinking to bring the meidote as well as the poison he likewise hinted something of making the pastor of the mountain one of the party. "I blosh, Madam," said poor Fernando, "that I have so long concealed the secret of the passion I entertain for you from that venerable divine; and at your feet, Madam, I intreat permission now to make the disclosure to him."—To this Madame de Solange gave a ready assent. It was, therefore, settled that after having imparted the project of the marriage to father Jerome, Pernando, accompanied by him and the Count Osma, should repair to the rustic dwelling of the heauteous widow, and that there assembled together, they should appoint the happy bridal-days

Preliminaries being thus arranged, the Marquis of Talavera took the road leading to Hernando's hermitage, leaving Madame de Solange baried in meditation upon the prospect which

seemed to open to her view.

END OF VOLUME THE SECOND.

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