

SCENES
IN
FEUDAL TIMES.

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SCENES

FEUDAL TIMES.

A Romance.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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Inopem solatur et ægrum.

HOR.

VOLUME I.

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CHAPTER I.

Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear?

SHAKSPEARE.

THE day of the tournament dawned. It's earliest beams were welcomed by the minstrels with rude harmony. Mingled voices, and the tread of numerous feet, resounded through the spacious courts of Fitzbaynham castle. Against the preparation for this magni-

ficent festival, every countenance displayed gladness; even the baron seemed to forget his long-cherished grief, and to partake the general joy.

Untaught by disappointment, and representing the future with an imagination free from those associations which at a more mature age too frequently embitter pleasure, Jacqueline had looked forward to this festival with the fallacious expectations of youth. Every object which she beheld, every sound that reached her, conveyed delight. Little did she suspect that on the events of this day, from which she anticipated with impatience a transitory gratification, depended her happiness and the honor of her house.

Jacqueline, the only daughter of the baron, had recently completed her eighteenth year. Lovely in person,

and excelling in all the accomplishments becoming her rank and sex, she was the pride and ornament of the family. To merit their affection, and promote their happiness, had been the constant study of her life.

Beside Jacqueline, the Baron possessed two sons arrived at manhood. Lord Richard, the eldest, resembled his father in his countenance, but his mind ill accorded with his exterior. Vain, imperious, the prey of every momentary passion, he had attained his twenty-fifth year in inglorious obscurity. His talent was crafty, his pleasures ungenerous and selfish; and he regarded his associates and competitors with the malignant jealousy of indolent and incapable ambition.

His brother, in every respect the reverse, though two years younger, had

already by his courage and military skill rendered his name celebrated through the greater part of Europe. Nor was his fame confined to arms. His liberal magnanimity, his unassuming manners, but, above all, the command which in the midst of victory he maintained over himself, had softened admiration into affection.

He had lately received the honor of knighthood from the king; and having closed his third campaign with increased glory, he had returned to pass with his parents the short interval before he departed for the Holy Land. To honor his return, the baron had proclaimed a tournament of three days; to which were invited, beside the nobles, many young knights, the companions in arms of his valiant son.

The baron, worthy of his high

tion, was beloved by his associates, and respected by his dependents. In early life his name had ranked with the most distinguished warriors of that martial age. But disgusted with the scenes of cruelty and fraud to which the practice of war at that period more constantly led, he retired to his domain, and in the bosom of his family devoted himself to pursuits more congenial to his disposition. United to the baroness by the most tender affection, he had looked forward to years of felicity, and in the brilliant prospect saw not the cloud which soon overshadowed his happiness. For a long period a deep melancholy had oppressed him, which even the anxious endeavours of his lady had not been able to dispel.

Fitzbaynham castle, the principal residence of the baron, and the appointed scene of the tournament, stood

on the summit of a lofty hill, surrounded by a princely domain, which had descended to him in regular succession from one of the principal captains who had accompanied William the Conqueror. This fortress was strongly fortified by nature and art, and commanded prospects of rich variety. On the south, from the battlements raised on the edge of a stupendous cliff, was beheld a large expanse of ocean, whose waves, breaking with frightful violence over the numerous rocks which lined this part of the shore, formed an inaccessible barrier to every hostile attempt. The west presented a strong and pleasing contrast, changing at once from the sublime and bold to the soft and peaceful. Here the eye rested on meadows stretching to the utmost limits of the horizon, embellished with herds of cattle, with the scattered dwellings of the vassals, and at intervals a distant tower

An extensive forest surrounded the north and east sides of the castle, and was continued to the summits of the hills which bounded the prospect. In the midst of this dreary solitude, almost concealed by their green neighbours, appeared the white spires of a monastery.

In the interior of the castle magnificence and good taste were at once displayed. The architecture was in the rich Gothic style, and the hall, of vast dimensions, was supported by a double row of pillars. From these depended standards and other military trophies of the valor of it's former lords; suits of armor, helmets surrounded by the arms of their valiant possessors, pikes, and many warlike weapons preserved in memory of great actions achieved by this illustrious family. The hall, seen imperfectly by the dim light admitted

through the high small windows, it's extent lost in perspective, impressed the beholder with awe, and bespoke the grandeur and dignity of the baron.

Within the walls of the castle was inclosed a large space of ground, called the manege, dedicated to those warlike exercises in which each chieftain was desirous to excel. In this place the lists were now formed, and galleries erected for the accommodation of the ladies, who, spectators of these encounters, animated the combatants by their presence and applause. Over the seat destined for the baroness, and her guests of the highest rank, the arms of the Fitzbaynham family were emblazoned. Here too waved a banner, the work of the baroness and her damsels, designed to commemorate the first action in which Sir Edmund had distinguished himself. It represented the scene of a

battle, where a young knight appeared almost singly maintaining an important pass.

In the hall the baroness received her guests with feudal state; while Jacqueline in an adjoining corridor attached to the armor of her youngest brother a scarf of azure silk, enriched with an embroidery wrought by her own hands. Pleased with this offering of her sisterly affection, Sir Edmund gaily rallied her on her absence from the company after the arrival of Earl Godemar.

“Is he come?” said she. “I hoped his haughty temper would have exempted us from his presence.”

“Perhaps his gallantry to-day will change your sentiments.”

“Impossible: they can never change,”

Jacqueline replied with a suppressed sigh ; and having arranged the scarf, she hastened to rejoin the baroness, who, accompanied by a noble train, proceeded to the scene of combat.

The trumpets sounded thrice, the heralds proclaimed the challenge, and invited any knight to come forward and encounter Sir Edmund Fitzbaynham. At the same time Sir Edmund advanced within the lists, and threw down his gauntlet. Three cavaliers successively opposed him, and after a gallant defence were overthrown. Having thus opened the tournament, Sir Edmund withdrew.

The baroness during these engagements had been agitated by a variety of emotions, admiration of her son's superior skill, apprehension for his safety, pride on his success : but when she be-

held the cross on his shoulder, that badge which doomed him to difficulties and danger, maternal fondness predominated, and she could scarcely refrain from tears.

On this day many encounters took place, and many heroic feats were displayed ; but one knight chiefly excited the interest of the spectators by his superior dexterity, his elegant figure, and his modest use of victory. He would now have retired, but Earl Godemar, whom he had already defeated, burning with rage at his former disgrace, re-entered the lists, and in a haughty tone demanded whether he dared again to face him. The knight, thus rudely called on, answered only by putting himself in a posture of defence. The combat was long doubtful ; but at length the earl, aiming a furious stroke at his adversary, and leaving himself

unguarded, the knight seized this moment of victory, and the falling earl again displayed the prowess of his opponent.

A short silence marked the intent earnestness of the assembly, and during this pause the knight advanced to the baroness, and laying at her feet the earl's sword, bowed and immediately quitted the lists. The baroness, turning to Sir Edmund, who had some time stationed himself near her, inquired whether he knew this knight.

“He is my most intimate friend,” replied Sir Edmund. “To his courage I am indebted for my life. He preserved it at the hazard of his own. He is one of the most gallant heroes our country boasts.”

“I must request you to introduce

him to me. For so important a service I am impatient to render him my thanks."

As the baroness concluded this speech, the trumpets sounded. It was the signal that the jousts were ended for that day. She arose, and, followed by the company, returned to the hall, where a sumptuous banquet was prepared; while in the outward courts tables, well-furnished, were spread for the refreshment of the vassals.

Surprised by the absence of Earl Godemar, the baroness at length inquired for him, and was informed by Lord Richard that he had left the castle.

"Why did he not stay?"

"How could he, when so insulted?"

“Yea astonish me, my lord. Insulted by whom?”

“Was he not twice defeated by the young knight whom he condescended to oppose?”

“If that is all, replied a cavalier, there are many here have equal cause of complaint.”

“Surely,” rejoined his lordship, “the earl’s rank entitled him to better treatment from a simple knight. His dignity ought to have exempted him from such disgrace.”

“Your friendship for the earl renders you, my son, too warm.”

“I know, madam, you are prejudiced against the earl, and perhaps enjoy his defeat; but your triumph will

be short, his spirit cannot endure disgrace unrevenged."

Willing to terminate a conversation which so publicly displayed the malignity of her son's disposition, the baroness left her seat, and seeing Sir Edmund approaching, accompanied by the knight who had so much signalled himself in the morning, she advanced to meet them.

"Sir Almeric de St. Amand," said Sir Edmund, presenting him to his mother, "the preserver of my life."

The baroness had begun a speech expressive of her thanks, when raising her eyes to the countenance of the knight, who now appeared without his helmet, she started, her voice faltered, a livid paleness succeeded to the deepest crimson. Again she viewed him,

again her color came and went, and she turned towards the baron with a look of anxious concern: but heaving a profound sigh, she almost instantly recovered herself sufficiently to apologise to Sir Almeric, who, surprised and embarrassed, remained silent, looking around him for an explanation of so unexpected a reception.

While this was passing, the eyes of the baron were fixed on the knight. He gasped for breath; guilt, fear, and shame were visible on his countenance; the drops of anguish stood on his forehead, and clasping his hands, as if in despair, he rushed from the hall.

So singular an occurrence excited the attention of the company; nor was their curiosity lessened, when Lord Richard, who had been attentively observing the baron, exclaimed, "Then

he is guilty !” No one’s astonishment was greater than that of Sir Edmund. To him his parents’ emotion, and his brother’s words, were utterly unintelligible. Lost in thought, he remained leaning against a pillar, without being able to form any conjecture of the cause ; till in a few minutes he received a summons from the baron.

The baroness perceiving the observation which this scene had attracted, endeavoured to dissipate it’s impression. Assuming, therefore, the appearance of her former gaiety, she addressed Sir Almeric, and with a smile told him, that since he had done her the honor to become her knight, by placing before her the trophies of his valor, she would employ the authority with which he had thus invested her, and impose a service on him, that of opening the ball. At the same time taking the hand of

Jacqueline, she presented her to Sir Almeric as his partner.

The dancing began, and was continued to a late hour ; but the voice of mirth had ceased, and all attempts to recal it were vain. Each tried to display a tranquillity which none really felt.

CHAPTER II.

The image of a wicked heinous fault
Lives in his eye; that close aspect of his
Does show the mood of a much troubled breast.

SHAKSPEARE.

ON Edmund's arrival in the baron's apartment, in obedience to his hasty summons, he found him seated before a table on which his arms rested. His head reclined on his hands, and his face concealed by them, he did not perceive the entrance of his son. Surprised at his father's attitude, Edmund paused, unwilling to disturb him.

In a few moments the baron, without moving, spoke in a low tone. "So

many years of intolerable anguish! Has not his form been ever present to my sight? Does not his voice for ever echo in my ear? Will remorse never cease? Can that moment never be forgotten?"

As he pronounced these words, he rose, and then first perceived Sir Edmund. Darting on his son an almost frenzied look, he demanded how he dared to intrude. Without waiting for an answer, he exclaimed, "Great God! is it come to this? Are my children spies upon me?" He strode across the room two or three times; then suddenly stopping before Edmund, "Who is this knight? Whence does he come?" he demanded in an impatient tone.

"Our friendship commenced in the camp, and of his history I am ignorant," replied Sir Edmund; "but his

his courage and honor are not excelled by the noblest knight in christendom."

"Of what family?"

"With his descent I am unacquainted," rejoined Sir Edmund; "it is a subject he has ever shunned!"

During his son's answer, the baron had assumed his former posture. After a short silence he uttered in a voice scarcely audible, "Eloise! Years on years separate us like a mighty gulph. Floating on the stream of time, day after day I am carried further from thee. Beloved companion! with thee happiness quitted this bosom, now the abode of guilt and remorse!" Then starting up, he exclaimed, "Who can awake the dead? Who can break the slumber of the tomb? Albert, arise,

arise!" Exhausted, he sunk into his chair.

Never had Edmund been so shocked. To hear his father, whose character he believed spotless, accuse himself; to hear him utter such unconnected sentences, and mention names to him unknown, as those of intimates, excited no less astonishment than distress.—From what but insanity could such conduct proceed? Under this conviction he approached the baron, and in the gentlest manner entreated him to moderate his feelings from whatever cause they arose.

Roused by Edmund's voice, the baron lifted his head; and fixing his eyes, with a stern penetrating expression, on the countenance of his son, "Away!" he cried, "seek not, boy, to probe my wound: it is beyond thy reach! Think

not that in an hour of weakness I will remove the veil which time has dropped on former action." With a deep sigh he continued, "Once I was innocent, once happy. O days of bliss, why float ye before my eyes, augmenting despair like distant land never to be reached before the sea-tost wretch?"

As the baron pronounced these words his grief became more violent. Alarmed at his extreme agitation, and finding that all attempts to lessen it only produced fresh irritation, Edmund requested permission to summon father Osborne, who acted, according to the custom of those days, in the double capacity of confessor and physician.—This the baron peremptorily forbade. Now musing, now rapidly pacing the apartment, he continued to lament and to accuse himself, heedless of his son's endeavours to sooth him.

Edmund was greatly embarrassed. He was unwilling to expose the baron's situation to the domestics; to leave him was impossible; and the means of procuring assistance he was unable to devise. From this state of uneasiness he was relieved by the entrance of the baroness.

She advanced to the baron, who, absorbed in meditation, had not heard her approach, and, taking his hand, tenderly reproached him for his long absence. Wildly gazing on her, the baron exclaimed, "Was it not his very image, his eye, his smile, all the mild dignity of his expressive face, such as I remember him in the bloom of manhood! The recollection shakes my soul."

"My lord, my lord, you strangely forget yourself," said the baroness

softly: then in a louder tone she enquired why Edmund was detained. Without answering this question, the baron continued, ‘ Albert, beloved friend, unhappy Eloise, worthy a better fate.’”

Here he paused, and Edmynd was proceeding to inform his mother of the baron’s illness, when she, interrupting him, said, “ Be not alarmed my son: it will soon be over. I regret that you have been made a witness to it. By the morning his usual composure will be restored. The hour is late,” she added, “ and it were better you retired to rest. The company have separated.

In compliance with her wishes, Edmund reluctantly quitted the apartment; when the baroness, hastily following him, again encouraged him not

to be anxious ; and she continued, " I adjure you to forget this scene." Thus saying, she closed the door.

To describe the state of Edmund's mind is impossible. It was a perfect chaos ; and his mother's last injunction increased his amazement. Hurrying through the now-deserted galleries, where a few lamps still glimmered, he reached the court of the castle. The stars had almost disappeared, and the tints of the day streaked the east.

Here, the silence broken only by his own footsteps, he reflected on the occurrences of the evening ; but in vain. No clew appeared to guide him to the cause, not even a conjecture. To the melancholy of the baron he had been accustomed from his infancy, and viewed it without surprise ; but the scene which he had just witnessed bore

a new and different aspect. It betrayed the anguish of remorse. The character of guilt was palpably impressed on it, and further implied in the solicitude of the baroness. But a conclusion so revolting to honor and filial affection could not be acquiesced in. Edmund rejected it with indignation, and returned to the anxious uncertainty from which he had been painfully rescued by this terrible probability.

To remain in this state of doubt was not possible: yet to whom could he apply on so delicate a subject? The baroness evidently studied concealment. At length the words uttered by lord Richard occurred to his recollection. These seemed to indicate a knowledge of the mystery: and he resolved, however unseasonable the hour, immediately to seek his brother.

On entering the castle he was surprised by a burst of laughter. It proceeded from the hall, where a few of the young guests still lingered in a state when reason takes but a small share in the actions, and indulging in all the wild sallies that youth and wine could prompt. In the noisy conversation which succeeded, he distinguished the voice of Lord Richard. From so disgraceful a scene Edmund turned with disgust; and finding his brother thus engaged, he relinquished with regret all hope of then gaining any information, and resolved to defer the interview till the morning.

In the corridor leading to his apartment he was met by the baroness, who informed him that she was then in quest of him. Supposing his father worse, Edmund eagerly inquired after him. "He is better," replied the barone

While she spoke, she entered the recess of the window which terminated the gallery, and motioning to Edmund to follow her, she continued, "The strange reception which Sir Almeric experienced, requires some explanation." It is the desire of the baron and myself, that in the morning you apologize to him in our names. Ascribe our emotion to his strong resemblance of a regretted friend."

"Allow me, madam, to inquire who is this friend? From my earliest infancy I have no recollection of any one whom this knight resembles."

"His existence terminated before you had completed your second year," replied the baroness with a sigh. "Your curiosity is natural; and I wish the events of this evening had never arisen to excite it."

“ Believe me, madam, I am actuated by other motives than mere curiosity, in what so deeply affects yours and my father’s happiness.”

“ Spare me on this subject, which I entreat may never be mentioned before the baron.”

“ Why this mystery ? ”

“ You know not the cruel doubts and apprehensions which torment me.”

“ Who is Albert ? Who is Eloise ! ”

“ It is a long and mournful tale, and the recital would greatly distress me ; for next to my family they were the dearest objects of my affection. How many summer and winter suns have set on their tomb ! Let their memory rest

in peace. Forget that you have ever heard of them."

"The duty, madam, which you enjoin is difficult."

Edmund was proceeding, when the first rays of the sun, bursting from behind the distant hills, revealed to him the grief of the baroness. He beheld her pale; the traces of recent tears were visible, and she seemed exhausted by fatigue and sinking under a conflict of emotions. Tenderly loving his mother, his concern for her overcame his former anxiety; and offering his arm, he requested her to retire.

Having conducted the baroness to her chamber, and obtained a promise that she would immediately seek the repose which she so much required, Edmund again assented to the repeated

injunction of silence before the baron, and withdrew to his own apartment. Opening one of the casements, he stood, for some moments lost in a crowd of ideas, which rapidly succeeded each other as waves on the shore, the last overwhelming the former, and like them leaving no trace. The fresh morning air relieved this fever of his brain, the confusion of his thoughts gradually subsided; and looking towards the sun, which had just risen, he recollected with what different feelings he had on the preceding morning beheld it emerge from behind the dark woods. "What a change has the lapse of a few hours produced! Who can boast of happiness, a shadow which for ever eludes our grasp?" At length, throwing himself on his couch, he endeavoured to compose his mind.

Sir Almeric De St. Armand had

during the night, vainly sought to account for his singular reception, and the continued absence of the baron. A stranger to all the family except Edmund, for whom he entertained a sincere friendship, he was the less able to form an opinion. The subsequent conduct of the baroness, testified, he thought, that no affront was designed, yet he felt uneasy. His lofty spirit was inflamed by the romantic feelings of knighthood common in that age, and perhaps by the want of inherited wealth and rank. He arose early, and descending to the terrace which overlooked the battlements, and commanded a view of the sea, he continued meditating, till he was joined by Edmund; and the two friends remained in conference until the hour of breakfast.

On their entering the apartment where most of the guests were already

assembled, the baron advanced to Sir Almeric, and in a hurried manner attempted to apologize. Perceiving his extreme emotion, which, while he held his offered hand, seemed even to partake of horror, the knight, willing to relieve him, expressed regret that his appearance had occasioned any uneasiness; and changing the subject, the conversation soon became general.

The amusements were renewed, and continued through that day and the succeeding, when a grand pageant, represented by the minstrels, closed them. But these splendid scenes were unable to efface from the minds of the guests the strong impression which the occurrence of the first evening had made, and which was further heightened by the baron's melancholy, and by his ineffectual attempts to conceal it. The most thoughtful of the company be-

came spectators rather than actors in these festivities, and their curiosity increased in proportion as the mystery seemed impenetrable. The unblemished reputation of the baron appeared to negative any suspicion of guilt. No circumstance in his life was remembered on which their doubts could fix; yet in the midst of this perplexity, when nothing new arose on which to ground their surmise, the envious and malicious did not hesitate to ascribe his confusion to the recollection of some hidden crime.

Under these impressions the company left the castle, with the exception of Sir Almeric; who had been previously engaged to pass with Edmund the short interval before he commenced his expedition to Palestine.

CHAPTER III.

Of joys departed,
Not to return, how painful the remembrance!

BLAIR.

IT was not till the third day that Sir Edward found an opportunity of speaking with his brother on the subject of the recent occurrence. After expressing his surprise and anxiety, he requested an explanation of his lordship's words. With a malignant air Lord Richard answered, that "Till some satisfaction had been made for the indignity which he had received in the person of Earl Godemar, no explanation was to be expected from him."

“What indignity has the earl suffered? Do you allude to his encounter with Sir Almeric?”

“Certainly!”

“Pardon me if I think your anger misplaced. The earl should have remembered that one must be vanquished, and the magnanimous can admire courage even in an adversary.”

“You are warm, sir; but let me warn you that I bear no reflections on the character of my friend. Who is this doughty champion, in whose cause you interest yourself so much, and whom you consider entitled to affront the greatest nobles?”

“His merits render him worthy of the most exalted station. In courage, honor, and ability, none is his superior.”

“To me you might have spared this panegyric,” said Lord Richard; and with a scornful air he added, “So much excellence doubtless boasts a noble descent.”

“I believe not. But it is little more than conjecture; for on this topic he has always been reserved. But we have strangely wandered from the purpose of this interview.”

Edmund then repeated his former request. But his brother continued to evade his instances, and to Edmund's arguments of his speedy departure, and his extreme anxiety to have this affair explained before he quitted England, Lord Richard remained inflexible; and at length positively refusing any information, till the earl's resentment had been appeased, he quitted the apartment.

Earl Godemar was the particular friend of Lord Richard, and though several years his senior, a similarity of disposition and pursuits had rendered them intimate. The estate on which the earl chiefly resided was contiguous to the baren's. The antiquity of his family, his rank, his great opulence, rendered him one of the first nobles of that age. But the qualities of his mind did not accord with these gifts of fortune. Haughty, inflexible, and cruel, he expected every one to be regulated by his will. Servile with his superiors, he was imperious to his equals and dependents; and unaccustomed to restraint, his castle resounded with the shouts of intemperance.

This nobleman had seen Jacqueline; and though unable to appreciate the graces of her mind, her personal beauty inflamed his passions, while the large pos-

sessions which she inherited from her maternal grandfather appeared a tempting prize to his avarice. He applied to the baron, in the full confidence that his alliance would be received with alacrity.

The baron, acquainted with the character of the earl, and valuing his daughter's happiness beyond every other consideration, resolved to take his proposal. Lord Richard opposed this determination by every argument. He enlarged on the dangers to be expected from the earl's vindictive temper, and placed in the most alluring view the honor and splendor of such a connexion. But the baron was neither to be intimidated nor dazzled, and the only concession he could be induced to make was to leave the decision to Jacqueline.

She received the information of the

earl's offer with surprise, but without hesitation rejected it; and thanking her father for the liberty which he had granted her in this affair, requested him to acquaint the earl with her determination.

A refusal so unexpected inflamed Godemar's love. He resolved by perseverance to overcome the reluctance of the baron, and engage him by paternal authority to extort Jacqueline's consent. To these measures he was incited chiefly by the persuasions of Lord Richard, who, regardless of his sister's happiness, sought the gratification of her union with a man of distinguished rank. Wearied at length with ineffectual solicitations, and confiding in the assurances of the baron, that her affections were not engaged, the earl had consented to suspend his suit and commit his hopes to time.

While Jacqueline remained in the retirement of her father's castle, he was not alarmed by apprehensions of a rival; but the late tournament had excited his jealousy, and he repaired thither, expecting by his splendid appearance and superior gallantry to extort general admiration, and secure the heart of Jacqueline. Excelling in warlike exercises he had been victorious in every encounter, and was enjoying his triumph, when Sir Almeric's prowess snatched the laurel from his brow. A second time he condescended to oppose him, determined to retrieve his glory; again he was defeated; when half-frantic, and in a fury not to be controled, he instantly quitted the castle.

The reluctance of Sir Edmund to leave England till the mystery which enveloped his family was removed, had

induced him to protract his visit much beyond his usual intention; but the intelligence which he now received, that the expedition was ready and waited only for him, rendered it impossible for him longer to delay his departure.

The unamiable disposition of Lord Richard had rendered Sir Edmund doubly dear to his family, and as the hour of separation approached, their affliction seemed to augment. The honor which his conduct reflected on their house had attracted to him their fondest regards, and they could not reflect without anguish on the perils to which he would shortly be exposed. Tenderly embracing his weeping relatives, Sir Edmund quitted, perhaps for ever, the abode of his ancestors.

The baron having overcome the emotions which he had experienced on

the first appearance of Sir Almeric, derived considerable pleasure from his society; and at the baron's particular request he still remained at the castle.

The gratitude which the baroness had felt towards Sir Almeric as the preserver of her son, was soon changed to affection by his elegant manners, his amiable disposition, the cultivated understanding which further acquaintance showed him to possess, and especially by the satisfaction which his attentions afforded to the baron.

Sir Almeric, on his part, did not receive less pleasure from their company. Confined for some years to camps, he had long been a stranger to the happiness of domestic life and the refined intercourse of accomplished women. The mild dignity of the baroness, and the

interest which she took in his welfare, excited in him, who had never known tenderness, a regard little short of filial.

But these sentiments were weak, compared to those he felt towards Jacqueline. Her personal beauty had attracted his admiration, but this was scarcely observed when longer intimacy had disclosed the more transcendent beauties of her mind. Unknown to himself he admitted into his heart a passion which constituted at once his torment and delight. Now for the first time he sighed for rank and titles. Had he possessed these, he might have aspired to the sister of his beloved friend.

Soon after Sir Edmund had sailed, Earl Godemar arrived at Fitzbaynham castle; and having remained near two

hours in conference with the baron, withdrew, without seeing any other part of the family. This visit had excited in Jacqueline considerable uneasiness, which was increased when her mother entered her apartment, and with much agitation desired her attention on an important subject.

The baroness then proceeded to inform Jacqueline that the earl had renewed his suit, and given her three days to consider of her final answer.

“ I thought, madam, he had been already informed of my determination.”

“ Perhaps time has changed your sentiments respecting him.”

“ They can never alter, madam.”

“ Consider, Jacqueline, all the advantages of this alliance; boundless wealth and the highest rank are offered you by the earl.”

“ Had he a diadem to offer, I would reject it. Once, madam, you were of my opinion, once kindly said you thought him unworthy of your daughter.”

“ But circumstances have altered, and I now wish you to accept the earl.”

“ Has my father, too, changed his sentiments? Does he no longer leave me an option?”

“ His wishes accord with mine. Perhaps on a more intimate acquaintance you may find Godemar less disa-

greeable. The reports circulated respecting his character have prejudiced you against him. Remember, it will be in your power greatly to correct his failings."

"O madam, call not his vices by so mild a name. His cruelty, his unrelenting nature, render all amendment hopeless."

"Jacqueline," said the baroness, in a solemn tone, "circumstances make your acceptance of his offer indispensable. Believe me, it is with regret I press what I lament to find so repugnant to your feelings. But look to the brightest side of the prospect. If you have little affection for the earl, you feel no greater attachment to another. Consider how much harder the task, had you to withdraw your regard from a more worthy object. Take time for

reflection, for in your power are placed mine and your father's happiness or misery."

"What circumstances render this alliance so important, madam?"

"If you value your peace, seek not to learn our reason, but yield to them."

"I see, madam, I have lost your affection. What unfortunate action have I committed that merits so severe a punishment?"

Jacqueline uttered this in a tender tone, and the baroness, taking her hand, replied, "Reproach me not. No, my daughter, never were you dearer to me. You know not, and may you never know, the sorrows which oppress my heart, and prey upon my life; but when they touch your

happiness, a keener pang is added. Should this marriage doom you to wretchedness".....After a pause the baroness proceeded, " Yet before you utterly reject this offer, Jacqueline, reflect whether you are prepared to encounter disgrace, whether you can endure to behold your family dishonored, and that name which has for ages shone unsullied, set for ever in the night of guilt and shame. Pride and maternal love divide my bosom. Concealment were indeed purchased too dearly by your unhappiness; and yet the alternative is dreadful. Gloomy to my view is the horizon of futurity: not one faint star glimmers in the awful obscurity."

" You alarm me, madam. What danger impends? Who presumes to doubt the honor of our house? Who

dares to join our name with guilt and shame?"

"I meant not to alarm you. This alliance will avert all that I apprehend, and only this can."

"Only this! O my mother, mention any other way by which I can secure your happiness; and fear not, however great the sacrifice, that I shall hesitate, but death would indeed be preferable to this odious marriage."

Rising, the baroness said, "Jacqueline, spare me the sight of your affliction. My own sorrows I can endure, but when my innocent children suffer, I can no longer support the idea of existence. Then vengeance is accomplished."

She would now have quitted the apartment, in an agony of grief which she was unable to suppress; but Jacqueline detained her, and in the most affectionate manner besought her to disclose the cause of this distress. Her sensibility was so much touched by the baroness' tears, that more than once her filial tenderness had nearly led her to assent to the earl's proposal, when the horrors that she dreaded rose to her view, painted in all the glowing colors of imagination, checked her half-uttered words. In a few minutes the baroness gained sufficient composure to say, "I will now, my child, leave to your consideration this important subject; but remember, Jacqueline, our happiness depends on your decision."

"Stay, stay, my mother, and advise me," exclaimed Jacqueline.

The baroness stopped, "I can endure this scene no longer. May Heaven direct you, my beloved child; I cannot." Saying this, she hastily left the room.

Jacqueline remained for some moments with her eyes fixed on the spot where the baroness had stood. She almost doubted the reality of what had passed, but as the truth became more strongly impressed, her spirits sunk. At length tears relieved her anguish. Lost in a tumult of thoughts, and unable to come to any determination, she remained, till the hour of dinner obliged her to descend.

During the whole of this and the following day, the baron continued in his apartment, shunning all intercourse, except with the baroness; who appeared, notwithstanding her endea-

yours to conceal it, uneasy and dejected. She avoided any private communication with Jacqueline; and the presence of Sir Almeric, when the family met, limited the conversation to general subjects.

Lord Richard seemed the most unconcerned, and neither the obvious disorder of his mother and sister, nor the seclusion of the baron, appeared to excite his curiosity; but the looks with which at intervals he regarded the baroness and Jacqueline, expressed a malicious pleasure. Usually reserved and haughty, his temper was now greatly changed. His words and actions displayed an extraordinary degree of vivacity, and his behaviour to Sir Almeric for the first time appeared cordial. Jacqueline remarked with surprise her brother's altered conduct. She knew by experience that it proceeded from

no good cause; and this reflection increased her uneasiness.

The reason of this deportment, as well as the mystery which the baroness had intimated; were equally inexplicable. The baron only she imagined could explain them; and trusting to the mildness of his disposition, and the affection he had always manifested towards her, she resolved to request an interview.

Considering this conference as the crisis of her fate, she continued to defer it. Thus hour after hour passed. The evening of the second day was closing, and still she wanted resolution. Dark tempestuous clouds, driven before the rising wind, moved heavily along, and reflected a gloomy light on the apartment in which Jacqueline, restless and uneasy, was pacing with

disordered steps. Stopping before a window, she stood for a few minutes looking upwards. The last red tinge of the setting sun faintly marked the west. "Calmly," she exclaimed, "you sink to rest, nor fear the coming morning." Tears filled her eyes, while the wind, rushing in violent gusts through the neighbouring forest, echoed mournfully along the ramparts. In a pause Jacqueline distinguished the heads of horses. They approached, and she perceived indistinctly by the twilight two horsemen advancing.

Her fears took alarm: it was the earl; she had too long delayed to see the baron; her doom was sealed. The horn sounded at the gate, the draw-bridge was lowered, they passed through the inner court, and entered the castle; when in an agony not to be described, she sunk into a chair.

From almost total insensibility she was recalled by the bustle in the castle. Several doors were opened and closed ; a murmur of voices reached her ; presently a step sounded in the adjoining corridor ; some one entered her apartment ; and in a moment Jacqueline found herself enfolded in her mother's arms.

“ My beloved child, heaven has heard my prayers, and you are for the present free.”

“ What mean you, madam ?”

“ A messenger from the king is arrived ; the dispatches which he brings require your father's immediate presence at court, public affairs render the attendance of all the nobles indispensable, and the earl suspends his suit till

these are settled. Why, how is this? What, not a word for all my news?"

"Forgive me, madam; but my emotions are too strong for words."

"Come," said the baroness, taking Jacqueline's hand, "let us join the baron. He begins his journey to-morrow morning, and will be impatient of our absence now."

In the course of the evening, the baron, addressing Sir Almeric, expressed his wishes to find him at the castle on his return; and the baroness pressed his stay with such friendly warmth, that the knight was unable to refuse their invitation. Every day had increased his hopeless passion; for hopeless to him it must ever be. Every day he more fully felt the propriety of flee-

ing from so fascinating an object, yet he constantly found some excuse for delaying the moment of separation.

To leave them now, when his presence was so much desired, seemed little short of ingratitude. In silence he would admire, in silence cherish, her image in his heart. To him the castle was the abode of love and virtue; and it appeared more strikingly such, when contrasted with his own desolate situation. To receive him no home opened it's doors; no kind relatives waited to greet his return.

Early the following morning, after taking an affectionate leave of his family, the baron, attended by a numerous band of retainers, commenced his journey. From the battlements the baroness watched their descent, till, the road winding round the forest, they

were concealed from her view. Presently on a distant hill, they again appeared. The plume of white feathers which he wore, rendered her able to distinguish the baron; and waving her hand in token of a last farewell, she retired to her apartment.

The uneasiness which the baroness had lately experienced had considerably impaired her health; and its ill effects were increased by concealment. She had frequently exhausted her spirits by endeavouring to dissipate the baron's melancholy; and, fearful of aggravating his unhappiness, had forbore to complain. Her indisposition now became apparent. An air of languor pervaded her countenance, but the anxiety which her daughter expressed made her attribute these appearances to the absence of her husband and son.

Jacqueline endeavoured, by every means which duty and affection could devise, to amuse her mother; and in this employment she was assisted by Sir Almeric, who though young (for he had not yet completed his twenty-second year) had seen much and reflected more. Possessed of a penetrating active mind, accustomed to observation, his short intercourse with the world had taught him experience, enlarged his views, and rendered his conversation interesting. He perceived the attention with which the baroness listened when Sir Edmund was mentioned, and sometimes beguiled her of her hidden grief by relating the actions in which he had beheld his friend. A glow would enliven the pale features of the baroness at the description of her son's courage; she sympathised in his dangers, and rejoiced at his success: but this last emotion was checked

when she reflected on the distance that separated, and the perils that surrounded him.

In these pious labors Lord Richard never joined. Intent on his own pleasures, he seldom sought the company of his mother; and by his neglect augmented her dejection.

One day when Sir Almeric had just finished an account of an interesting engagement in which Sir Edmund had taken a distinguished part, Lord Richard) his malignant passions roused by the praises of his brother) in a jocose manner requested the knight to relate his own history; "though perhaps," he added with a sneer, "you have already favored the ladies with it." As he spoke he eyed Sir Almeric; for he recollected Edmund's having said that this was an unpleasant subject;

and with a look of triumph he enjoyed the knight's embarrassment. Sir Almeric colored, hesitated, and at length with a sigh replied, that it was a topic too insignificant to afford them amusement, and immediately turned towards a window to conceal his emotion. This conduct excited the attention of all, and heightened the curiosity of Lord Richard; who, not accustomed to regard the feelings of others, and unrestrained by delicacy, repeated his request.

The baroness, though surprised by the behaviour of St. Amand, who remained silent and confused, checked her son; and expressing her regret that any unpleasant recollections had been revived, desired the knight to forget that the subject had been mentioned. Sir Almeric, turning to the baroness, said, "I should be unworthy

of this kind regard, were I longer silent. Believe me, madam, my reluctance is principally occasioned by an apprehension of losing the friendship with which you have exalted me, and which I consider my greatest happiness, when you learn that he whom you have condescended to notice boasts no nobler possessions than unstained honor and his sword."

"Never," replied the baroness, "can I repay the gratitude I owe as the preserver of Edmund's life, or forget the pleasure which your society has afforded to the baron. The sentiments which I feel towards your rank can neither increase nor lessen. If the recital will be distressing to your feelings, do not attempt it. I assure you I shall not attribute your silence to any other motive." Sir Almeric thanked the baroness for her consideration, but de-

clared that the events of his life, less unfortunate than extraordinary, affected him rather with perplexity than sorrow.

“ You have raised my curiosity,” said the baroness; “ and since it does not afflict you I will own that the narrative would oblige me, and relieve the tediousness of indisposition.” The knight replied, that if his adventures could contribute to her amusement, they would acquire an unexpected value in his estimation; but he feared they contained nothing to gratify the expectations which she expressed. She must excuse a disappointment that was imposed by herself.

CHAPTER IV.

No, let me purchase in my youth renown,
 To make me lov'd and valu'd when I'm old :
 I would be busy in the world, and learn,
 Not like a coarse and useless dunghill weed,
 Fix'd to one spot, and rot just where I grow.

OTWAY.

“ MY earliest recollections found me an inmate of a cottage situated on the borders of a lake in the north of England. Here passed the first fourteen years of my life under the protection of a lady in declining age. Beside ourselves, the family consisted of one female servant. My kind patroness watched over me with maternal tenderness and solicitude ; while, without any other object to share the overflow-

ing affection of infancy, my fondness for her knew no bounds.

“ Though living in the bosom of solitude, her manners still retained the habits of refined intercourse. Her mind was strengthened by reflection, and enlarged by experience; the infirmities of age had not impaired the sweetness of her temper, or the vigor of her faculties. To her I am indebted for my first instructions.

“ The only visitor that approached our dwelling was a venerable friar, who at long intervals spent two or three days, and sometimes a week, with us. From him I learned, as my youth advanced, that I was an orphan consigned by my dying mother to the care of his sister, my beloved guardian.

“ Simplicity, mingled with chastened

elegance, presided at our abode, and the pomp of architecture was not required amid it's graceful embellishments. Plants and flowers, trained by the tasteful hand of it's mistress, decorated our windows, dispensing shade and fragrance. In the prospects nature presented a scene which might be beheld for ever without satiety. Our garden almost overhung the lake flowing at a vast distance below. The descent was steep and sudden, but broken to the eye by numerous bushes, intermixed with taller shrubs which spread quite to the margin. On the opposite quarter rose a progression of hills thickly clothed with a luxuriant variety of trees whose waving heads seemed to stoop beneath the clouds. In this wild scenery, with all the careless joy of childhood unmindful of tomorrow, it was my delight to wander. O happy hours, how rapidly

you flew on the wings of health and peace!

“ One evening, having prolonged my stay beyond the usual hour, I retraced my steps with anxious haste. On approaching the cottage I was surprised to find neither my kind friend nor the domestic waiting for me. The door opened at my touch. It seemed unfastened for my admittance. On entering, no light appeared in the room where we usually sat. A low indistinct murmur alarmed me. Perceiving a faint glimmer on the stair-case, with cautious steps I ventured to ascend. The light became stronger, the lamentations more loud. Both proceeded from a room the door of which stood partly open. I now distinguished the voice of our servant, and, instantly springing forward, entered the apartment.

“ Kneeling beside a couch, on which reclined my benefactress, appeared our domestic, weeping and complaining. As soon as grief would permit her, she informed me that her mistress had been seised with a sudden indisposition, and was still insensible. Those who have known what it is to possess and to lose such a friend, will be able to judge of my distress; more poignant because the first I had suffered. I pressed her cold hand to my bosom, I kissed her pale face, and with all the weakness of childhood sought by my voice to recal her senses.

“ Suddenly our attention was roused by footsteps below. We heard them ascend the stairs. There they paused. The circumstances of the time rendered this unexpected incident fearful. In a moment the door slowly opened, and a figure entered. Advancing nearer, I

perceived it was the friar, the brother of my dying friend, who had come with the intention of spending a few days with his sister. The mournful spectacle shocked him ; but restraining his feeling, he applied his skill in medicine to restore her.

“ With what transport did I behold her eyes open ! They beamed on me, but their lustre was fled : The sleep of death weighed heavy on them. A smile of gladness relaxed her features, when she beheld her brother : and struggling with her weakness, she addressed to him words which have never been absent from my memory. She adjured him to observe his oath respecting me, and never to sacrifice it to fear or ambition. He assured her, in the most solemn terms, that an engagement so sacred should be inviolable. ‘ Then I die in peace,’ she exclaimed, and re-

lapsed into insensibility. . . The next morning terminated her life."

The knight paused — "Many years have intervened," said he, after a short silence, addressing the baroness; "but time in this instance has failed of it's usual effect: for still in strong characters is engraven on my heart the remembrance of that melancholy day." In a few minutes he subdued his feelings, and proceeded.

"The third evening I beheld her remains committed to the earth, agreeably to her desire, in a sequestered spot of the garden, under a tree of her own planting. The sensations of that moment are not to be described. It was a cloudy autumn evening; the chill wind whistled mournfully in the adjoining grove, and scattered with it's inclement touch the withered leaves,

Some fell on the bier. I stooped to brush them off, but, whistling with a hollow rushing sound, they dropped beside it. The lake, swollen by recent rains, and agitated by the gusts that at intervals rushed between the surrounding hills, seemed in murmurs to lament her loss. Bending with grief, her aged brother, the friar, repeated the last service in a faint but solemn tone; then, with his eyes raised to heaven, he stood for some minutes as if tracing her spirit to its native mansion. His violent sorrow was succeeded by an aspect of resignation, and meekly sighing, with slow and feeble steps he sought the cottage; while I, sinking on a rude seat near the grave, long remained absorbed in grief, and lost even to myself. At length I seemed to awake. I started, for my name was repeated. Night had stolen the surrounding scene from my view: a few stars twinkled between the

breaks in the clouds; and the moon, now shining, now obscured, diffused an uncertain glimmer. Lights moved among the trees; and I now distinguished the friar, who, alarmed by my absence, was searching for me."

Here Sir Almeric, turning to his auditors, apologised for dwelling so long on an event so melancholy, and to them uninteresting; but the painfully pleasing emotions which the remembrance excited in his mind, had unintentionally led him to trespass on their patience. The knight continued.

"On the following morning I departed, in company with the friar, who was anxious to quit a place which to him revived only painful images. My feelings were different; for though every object quickened the memory of my loss, they were so connected in my

mind with her whom I regretted, that all, even the most insignificant, possessed to me a kind of sacredness. A heavy languor oppressed my heart, when from a distant hill I cast a parting glance on those scenes which had witnessed my former happiness. The cottage, the lake, the garden in which reposed my friend, were spread before me. This moment I beheld them; a few steps further they no longer appeared: and whether I should ever retread these beloved haunts of infancy, was shrouded in the bosom of uncertain futurity.

“ Father Anselm, so was the friar called, far advanced in years, was ill able to sustain the fatigues of travelling, and often needed my arm to assist his feeble steps. Our progress was slow; but after a journey of some days,

we arrived at his monastery. I was introduced to the abbot as the ward of Anselm, who intimated that I might probably at no distant period become a member of their society.

“ Here during three years I continued to pursue my studies under the direction of the friar. The dull confinement of a monastic life at first appeared insupportable to me, especially when contrasted with the freedom I had formerly enjoyed. My walks here were limited to the garden, surrounded by high walls; and beyond these since my first entrance I had never passed, never had my eyes from that day been gratified by even a glimpse of the prospects which fancy painted to exist without these gloomy barriers. Books and the conversation of the friar, who continued to treat me with the

utmost kindness, were my only amusements.

“ As my years advanced, I sought in these discourses to obtain information respecting my family : but as often as I asked a question in any way connected with this subject, the friar would divest, or abruptly terminate, the conversation. He frequently urged many arguments in favor of a religious life. He praised the tranquillity and the security to be found in the cloister, and strongly urged me to accept the cowl. To this proposal I felt a great repugnance. To my ardent temper the camp presented a more congenial scene. But when I hinted this project, the friar, with unusual warmth, checked my wishes, and pressed me to enter the church.

“ ‘ Within that holy place alone,’

said he, ' can you find safety. Every day is important. A mystery hangs over your destiny, and while you hesitate I tremble for you.'

" In vain I besought him to explain the cause of his alarm, in vain inquired what danger menaced.

" ' An oath,' said he, ' binds me to silence. The time is not yet arrived when I shall be released from it.'

" This ever was the only answer I could obtain.

" At length habit had in a great measure reconciled me to my abode. The peaceful uniformity no longer oppressed me; and as my mind opened, I began to taste the pleasures of literature. Still I sometimes felt a desire to behold the world, and mingle in it's busy

scenes; but these wishes became gradually fainter and less frequent: they did not now, as formerly, possess sufficient strength to disturb the tranquil motion of my hours, but appeared rather the eccentric wanderings of fancy.

“ Such was the state of my feelings; when on the evening preceding a grand religious festival, which was to be celebrated in the church of our abbey, I received an order from the abbot to supply, in the ceremonial of the next day, the place of a novice who was unexpectedly confined by illness. Considering me as one who would soon join their order, he felt the less scruple in admitting me to a participation in the sacred rites. Hitherto I had performed my religious duties in the private chapel of our house, and I anticipated with pleasure the novelty of appearing in

public: but Father Anselm expressed the utmost uneasiness, and labored to prevail on the abbot to recal his order. As my absence, however, would have deranged the ceremonials, his endeavours were vain; and he was obliged to content himself with charging me to retire to my cell, as soon as my presence could be dispensed with.

“ ‘I am sorrow,’ said he, ‘to appear thus rigid, but the hazard is too important to admit of trifling. Would you but once enter your noviciate, my fears would terminate, and your liberty commence.’

“ The next morning, habited as a novice and bearing a lighted taper in my hand, I took my station on one of the steps of the altar. To me, young and educated in retirement, how solemn and impressive was the scene!

All the magnificence of the brotherhood was displayed; and a brilliant assemblage of spectators, many of considerable rank, diffused a splendor, which became more striking, contrasted with the sable garments of the monks.

“The service began. Music lent it's aid to lift the soul above mortality. To my youthful fancy the majestic tones of the organ, considered as the emblem of mighty power, inspired an emotion of sublimity and even terror. These were succeeded by the low-measured chaunting of the recluses, which, gently stealing on the ear, seemed as the voice of angels speaking hope and peace. The world faded as a dream before visions of celestial bliss. So powerful was the impression that I resolved immediately to dedicate my-

self to heaven, and wondered that I had ever hesitated.

“Towards the conclusion I ventured to direct my eyes more particularly to the company, and perceived with surprise a cavalier attentively regarding me. He appeared beyond the middle of life; his features bore the traces of manly beauty more impaired by violent passions than by age. His dress bespoke superior rank; and a strange mixture of haughtiness and servility appeared in his aspect and manner. His dark eyes, almost obscured by their long lashes, and overhung with thick brows, were fixed on me with a piercing expression.

“While he continued gazing, his features assumed a character of stern malignity, and betrayed the strong emotions by which he was actuated. I was

distressed by his penetrating glances: they excited in me a sensation which I had never before experienced. I wished to forget him, yet an irresistible impulse obliged me almost constantly to observe him. On quitting the church, when I had reached the door, I once more looked towards him, and found his eyes bent on me with a glance of anger and hatred.

“This circumstance made a deep impression, and in the retirement of my cell I reflected on the means of gratifying the curiosity which it had excited. I even felt a desire of again seeing the stranger. An unaccountable imagination seised me, that my fate was connected with his.

“One of my windows overlooked the court in which the carriages belonging to the company waited. With anxious

solicitude I sought for his appearance in the crowd, but in vain. All had departed; and with extreme disappointment I was turning from the window, when I perceived him, in company with Anselm, enter the cloister. This circumstance confirmed my suspicion, and with difficulty I remained in my apartment. A thousand vague ideas respecting the stranger invaded me; and the anxious uncertainty in which they all terminated, rendered these hours the most tedious I had ever passed.

“Evening at length approached, when one of the lay brothers informed me, that father Anselm wished to see me. I found the friar kneeling before a crucifix. On my entrance he arose. His countenance expressed sorrow, and some traces of vexation. He motioned to me to place myself beside him. ‘My son,’ said he, ‘the events of this

day have realised my fears. We must part to-night.'

“ ‘How, holy father,’ I exclaimed, altogether astonished at his words; ‘wherefore must we part?’ and I proceeded to inform him of my intention immediately to commence my novitiate.

“ ‘It is too late. Alas! even that cannot now preserve to me your society. Would that you had sooner yielded to my desire. But that is past. Let us not waste these moments, which are precious, in vain retrospections. You have often expressed your preference of a martial life. Direct your views to the camp, for there you must in future seek that security which these walls can no longer afford you. I had flattered myself with the hope that my few remaining years might be sweet-

ened by your presence: but Heaven has ordered otherwise, and I submit to it's decree. This night you must depart.'

" I besought him to explain the cause of this hasty procedure, and questioned him respecting the cavalier.

" 'All,' said he, ' that relates to you is veiled in doubt and mystery. Your unfortunate appearance to-day has disclosed your residence. Had you already professed, you might have defied his utmost effort, and, wrapped in the holy garb, securely dared his power.'

" He then proceeded to inform me, that he had provided a person in whom he could confide, who would conduct me to the nearest post, whence I might easily pass to the English army then in France. At the same time he pre-

sented to me a letter addressed to one of the principal commanders, with whom he had formerly been intimate.

“ ‘ That will secure you a favorable reception. I know his character : and though we have not met for some years, our friendship was too sincere to be forgotten. On his protection and advice you may always rely.’

“ ‘ Forgive me, father,’ I said ; “ but it is time that I should protect myself : it is time that the mystery in which I have been reared should cease ; let me no longer remain a stranger to myself.’

“ ‘ Be not impetuous, young man,’ rejoined the friar ; ‘ nor with the rashness of inexperience accelerate your destruction. Listen to the counsels of age.’

“ ‘ And flee, Anselm ! basely flee before an unknown foe ! Are these the counsels you would have me follow ? ’

“ ‘ Restrain these transports, which your youth only can excuse. It is not by violent gusts of passion that the wiles of craft and power must be opposed. He whom you beheld this day is subtle and inventive ; one whom long practice has rendered familiar with the mysteries and refinements of the science of deception.’

“ I besought Anselm to reveal his name.

“ ‘ His vices alone are known to me,’ answered the friar. ‘ Of his name and rank I am wholly ignorant.’

“ ‘ Is it possible ! ’ I exclaimed.

“ ‘ Yes, my son ; strange as this appears, it is nevertheless true, and the circumstances under which we first met are still more surprising. To avoid him is the course for you to pursue ; and this night presents the only opportunity : to-morrow he will demand you of the abbot. Nay, offer no more objections,’ said the friar, for I was preparing to speak. ‘ I have sworn, I will perform. For myself, I fear not his utmost vengeance, and despise his offers.’

“ When I inquired the name of my family, and conjured him no longer to conceal the particulars of my infancy.

“ ‘ I am well aware,’ said he, ‘ that my silence must be painful to you, but I am not at liberty to break it. For the present accept my name.’

“ My vexation was apparent, and he continued :

“ ‘ Do not reject my friendship because an oath prevents my gratifying your curiosity. To part from you is sufficient sorrow : add not to my regrets the loss of your affection.’ ”

“ I was sensibly touched by these words, and lamented to have grieved one who already suffered so many anxieties on my account. He continued to give me instructions respecting the scene on which I was about to enter, and particularly enjoined me to avoid the cavalier.

“ Towards midnight he conducted me to a private door in the garden, which opened on an unfrequented path. At a small distance, under a clump of

trees, appeared a man waiting with two horses. On seeing us he approached. The friar directed him to avoid the high roads, and to make as much dispatch as possible; but at the same time expressed his hope that there was little danger of pursuit. Hubert, so the guide was called, he recommended as one in whom I might confide. All being ready, he embraced me with paternal affection. — ‘Adieu, adieu, my son!’ said he hastily; and entering the garden, he closed the door.”

CHAPTER V.

Thou bringst his dreadful image to my thoughts,
And now he stands before me stormy, fierce,
Imperious, unrelenting, and to death
Tenacious of his purpose, once resolved.

ROWE.

“WE commenced our journey at a quick pace. Before we had proceeded far, we distinguished the tread of other horses, apparently following us; and apprehensive of pursuit, we increased our speed. After rapidly advancing a considerable distance, we stopped to listen. No sounds reached us; and we continued our progress during the rest of the night without interruption.

When the morning dawned, we were

ascending a high hill, which commanded for a great length the road which we had passed. At a considerable distance behind us, we perceived one horseman slowly advancing, and smiled at our alarm in the night, occasioned, we conceived, by this traveller. Now many miles from the monastery, and observing no signs of pursuit, we congratulated ourselves on our escape.

“ We continued to proceed all that day, stopping only to refresh our horses. It was the middle of winter, cold, and towards evening it began to snow. In conformity to the friar’s directions, we had ridden across the country, following the bye-roads, which at this season were almost unfrequented. A wood of great extent lay stretched before us; night was shutting in; and not a hut appeared in the inhospitable solitude.

We had not advanced many steps in this gloomy forest, when I discerned, among some thick underwood, the figure of a horseman who seemed waiting our approach. Hubert observed it at the same moment, and, turning his horse, called on me to follow.

“When we had reached the open country, Hubert, still looking round, inquired whether I had witnessed the same appearance. It is probably some of the banditti who infest the forest. The darkness among those branches was so great, that I could hardly distinguish whether the figure was human. It will not be possible to pass through to-night. Let us therefore endeavour to find a place of shelter till the morning. We rode along the side of the wood for some distance, without discerning any dwelling; and by this time it would have been wholly dark, but

for a few stars which appeared between the clouds aided by the reflection of the snow.

“ At length perceiving before us a building, we joyfully quickened our steps. On our nearer approach, from it's extent and the numerous breaks in the walls, we imagined it to be only the ruins of a castle. Our disappointment was extreme; for the cold had rendered us almost unable to sit our horses. Riding slowly round, we observed that bricks and rubbish had fallen into what appeared to have been once a moat, and rendered it in many places almost level with the ground. I proposed passing over. Hubert, oppressed with the fear of banditti, and apprehending that this might be their haunt, strenuously urged me to desist, and counseled to search for a cottage. I was averse to the prospect of wander-

ing further in the gloomy night, and preferred the chance of dangers which we might encounter here, to the certainty of what we must suffer in the alternative. Requesting him therefore to remain where he was, while I approached to explore the building, I dismounted and attempted to cross.

“The earth was loose, and the severe frost rendered the passage still more dangerous. Often I with difficulty saved both myself and my horse, which I led after me, from being precipitated to the bottom. At length I succeeded in gaining the opposite side, and found myself in what appeared to have been the outer court of a fortress. At this moment I perceived Hubert endeavouring in great haste to join me, which he had no sooner accomplished, than motioning me to follow him, we advanced towards the entrance of an arch.

“ Having entered this recess, which was totally dark, he stopped. I was beginning to inquire the reason of his strange conduct, when, seising my arm, he enjoined silence. After a pause, he said in a suppressed tone, ‘ We have, I believe, escaped this danger;’ and proceeded to inform me that I had scarcely left him, before he heard the approach of horses. The sound appeared to come from the forest, and they were rapidly advancing: he even thought that some one called to him. Apprehending them to be a party of robbers, informed of our situation by the horseman whom we had seen, and who was probably one of their scouts, he imagined the only way to elude them was to conceal ourselves in the ruin.

“ The severity of the weather rendered us unable to keep our station long, and,

reassured by the undisturbed silence, we ventured to advance with caution towards the interior of the arch, which terminated in another court surrounded by buildings. But the air of desolation which prevailed, and the large masses of stone continually impeding our steps, forbid the hope of finding inhabitants.

“On reaching what appeared to have been the principal entrance, we paused to listen. No sound broke the stillness of night, except the wind which, whistling mournfully through the deserted mansion, seemed deploring the devastation of time. The doors were open, and, leaving our horses, we entered what by it's large extent we conceived had been the hall. Many openings in the half-decayed roof admitted sufficient light to reveal the general outlines.

“ At this moment the moon, emerging from behind a cloud, shone through the frameless windows; overhung and wreathed with ivy, whose leaves, sparkling with the new-fallen snow, seemed as illuminations prepared for fairy revels. The time and place were aptly fitted. Indeed a more romantic scene could not be fancied. Between the pavement grass and tall weeds had sprung, which, waving with every breeze, and embossed by the frost, emitted an uncertain glimmer.

“ Finding ourselves in this place almost as much exposed as in the open air, we resolved to explore some of the many avenues which branched off to the right and left; and entered one apparently communicating with another pile of building, and which we were enabled to traverse by means of the light admitted through an aperture in

the mouldering wall. After a considerable distance, our progress was stopped by a massy door, which resisted our efforts to open it.

“ While hesitating whether to knock, we distinguished a human voice speaking within. At the same moment the door was partly opened, and the head of a man appeared bent forward, who after looking around with caution, advanced a few steps; when turning as if addressing some one in the apartment which he had quitted, he said, ‘ Stand at the door while I go a little further, but surely he can never think of coming in such a night.’

“ By the red glow of a fire we could discern a female figure moving from the interior of the room. Leaving the pillar behind which we had stationed ourselves, we approached the door. At

sight of us, the woman screamed and ran back, notwithstanding our assurances that she had nothing to fear.

“The man, recalled by her outcries, joined us, and in a rough tone demanded our business. With difficulty, after explaining our situation, we prevailed on him to permit our remaining till the morning. On mentioning that we had left our horses at the entrance of the hall, he muttered something to himself; then turning to us, he said, ‘Perhaps you will not object to bring them to the end of the gallery. I will meet you there, and show you a place where they may be disposed to-night.’ This proposal surprised us, but as there was no alternative, we assented.

“Having retraced our steps, we found

the animals benumbed with cold, and scarcely able to move. With some difficulty we brought them to the place where our host waited for us. He was holding up his lanthorn and looking across the hall with a sort of fearful impatience, calling to us to make dispatch; he led the way to a rude kind of stable, where, he said, they would find food enough till to-morrow. Then casting his eyes timidly behind him, with quick steps he returned, accompanied by us, to the room from which we had just seen him issue, and closed with precipitation the double doors which secured it.

“We now had leisure to observe the apartment. It had once apparently been a kitchen. By the side of a large fire sat the old woman we had before seen, who without moving desired us to come towards the hearth; an invita-

tion which we did not require to be repeated.

“ While this passed, our host had been surveying us with considerable attention. Now speaking to the woman, ‘ Come, Catharine,’ said he, ‘ spread something on the table. These gentlemen must have good appetites after being out in the cold so long ; and do not forget to bring the ale.’ Our host interrupted our apologies by saying that since he had admitted us, we were welcome to the best fare they could produce ; which was indeed but coarse, as they were not accustomed to receive many visitors. ‘ Indeed so little is this place frequented, that your first appearance startled us.’

“ The old woman, who was employed in preparing supper, hearing her husband’s best speech, said to him, ‘ As

I live, Ernulph, when I first saw them, I thought they had been my old master and his son.'

" 'Peace, fool!' said Ernulph; and he threw on her a glance which she seemed perfectly to understand.

" A lamp was now placed on the table, and during the repast we had opportunity to observe our host. He was more than fifty, short and stout; his countenance was ordinary, low cunning seemed it's chief characteristic; but his eye sometimes expressed a ferocious cruelty, and his manners were coarse. Both he and his wife appeared uneasy, and I observed them often look around with apprehension, and start at every sound, which the wind, blowing with violence through the dilapidatory building, frequently occasioned. They drew to-

wards the fire, and invited us to do the same. Suddenly the woman said to Ernulph, "Is not this the twenty-first of the month?"

" 'Yes,' he replied, and relapsed into silence.

Hubert inquired whether we could be accommodated with beds. At this question our hosts regarded each other. 'There are two,' said Ernulph; 'but it is a long time since they were used.'

" 'Surely you cannot offer those,' exclaimed Catharine.

" 'Why not?'

" 'Is it possible you can ask that question? Have you forgotten this night? What noise was that?'

“ ‘What should it be but the rout begun?’ replied Ernulph.

“ ‘Lord have mercy on us!’ ejaculated Catharine, and crossed herself.

“ ‘Ah, well, it does not signify. If people will be wicked, they must suffer for it. So let us have another pitcher, dame.’

“ ‘Then you must fetch it yourself, Ernulph; for if I was dying of thirst I could not go for it now.’

“ ‘Who would think you had been here so many years, to see you thus simple?’

“ As he said this, he arose; and, taking the lamp, quitted the apartment at a side door. During his absence the old woman was busily employed in ad-

dressing prayers to all the saints for his safety. In a few moments with quick steps he returned, secured the door, and resuming his seat, pressed us to taste the fresh liquor.

“ The strange conversation that had passed, and the agitation of Ernulph, which he vainly strove to conceal, attracted my attention. Perceiving this, he turned to Catharine, ‘ While I was away,’ said he, ‘ I suppose you have been entertaining our guests with the old story ?’

“ ‘ O no,’ she replied; ‘ I would not for the world report such a horrid tale. Besides, Ernulph, you can relate it better than I.’

“ ‘ Why, I believe,’ returned he, ‘ nobody knows it so well as myself. I had but too large a share in it.’

“ A boisterous gust of wind at this moment shook the doors and windows. ‘ God forgive me, for the part I acted! I wish these old walls may stand over our heads. What a night it is!’

“ ‘ And I wish,’ said Catharine, ‘ Father Ingulph were come. Then we should have some peace from these dreadful doings. There they all go: I hear them hoop by.’

“ This discourse affected me strangely, and Hubert with some alarm asked who had passed.

“ ‘ Only my old master, and his family,’ replied Ernulph.

“ ‘ You mean their ghosts,’ said Catharine: ‘ They are going to the south tower. This is one of their nights of penance.’

“ ‘ Mine are all days and nights of penance, I think, to be obliged to live in this place,’ muttered her husband.

“ These speeches excited my curiosity, and I was about to question Ernulph respecting them, when, looking towards one of the large windows which were unprovided with shutters, I thought I could distinguish a human countenance in a fixed attitude regarding us. The light from our lamp was so small, that the beams of the moon, reflected on the snow, rendered external objects very visible. The longer I looked, the more I became convinced of the reality of the appearance; but while I turned to notice it to Hubert, it disappeared.

“ Hubert expressed his uneasiness at this circumstance, and inquired whether the doors were all fastened.

“ ‘ Yes,’ replied Catharine, ‘ they are locked and bolted. It was no doubt one of the beings who infest the abbey.’

“ ‘ Who are they ?’ said Hubert.

“ ‘ All the rabble of hell, I believe, from the noise they make, let loose at once to torment Sir Reginald. Do not you hear them now ?’ As Ernulph uttered this, a noise like steps echoed through the apartment. Hubert, drawing closer, besought him to explain those frightful sounds, and I eagerly seconded this request.

“ ‘ Well,’ replied Ernulph, ‘ I will try, as you desire it so much, for it will not be possible for you to go to bed yet, and this may serve to pass the time till they are retired.’ After taking a long draught, he began : —

“ ‘ It is now near twenty years since Sir Reginald, on the death of his father, came to reside at this castle, then one of the most splendid in the kingdom. Sir Reginald's disposition was little known here; for he had passed his youth in the camp, and at his marriage settled on one of his wife's estates: but a few days were sufficient to inspire regret for his succession and pity for his lady, whose amiable and patient submission seemed only to provoke his brutality. Capricious, cruel, and a prey to the most ungovernable passions, he soon became the terror of his dependants and all with whom he was connected.

“ ‘ One son, his only child, of whom he was unworthy to be the father, he had caused to be educated abroad, and persisted to forbid his return, against the earnest entreaties of his mother and

himself. Arthur, so the youth was called, despairing of ever gaining his consent, ventured to come without it; but, not daring to appear, he wandered about for several days in disguise, before he could find an opportunity of acquainting his mother.

“ I was warden of the castle, and one night, when my master was absent, I was ordered by my lady to admit Arthur, after the rest of the family had retired, by a private passage, to her apartment in the south tower. Having conducted him to his mother, I waited for his return in a room at the bottom of the special staircase. I had not staid here half an hour before the door opened, and my master entered. I was ready to die with fear. ‘ Are all the gates shut ? ’ said he. I knew not what to answer, distracted by the dread of his son’s coming. Indeed I cannot

relate all that passed; but, awed by his presence, and the dreadful threats which he denounced if ever I deceived him, I confessed, what from his conduct I thought he already knew, that his son was in the castle.

“The moment I uttered these fatal words, I repented; for his rage exceeded all belief. He traversed the apartment in a perfect frenzy. So violent was his resentment against his wife and child, that the part I had acted never occurred to his mind, or he would have destroyed me on the spot. I had reached the door, hoping to escape unperceived, that I might give my lady notice; when, seising my arm, he flung me to the opposite side of the room, and rushed out like a maniac.

“Scarcely an instant had elapsed,

when the shrieks of my mistress made me hasten up stairs. On entering the apartment, I beheld her seated on a sofa, concealing her face with both hands, while my master stood over her, holding her hair, and brandishing a bloody sword. Before them on the floor lay the body of young Arthur divided to the girdle; for his father had approached unperceived, and struck him while on his knees receiving his mother's blessing.

“ At this spectacle, of which I considered myself the innocent occasion, I could neither move nor speak: while my master, after upbraiding his wife with unrelenting cruelty for her disobedience, and mingling frequent denunciations of the most severe punishment, dragged her to the next room, and locked the door; then in a voice which did not admit of hesitation, he

commanded me to raise his son's body and follow him. In one of the vaults under the castle I deposited, not without shuddering, the corpse of this unfortunate youth ; while the unfeeling father remained at the entrance. When I returned towards him, he raised the sword, which he had never quitted, and extorted from me an oath that I would never, while he lived, reveal the transactions of that night. My lady's senses never returned, and she did not survive the catastrophe many days.

“ From this period the castle became the haunt of unquiet spirits. Sir Reginald was soon obliged to leave it, and met his punishment by endeavouring to flee from it ; for, having embarked with an intention of going to the continent, he was overtaken by a storm, and miserably perished. On the twenty-first of every month they all meet

in the south tower. Sir Reginald, driven by a band of furies, comes riding through the forest, on the same horse, and in the same path, as on the night when he murdered his son."

"Hubert, who had listened to this relation in mute attention, now exclaimed, 'Then those were the sounds I heard this evening, coming from the forest. Mercy on me! I am glad I did not know it then, for I should not have been able to get out of their way?' My hosts were shocked to observe, that I could not refrain from smiling at this speech, and Ernulph gravely added, 'His horse waits at the door of the hall till twelve, when he descends from the tower, remounts his steed, and departs as he came.'

"At this moment a door in a distant part of the building closed

with violence, and the sound reverberated for a long time in the empty mansion. Catharine uttered an exclamation of terror, and Hubert declared that he would rather have remained all night in the snow than have encountered these horrors.

“ A silence ensued, till presently Ernulph, remarking that it was past midnight, inquired whether we were inclined to retire. Hubert hoped that our chambers were near.

“ ‘ They are contiguous,’ replied Ernulph, ‘ though a long way hence. They are the only ones that remain unfinished : for on my master’s death, all the rest of the furniture was removed by order of his brother to his own residence. The decorations of these apartments, the scene of the murder, he could not behold without

horror, and therefore left them in this deserted mansion.'

"On hearing this speech, Hubert with a countenance of extreme terror declared, that he would rather never go to bed again than remain a night in those rooms. Ernulph in vain assured him that the danger was past, as the ghosts would not revisit the tower till the twenty-first of the next month. 'That,' Hubert replied, 'was more than he or any other person knew. For himself, he was resolved never to enter a place where such beings assembled, and he would pass the remainder of the night by the fire-side.'

"It was in vain that I combated this resolution: his fears were so strongly excited that he was become incapable of any other emotion. To confess the truth, I did not admire the

prospect of passing so many hours alone in so remote a place; and although my opinion of supernatural appearances was not orthodox, I should have been greatly relieved by the society of Hubert.

“ Ernulph presently lighted a lamp, and offered to conduct me to my chamber. Hubert solicited me to remain, and I was well disposed to comply with his request; but youthful vanity prompted me to conceal this inclination, and with reluctance accompanied Ernulph.

“ In the hall we were compelled to stop frequently, lest the wind should extinguish our lamp. ‘ I believe we are going right,’ said Ernulph; ‘ but this place is much altered. I hardly know ’ After looking about, ‘ Yes, this is the way. Now I know

where I am. There is old Sir Geoffrey's spear; and yonder in that corner is the spiral staircase.' I turned towards the part to which he pointed, and in the dusky obscurity discerned a flight of stairs. At the same moment I thought a figure glided up them. Surprised, I was going to notice this appearance to Ernulph, whose attention was otherwise engaged, but checked myself, unwilling to betray symptoms of fear, and considering it to be a mere creature of my imagination heated by the story I had heard. 'There is the room in which I waited on that fatal night. Heaven help me! I shall never forget it. I almost think I see my master.'

"We began to ascend the stairs. They terminated in an extensive gallery, with numerous apartments on both sides. Having almost reached the end, Ernulph entered one. I was

following him, when the rays of his lamp shining on an opposite door partly open; I fancied I beheld a human countenance, which was immediately withdrawn. This passed so instantaneously, that I could not be certain it was real.

“ Finding that I had stopped, Ernulph called to me, and inquired the reason. On my informing him, he laughed, and assured me there was nothing to be feared. ‘ Do you think,’ said he, ‘ that I would venture here, if I did not know they were all gone?’ Not willing that he should think me alarmed, I assumed a calmness which I was far from feeling.

“ ‘ I have brought a light which will last long enough for you,’ said he, placing a small lamp on the table; and asking whether I wanted any thing

more, he continued, ‘ I do not care how soon I leave this room, for it brings strong to my mind the recollection of that horrid scene.’

“ ‘ Was it in this apartment the murder was committed?’ said I.

“ ‘ Yes,’ replied Ernulph ; ‘ on that sofa my lady sat, and where you stand lay the unfortunate Arthur: I believe you may still see traces of blood on the floor. At that door,’ pointing to one I had not before observed ‘ my master entered. Poor guilty wretch! I pray the saints to keep me from ever witnessing such another sight.’ With these words he quitted the room.

“ I would gladly have detained him, for his discourse had raised my terror to a most painful height; and as I heard his steps gradually become fainter, I

was almost tempted to follow him : but a childish vanity restrained me, and while I hesitated he had got beyond my hearing. Perfect stillness succeeded. My own breath, drawn quick and short, alone disturbed it. My eyes remained fixed on the side door ; and so far had imagination triumphed over reason, that I every moment expected to see it open and admit the figure which Ernulph had described. I recollected my distance from the inhabited part of the building, and, with a motion almost involuntary, I sprung to the outer door and locked it. I would have secured the other, but it was without any fastening. Seising a chair, I placed that against it, as some security to my imagination.

“ These motions, relieving the excess of terror, restored the use of my faculties. I was able to survey the

spacious apartment, and to admire it's elegant decorations.

“ While thus engaged, my lamp began to glimmer in the socket, and threatened me with darkness. This was an event for which I was utterly unprepared, and I sought, but in vain, something to replenish it. It only gleamed at intervals, and in a few moments became extinct. Oppressed with indescribable terror, I sunk on the bed near which I had been standing.

“ A train of waking dreams rapidly succeeded each other. Often I started from short slumbers, and vainly strove to discern the objects around me. Fatigue and silence had at length nearly sunk me in more settled repose, when I was recalled by a slight noise; and opening my eyes, I found my room no longer dark. The side door was

ajar, and the fall of the chair which I had placed against it had roused me. Sufficient light was admitted from the next apartment, for me to discern what passed on that side of the room. I heard steps approach, the head of some person appeared in the aperture, and after remaining in a listening attitude for some minutes, was withdrawn.

“Rising from the bed, I remained standing on the side farthest from the door, which was sufficiently open to permit my seeing all that passed in the next room, while the darkness secured me from observation. On a table in the centre of the apartment a lamp was burning, and by it's side lay a dagger. A man, muffled in a cloak, and his face concealed by a large hat, was walking to and fro in a musing attitude. At length he approached the table, and seising the lamp and dagger,

advanced towards the door. Suddenly he stopped. 'No, let me not behold those hated features,' he exclaimed, as he turned to replace the lamp, 'image of him my soul abhors.'

"While uttering these words, his violent gestures deranged the folds of his cloak, and a miniature, suspended by a ribbon, slipped from his bosom. He started. 'What!' said he, wildly, 'you plead for him?' And in a softer tone he continued, 'Dear, injured excellence! had he resembled thee, he had been safe.' After gazing on the painting, 'Fix not on me those melting eyes. They never beamed with love on *me*; never did that bosom heave with tenderness for *me*. On him were lavished all the soft affections of thy heart; on him, whose love was not more ardent, more sincere, than mine. Detested rival! He rioted in wealth and titles,

while I, at humble distance — I was the useful friend to smooth the way, and lead him to the heaven of thy arms. Accursed be that hour !

“ As he pronounced these words, he struck his hand on his forehead. His hat dropped; and the light shining strongly on his face, I beheld the countenance of the cavalier who had so much regarded me in the church, and from whom I was now fleeing. On this discovery I knew not how to act. I recollected the friar’s repeated injunctions to avoid him; and before I could come to any determination, I observed him thrust the picture into his bosom, grasp the dagger, and advance with hasty steps. ‘ I will have revenge !’ he cried, as he approached the bed. Twice I beheld his dagger pierce the place from which I had so lately

risen; while he exclaimed, 'Perish, fruit of detested nuptials!'

"This base atrocity raised my indignation. I was tempted to spring on him, and wrest the weapon from his hand. I even made a motion for this purpose, which Anselm's advice alone withheld me from pursuing. As he entered the next room, he threw the dagger from him, saying, 'He sleeps, and vengeance is accomplished. Yet I feel not peace. No matter: it was revenge *I* sought. The son has paid the forfeit of his mother's pride. His mother! Was it *her* blood I shed?'

"He walked rapidly about in a disordered manner; then stopping near the table, he exclaimed, while his countenance assumed a livid hue, and his features seemed convulsed by the power

of his emotions, 'How lost am I! how fallen! From the dignity of virtue, degraded to a midnight assassin! Well, revenge is mine; and for it I have sacrificed.... Come, let me enjoy it, let me feast my eyes, and view his image wrapped in death.' Raising the lamp, he now advanced towards my room.

"At this movement my agitation was great. If I remained in my present station, he would probably observe me; at least he would discover that he had failed in his attempt. To reach the outer door before he entered, seemed the only mode of escape. I had but a moment to decide and act. As I quitted the apartment, I beheld him standing at the other door with his eyes directed towards me, as if he had heard my steps.

“ I proceeded along the gallery as swiftly as the darkness would permit, and, descending the spiral stairs, gained the hall. I here stopped to discover the avenue through which I had passed with Ernulph. Before I was able to ascertain, I heard steps above, and, looking up, discerned a light; and the next moment the unknown appeared on the staircase.

“ Not doubting that he had discovered my flight, and was pursuing me, I no longer hesitated; but crossing the hall, entered the first passage which presented itself. I advanced a considerable distance in total darkness, guiding myself by my hand against the wall; when hearing no sounds, nor perceiving any light, I concluded that I had escaped his pursuit, and only felt anxiety whether the path led to the

part of the building inhabited by Ernulph.

“ I still continued moving forwards slowly, and after some time perceived a faint glimmer before me. As I drew nearer, it became stronger; and I now found it to be the first faint dawn of a winter morning. Overjoyed at this discovery, I quickened my pace. On gaining the end of the passage, I entered a small square court, surrounded by high walls, in which four avenues terminated. Quite at a loss which to enter, for they were all equally dark, and uncertain whether they led to or from the place I sought, I remained in doubt for some minutes.

“ While thus engaged I heard steps in the passage on my left, and recollecting that the light exposed me where I stood to observation long before I

could perceive who approached, I entered the turning to the right. The steps became louder, and presently I perceived my unknown foe issue from the opening.

“ He advanced to the entrance of the avenue in which I was; and, raising the lamp which he still carried, looked eagerly before him. Supposing that he had seen me enter, I was going to quit the small recess in which I had concealed myself, (for being quite unarmed, I was unwilling to encounter one who was avowedly seeking my life) when he spoke; but the distance prevented by hearing his words, and immediately moving, he turned into the avenue which I had just passed through.

“ Alarmed by this circumstance, which showed that he was still in search of me, I knew not what course to pur-

sue. Wandering in the labyrinth of this numerous pile, at every turn I was liable to meet him; yet to remain where I was did not seem less dangerous. Influenced by this consideration, I resolved to explore with caution the passage in which I stood.

“Having proceeded a little way, guided by the wall, I found my hand rest on the lock of a door. I endeavoured, but in vain, to open it. Renewing my attempts, the lock slipped. At the noise, a scream from within, and the voices of men, among which I thought I distinguished Hubert's, encouraged me to knock. On this the screams were renewed, and the next moment Ernulph demanded who was there.

“Rejoiced to find my hopes realized, I instantly answered; but it was long before I could make him believe that

it was I who waited, or prevail on him to open the door.

“ The astonishment of him and his associates were extreme when I related the strange adventure I had encountered; and they concurred in imagining that the danger with which I had been threatened arose from the resentment of the ghosts, whose haunts I had dared to enter, and who were able to assume any appearance. All my endeavours to alter this opinion were useless, their superstitious fears being raised to an extraordinary height by the tales they had been relating to each other: for Ernulph and his wife had passed the night with Hubert, at his request.”

Here Sir Almeric, turning to the baroness, apologized for having occupied so much of her time with his trifling adventures; and proposed, if

she were not already weary of the subject, to defer the conclusion till the following day. The weakness of the baroness obliged her, though with reluctance, to consent to this proposal; and, thanking Sir Almeric for the entertainment his recital had afforded her, she expressed herself highly interested.

CHAPTER VI.

Thrice happy thou, dear partner of my bed,
 Whose holy soul the stroke of fortune fled :
 Prescious of ills, and leaving me behind,
 To drink the dregs of life by fate assigned.

DRYDEN.

THE next morning Sir Almeric, at the request of the baroness, resumed his recital.

“ It was not till after the sun had been risen some time, that I could prevail on Ernulph to conduct me through the castle. Taking my sword, we surveyed the lower apartments ; but when I advanced towards the south tower, he positively refused to accompany me.

Ascending, therefore, alone, I searched all the rooms. No one was concealed in them; and much disappointed, I returned to Ernulph, who remained in no small agitation at the foot of the spiral stairs.

“ During this time Hubert had prepared our horses, and we now recommenced our journey. On quitting the castle, we observed the traces of a horse's feet in the snow for a considerable distance in the forest. At length they turned off in a bye path.

“ Before evening we arrived at the port to which Hubert had been engaged to conduct me. Without difficulty I obtained a passage, and the following day arrived at the English camp. Anselm's letter insured me a favorable reception, and my services readily accepted.

“ Four years I continued in the field. It was during this period that I became acquainted with Sir Edmund; and a slight service which the chance of war enabled me to render him procured me the happiness of his friendship.

“ On my first introduction to the army, I had anxiously sought my unknown foe among the chiefs; but he did not appear: and having neither seen or heard of him for so long a time, the curiosity which I formerly experienced had considerably abated.

“ From Ansel I frequently received complaints of the increasing infirmities of age, and expressions of regret for my absence.

“ After an unusually long interval, a letter arrived from him. He had been

attacked by a disorder which he apprehended would be fatal, and was now desirous of explaining the mystery in which I had been educated. He added that the weakness which he felt daily advancing would shortly incapacitate him, and earnestly pressed my immediate return.

“ At the time this letter reached me, I was confined to my tent by the wounds I had received in a severe engagement which had procured me the honor of knighthood. More than a week elapsed after I received this information before I was able to travel, and my impatience prompted me to proceed with all the expedition my enfeebled state would permit.

“ The venerable friar was still living, and he received me with an eagerness of joy which had nearly extinguished

the faint embers of his existence. 'Welcome, my son,' he exclaimed; 'child of my adoption, welcome! Once more I behold you. The moments of my life are few: the hour is come when I am absolved from my oath. Listen while I have strength and recollection.

“ ‘ It is now one and twenty years since I received you to my care, bequeathed by your dying mother amid grief so touching, and circumstances so extraordinary, as to be almost without parallel. I was returning from the south of France, whither I had repaired for the purpose of conducting my sister to England. Lately become a widow, she wished to spend the remainder of her days in her native country.

“ ‘ One fine evening we stopped at

a small village, where we designed to pass the night. The weather was warm, and the neighbouring scenes, faintly touched by the setting sun, presented so inviting a prospect, that I was tempted to visit the environs. Quitting the hamlet, I followed a path, which soon brought me to the borders of an extensive wood. Here through a prolonged vista I beheld the sun sink behind a distant mountain.

“ ‘ While engaged by the emotions which this sublime spectacle inspired, I had not perceived the approach of four men, till surrounded by them. Instantly seised, I had only time to observe that they were marked, before I was blindfolded. At the same time they assured me that I needed not be under any apprehension, and that no violence was intended. Then leading

me a short distance, I was placed in a carriage, which proceeded immediately with great rapidity.

“ ‘ To my repeated questions respecting the occasion of this outrage I received no other answer but that they only obeyed the orders they had received. In about an hour, as well as I could conjecture, we stopped, and quitting the vehicle, entered some place strongly fortified; such the noise of many fastenings, redrawn after our admission, led me to believe it, for my eyes were still covered.

“ ‘ Having passed through a winding passage, and ascended some stairs, one of my conductors knocked at a door. A voice from within demanded who was there. ‘ The friar,’ was answered. ‘ Let him enter,’ said the same voice.

“ ‘ The door was opened ; and the bandage being removed from my eyes, I found myself in a handsome apartment ; and at a table on which several papers were spread, sat acavalier ; the same, my son, whom doubtless you remember to have seen in the church. He arose, and apologizing for the manner in which I had been treated, declared that the peculiar circumstances of his situation had compelled him reluctantly to resort to these measures.

“ Here he stopped, apparently in some embarrassment ; but before I could speak, he continued, in an insinuating tone, ‘ Father Anselm, I am well convinced, from his humanity, and the benevolence of his character, with which I am not unacquainted, will readily forgive the disrespect which the adventure of this evening has apparently implied. To rescue from the

tyranny of relatives an oppressed and helpless woman has obliged me to resort to this unpleasant method of procuring his assistance.'

“ ‘I listened with astonishment to this extraordinary speech, my answer to which he appeared anxiously to await. I replied that the means he had employed to procure my services were indeed so strange and unnecessary, that he must forgive me if they excited some suspicions.’

“ Here the friar's weakness compelled him to pause. After a short interval he said, ‘ I find my strength unequal to the relation of all that passed. Excuse me, my son, if I mention the most important facts. The cavalier at length required me immediately to perform the marriage ceremony between a young lady and himself. This

proposition I peremptorily refused, till I had seen the lady, and learned from herself that these clandestine proceedings had her consent.

“ ‘Exasperated by this declaration, he forgot the mildness which he had before assumed, and even scrupled not to employ menaces. Finding these utterly disregarded, though he at one time proceeded so far as to remind me that I was entirely in his power, he sought to engage my ambition by the prodigality of his promises; but finding both equally ineffectual, and that my determination was not to be altered, he quitted the apartment. In a few minutes he returned, his countenance inflamed with anger and disappointment.’ ”

As Sir Almeric pronounced these words, the baroness, uttering a faint

cry, fell back in her chair insensible. Unwilling to interrupt the knight, she had for some time supported with difficulty her increasing illness. She was conveyed to her apartment, and medical assistance immediately procured. As soon as her senses were restored, she particularly directed that the baron should not be informed of her indisposition.

For a week Jacqueline watched beside her bed with the most unremitting attention, in a conflict of hope and fear; a state perhaps the most distressing that can be imagined. At the end of that period, the looks and silence of the medical attendants confirmed her worst apprehensions. A thrill of anguish shot like lightning through her frame; but suppressing her emotions, she returned to the

apartment of her mother, and with assumed composure continued her soothing attentions.

In the course of the day the baroness desired that a messenger might be dispatched to the baron, to request his immediate return. Though convinced from the beginning that her disorder was fatal, she had not intimated this conviction till the increase of bad symptoms rendered longer reserve unnecessary. On this trying occasion, the baroness alone appeared unmoved. The following evening she received with firmness and dignity, from the hands of Father Osborne, in the presence of her afflicted family and household, the last religious rites administered to the dying.

At the conclusion of the awful ceremony, she thus addressed her daughter:

“ I feel,” said she, “ from my increasing weakness, that it is vain to indulge a hope of seeing the baron. Heaven knows it was my last earthly wish, but my confidence in you renders me more tranquil under this disappointment, assured that you will scrupulously perform my dying injunctions.”

The baroness then delivered to Jacqueline a small key, informing her at the same time, that it opened a secret drawer in her cabinet. After explaining it's situation, she continued: “ You will there find a parcel bound with a crimson velvet ribbon, sealed with our arms, and over them the impression used by the inquisition. This I solemnly charge you to deliver to the baron shortly after his arrival.”

As soon as grief permitted her to speak, Jacqueline promised to observe

her mother's directions; and raising the golden cross, suspended from her necklace, she kissed it in confirmation of her words.

Exhausted by these exertions, the baroness sunk into a stupor, while Jacqueline remained beside her in an agony of silent woe. The apartment was dimly lighted, but the curtains being partly undrawn, a faint glimmer shone on the countenance of the baroness, from which neither sickness nor the near approach of death had stolen the sweet expression that characterised it.

Lord Richard approached, and stood for some moments gazing on her. His heart, though habitually unfeeling, was softened by this spectacle. He recollected her maternal tenderness. How often had she kindly interposed in his

behalf, to mitigate the resentment of his father! With what solicitude had she studied his happiness! Deeply did he now regret his ungrateful neglect; and he hastily quitted the apartment to conceal the sorrow which he was unable to subdue.

Slow and silent passed the hours, while Jacqueline, kneeling beside her couch, listened to the faint breathings of the baroness, under the dreadful expectation that each would be the last. Father Osborne frequently entreated her to leave a scene which only served to augment her grief; but Jacqueline was incapable of yielding to that selfish sensibility which would have urged her to spare her own feelings by forsaking the pillow of her dying mother. A desire to perform what she considered a sacred duty, and the strong affection which she had ever felt towards the

baroness, supported her on this trying occasion. So near a final separation, how precious did each moment appear; how eagerly did she view those beloved features which she should shortly behold no more!

Towards midnight the baroness opened her eyes. Her strength was too much wasted to admit of words, but when she perceived her daughter, a smile of grateful affection showed the pleasure her presence afforded, and rewarded Jacqueline for all her sufferings. The fatal moment rapidly approached, and while the features of the baroness displayed meek resignation, her spirit winged its way to happier worlds. The livid hue of death alone announced to her attendants the awful change, accomplished without a struggle, unmarked even by a sigh. With placid

composure she seemed to sink into a profound slumber.

All the faculties of Jacqueline were absorbed. Her bosom felt as if it would burst. The excess of grief deprived her of the means of relief: she was unable to shed tears, while every nerve trembled with horror. She now endured the severest trial imposed on mortals: the dearest connexion that nature forms was for ever dissolved. She had seen snatched from her the protectress of her infancy, the guide of her youth, the beloved friend of her riper years. For a short space hope still lingered in her breast, and, rising, she continued with her eyes fixed in anxious impatience on the lifeless form of the late baroness. Father Osborne at length approached her, and in unresisting silence she suffer-

ed him to conduct her from the apartment.

Deep was the grief of all the inhabitants of Fitzbaynham castle at this melancholy event. On Sir Almeric it fell with peculiar severity. Brief as had been his acquaintance with the baroness, her virtues had excited in his bosom an affection almost filial. He had long suffered from the want of parents; he now seemed to have lost them once more.

Father Osborne remained with Jacqueline, administering the best consolations which piety and friendship could offer. Sometimes in silence he permitted her to indulge her excessive sorrow, at others presented to her imagination the prospect of a reunion with her departed parent in regions of unfading bliss.

Thus he continued till a deputation of monks from the neighbouring monastery arrived to celebrate the first requiem for the late baroness. Floating on the silence of the night, these solemn strains, remotely heard, reached Jacqueline. They expressed a holy fervor, a pious resignation, which soothed her grief, and lulled the tumult of her soul.

It was not till the close of the following day that the baron arrived. He had employed the utmost expedition, but his great distance, and the difficulty attending traveling in that age, had unavoidably detained him. On his entrance he was met by Father Osborne, who was considered the most proper person to communicate the afflicting intelligence.

The baron received the news of his

irreparable loss with manly composure. Attended by the friar, he visited the remains of his beloved wife. His tears fell on her cold cheek, as he bent over her. Mournful as was this spectacle, it imparted comfort to him; for an expression of calm happiness still remained on her features: it appeared as if her last moments had been gilded by a foretaste of immortal bliss.

On returning to his own room, the baron desired to be left alone; and the friar immediately hastened to Jacqueline, eager to relieve her anxiety respecting the baron. Impatient to fulfil her promise, Jacqueline, accompanied by Osborne, proceeded to the oratory of the baroness. Here her grief was renewed. This was the place in which some of her happiest hours had passed in sweet intercourse with her departed parent. Every object renewed the me-

mory of pleasures never to return. She beheld the seat from which she had received instruction and delight, pronounced by that voice which was now hushed in death. Beside the table stood her mother's harp. How often had she listened to it's melting tones, modulated with exquisite taste by the hand of her who would never more awake it's melody. The present and the past rushed on her view at once; and leaning on one of the windows for support, she indulged the sorrow these sad recollections had excited.

Father Osborne considered her grief too sacred for intrusion, and waited in respectful silence till her first emotions had subsided.

In a short time, raising her head, she was struck with the venerable figure of the friar. The lamp which he carried

shone on his aged countenance shaded by a few white locks. She accused herself of selfishness in yielding to her own sensations, while she detained Osborne, whose declining years required consideration ; and eager to repair this involuntary error, she advanced hastily to the cabinet.

The directions which the baroness had given were so clear that Jacqueline experienced no difficulty in finding the secret drawer. The key readily unlocked it ; but how great was her surprise to find it empty. No marks of violence were visible on either lock, and both keys had remained in her possession ever since she received them from the baroness.

Father Osborne expressed the utmost astonishment. He remarked that no one, beside the family, was present

when the late baroness delivered this injunction, except Sir Almeric and her immediate attendants. These their long service and zealous attachment placed above suspicion.

Jacqueline searched the cabinet with the minutest care. All remained in its usual order; for she was well acquainted with every part except this drawer. The more she reflected, the greater her uneasiness became. The baroness appeared to have considered this packet of the last importance. Ought she not immediately to acquaint the baron? But from this the friar dissuaded her, and recommended a perfect silence on the subject; for as she was ignorant of the contents, the communication could serve only to excite uneasiness.

“Time,” said he, “will explain this mysterious circumstance. In the inte-

terim, let it remain known only to us." To this advice Jacqueline reluctantly consented.

For two days preceding the funeral, the body of the baroness lay in state in the hall. It was hung with black: on many places were emblazoned the arms of her own family, of which she was the last representative, intermixed with the Fitzbaynham. Between these a few tapers burned, diffusing a dusky light. On the coffin, placed in the centre of this vast apartment, was laid her coronet, and around stood several mutes.

The scene was solemnly impressive, and the grief of all who approached, too real to be suppressed. Beloved by the vassals, they united in unaffected lamentations at her loss.

On the second evening the obsequies were celebrated by torch-light in the chapel of the castle, with the utmost magnificence of funeral pomp.

During the awful ceremony, Jacqueline remained in the retirement of her chamber. Between each stroke of the bell, which reverberated in hollow echoes through the spacious apartments, she could distinguish numerous steps. The glare of torches, as they passed and repassed in the distant courts, flashed at intervals on the arras, and imperfectly revealed the figures which, in gloomy colors and menacing attitudes, appeared as the phantoms of dismal futurity. The ensuing silence informed her that the awful rites were concluded.

Absorbed in melancholy, the hours

slowly moved through this tedious night. Sleep did not one moment steal her from her sorrows. She anticipated with distress the first interview with her father; for since his return, he had hitherto declined seeing his children. She longed by her attentions to mitigate his grief, yet dreaded lest her emotions should increase it.

After many ineffectual struggles for composure, at the hour of breakfast she attempted to descend. Her motions were rapid. An instant brought her to the hall, which it was necessary to cross in her way to the parlour. Here her eyes encountered the mournful hangings. A sudden faintness arrested her steps, and she clung to the balustrade for support. In a few minutes she was able to proceed.

The baron was alone when she en-

tered. At sight of him, her assumed composure failed. The paleness of his countenance, rendered more striking by his sable dress, shocked her; and she burst into tears. Tenderly embracing her, the baron remained silent, and his tears mingled with hers.

The entrance of Sir Almeric relieved them. Without appearing to notice their agitation, he contrived to lessen it by drawing their attention to other subjects. From mutual regard they labored to maintain an appearance of fortitude; and the presence of Sir Almeric, by imposing a restraint on their feelings, and obliging them to attend to the duties of hospitality, assisted in restoring tranquillity.

In less than a month after the death of the baroness, Lord Richard expressed himself wearied by the dull-

ness of the castle, and declared his intention of spending some time on the continent. For her father's sake, who seemed to feel deeply this unkind desertion of his son, Jacqueline regretted her brother's determination. She even ventured to remonstrate with him; but finding that he answered her most serious arguments with raillery, and knowing his untractable disposition, she desisted, convinced that opposition would only more strongly fix him in his purpose.

Many reasons had incited him to adopt this plan, but his most powerful motive was, to escape, if possible, from himself: for the melancholy scene which he had witnessed in his mother's apartment, had waked him from the dream of pleasure in which his days had hitherto passed. His conduct, no longer veiled by enjoyment, ap-

peared to him in it's real deformity. Disgusted and humiliated, he sought not to reform himself, but by change of place hoped to banish these painful impressions.

To his father's question, 'What country he designed to visit?' 'Not Spain,' he replied; at the same time regarding him with a strange expression. Surprised and confused, the baron soon quitted the apartment, without any farther inquiries.

After Lord Richard's departure three months passed in gloomy seclusion. The melancholy of the baron increased, notwithstanding the constant endeavours of Jacqueline to dissipate it. The only circumstance which enlivened this heavy period, was the account they received of Sir Edmund's safe arrival in Asia. How often did Jacque-

He regret his absence, how often look with wishful eyes on the world of waters that separated them !

It was now, when the baron, frequently shunning all society, would remain for hours in his study, that Jacqueline experienced the value of numerous accomplishments. In her retired situation, they were almost her only resource against that aching void, those longing regrets, to which the loss of beloved relatives long leaves the mind a prey.

Sir Almeric still remained at the castle, in compliance with the pressing entreaty of the baron ; who, deprived of the society of both his sons, felt his regard for the knight daily increase. The serenity which his friendly attentions diffused over the baron's mind, inspired Jacqueline with the most lively

gratitude. She esteemed his amiable character; and the resemblance which she traced in his conduct to that of her beloved brother, increased the sentiments she already entertained in his favor. Endowed with great sensibility, and softened by her recent loss, she was disposed more easily to receive a tender impression. Unconscious to herself, this new passion, wrapped in the disguise of friendship, had acquired too powerful an ascendancy to be expelled, before an accident revealed to her the true state of her heart. Left in painful uncertainty respecting the knight's history, at the very moment which promised to elucidate the mystery that enveloped him, her curiosity was strongly excited; but the melancholy circumstances which had interrupted the recital forbade any allusion to this interesting subject.

CHAPTER VII.

Revenge and jealous rage, and secret spite,
Roll'd in his bosom.

DRYDEN.

THE baron's attention was now diverted to another, though scarcely more pleasing, subject, by the arrival of a letter from Lord Richard. It stated that he was on the eve of marriage with the only child of the Marquis Omfredo, the heiress of his title and immense possessions. The marquis, Lord Richard continued, was one of the most distinguished nobles of Italy, and this alliance might be considered as even conferring honor on the antient

family of Fitzbaynham. The celebration of the nuptials waited only for the signature of the baron to the enclosed writings; which he desired might be returned without delay.

A cold unfeeling tone characterised this epistle. It even bore the appearance of command rather than request, and deeply wounded the paternal feelings of the baron. But, on looking over the papers, these sensations were supplanted by astonishment and resentment; for in this rude uncereemonious manner he was expected to assign to his son nearly half of his property.

The baron's first emotions urged him to reject so unexpected a proposal; but reflection abated his anger, and revived the affection which all the vices and follies of Lord Richard had not been able to extinguish. Ever kindly

indulgent to his children, and superior to sordid consideration, the baron, anxious to complete his son's happiness, executed these deeds.

The marriage immediately took place; and the information of this event was transmitted by Lord Richard in a short note to his sister. Silence was the only gratitude which the baron received for his generosity to this ungracious son; who, thus placed at the summit of his wishes, was revelling in all the pleasures of a luxurious country, regardless of the distress which his unfeeling conduct inflicted on his father.

About this period the domains of the baron were much infested by the depredations of banditti, sheltered in the neighbouring forests. The melancholy which oppressed the baron, and the absence of his sons, released them

from the terror with which the known valor of this family had impressed them. The success attendant on their first exertions provoked their temerity, and rendered ineffectual the feeble resistance of the vassals, unprovided with an experienced leader to direct them. Many families were compelled to quit their insecure dwellings, and seek safety within the walls of the castle.

The arm of public justice had not yet acquired sufficient strength to repress these lawless spoilers; especially as they were usually protected in private by the nobles, many of whom were not ashamed to share the spoils with these depredators.

With indignation the baron received the intelligence of these ravages; but grief had subdued his heroic spirit. He shunned the prospect of active exer-

tions, and personally to oppose these outlaws required a most painful effort.

Sir Almeric quickly perceived the distress of the baron, and guessing it's cause, eagerly requested the command of the troops. This offer was too agreeable to be rejected. The baron accepted it with alacrity, and invested the knight with unlimited authority over the force dispatched on this service; who, headed by so renowned a warrior, thought themselves assured of victory.

After an absence of ten days Sir Almeric returned. The banditti were completely dispersed, and security fully restored to the baron's territories.

The courage which the knight displayed on this occasion, was the theme of admiration among those who had

accompanied him, and quickly communicated throughout the castle. In the numerous goblets quaffed in commemoration of the restoration of tranquillity, his fame received due honor.

How agreeable were the sensations of Jacqueline on this occasion! she listened with delight to the thanks with which the baron received his gallant guest; whose short absence, and the dangers which he had encountered for him, endeared him still more.

Animated by his presence and conversation, the evening of his arrival passed rapidly away. For months the sun of cheerfulness had not beamed on their minds. Sir Almeric's return had dispersed the cloud of grief, and novelty rendered this first approach to mirth more pleasing.

Never had Jacqueline appeared to more advantage. Her features and gestures, still softened by the delicate hand of sorrow, were irresistibly attractive. The lustre of her eyes was sometimes obscured by tears of joy and gratitude, when she beheld the address with which Sir Almeric engaged the baron's attention, and inspired him with interest on lively topics.

Mutually delighted, mid-night had long been past before they separated.

On retiring to her apartment Jacqueline dismissed her attendants. She longed to enjoy alone the sentiments which filled her bosom. This was the first moment, since the death of the baroness, that she had tasted happiness. Nature seemed in unison with her feelings, as, leaning on one of the

windows, she contemplated the calm scene. The moon beams gently reclined on the surrounding landscape. Their mellow light displaying with minute exactness the walls and turrets of the castle, more faintly revealed the adjoining forest, slowly waving in the gale of early morning. No sound disturbed the profound repose, except at intervals the steps of the centinels on the distant battlements.

The horison was richly spangled with stars, and Jacqueline reviewed these wonders of the heavens with a religious awe. “In which of those glorious orbs dwells the spirit of my mother?” she exclaimed. “In those blissful mansions still do her thoughts linger on her daughter?”

Absorbed in these reflections she continued gazing, till a slight noise in

the court beneath attracted her attention. Immediately before the windows of Jacqueline's chamber, at the opposite side of a court of considerable dimensions, a high wall rose, on the very edge of a tremendous precipice. So formidable were the natural obstacles to any hostile attempt on this part, that the fortifications were never manned, except on occasions of particular danger.

In this wall was a door, so neatly fitted that it might have escaped observation in a minute scrutiny. This opening was known only to the baron's family and a few of the principal officers in the castle. It's chief use, and the reason of this secrecy, was the opportunity it afforded of conveying intelligence during a siege, and of removing, in cases of great danger, the defenceless part of the inhabitants.

The door opened on a prodigious abyss. One of the former barons had with much difficulty succeeded in forming on the edge a few resting places for the feet. To those unacquainted with the secret, this precipice appeared inaccessible: and indeed the ascent, but more particularly the descent, was never accomplished without great peril.

The noise which Jacqueline heard, proceeded from this entrance. The gate slowly opened, and a figure entered. Advancing a short distance under the shade of the wall, it remained stationary for a few minutes: then returning to the door, a second person appeared.

Greatly surprised, Jacqueline continued watching them. The shadow of one of the towers fell on the spot

where they stood, and prevented her observing them distinctly. They were tall, and wrapped in dark garments: even their faces seemed concealed. Closing the door, they proceeded, still keeping under the shade of the wall, towards one of the turrets which formed the east angle of the castle.

The distance and obscurity had rendered it difficult to trace them so far. On their reaching this building, she suddenly lost them. They had not turned the corner, she was convinced, for the moon shone brightly on the place they must have passed to gain the other side of the turret. On this side, she recollected, there was no entrance, only the loop-holes in the staircase looking towards this court.

Who these persons could be, greatly perplexed her. Either they were ex-

pected, or the centinels had not observed them. This last conjecture appeared most probable ; as they seemed anxious to avoid observation, by keeping in the shade, and frequently pausing as if to listen.

She had sat for some time with her eyes fixed on the place where she had last seen the figures, in expectation that they would either proceed or return, when she heard the watch-word given from the battlements ; and in the succeeding moment, the alarm drum was beaten, and the troops hastily assembled at their posts.

While this hurry and confusion prevailed in the castle, the two figures reappeared, bearing between them something which seemed to be of considerable weight. They succeeded in gaining the concealed door, which they

instantly closed behind them, before the arrival of their pursuers.

The astonishment of the soldiers was extreme, when they found no one in the court; and not being able to discover any rational means of escape, they had recourse to the marvellous, and concluded that two spirits had assumed the human form for some unknown purposes.

In the alarm, some of the most timid had fled to the apartment of Sir Almeric, hoping in his valor to find protection. The knight was not there; and they now returned to seek the baron, who in the hall was collecting the particulars of this disturbance, and issuing the necessary orders.

When he was joined by Jacqueline, the first words she heard were, that Sir

Almeric was not to be found. During the tumult he had not appeared; and one who had just returned from the knight's room, delivered to the baron a paper he had found lying on the table there. It was blank, and seemed to have been merely used as an envelop; and the baron was going to put it aside, when the seal attracted his attention.

It bore the impression of his own arms, and over these the stamp of the holy office. He turned towards Jacqueline, to express his surprise, when he beheld her, pale and trembling, faint in the arms of her attendants. She was conveyed to an adjoining apartment, followed by the baron; who attributed this accident to the recent alarm. The usual remedies soon restored her: when eagerly snatching the paper, which the baron still held

in his hand, she gazed at it in silence.

This was the cover of that packet which the baroness had committed to her care with such earnestness. By what means had it come into the possession of Sir Almeric? She recollected that he was present when the baroness had given her the instructions respecting it.

For a moment she thought that the knight had secreted it; but this idea was too painful to be endured, and she rejected it with indignation. Every action of Sir Almeric militated against the possibility of such baseness, and she regretted that even for an instant she had believed it. "O no," she exclaimed, "he is too noble: he would disdain such meanness."

Suddenly she stopped, recollecting

that she was thus inadvertently revealing what she had resolved to conceal from her father. Her words and agitation did not escape him. He easily perceived that they were excited by some circumstance connected with that paper, and questioned her respecting them.

Her first confusion and unconnected answers only increased the baron's curiosity. Unskilled in deception, she knew not how to elude his inquiries; till finding that she had betrayed sufficient to excite anxiety, she conceived a full disclosure would be less painful to him than concealment. Deeply did the baron regret the loss of the packet; and the more, as he declared himself unable to conjecture it's contents.

The persons who had been employed to search for Sir Almeric, now re-

turned unsuccessful. All the gates were secured, and had not been unfastened since the preceding evening. The knight's sword was found in his apartment, lying on a table, beside an open book, which he appeared to have been reading. This mysterious absence excited great astonishment; and among the inferior inhabitants of the castle was attributed to supernatural agency.

When they were again alone, Jacqueline informed her father of the strange intrusion she had witnessed from her window. She expressed her fears that this attempt was directed against Sir Almeric; and in this opinion, after she had briefly stated the knight's history, the baron concurred. How many strangers would become acquainted with the secret of the concealed door, or how they could gain admittance to

the knight's room, situated in the tower, close to which Jacqueline had lost sight of them, was wholly inexplicable.

That this occurrence was the machination of Sir Almeric's unknown enemy, the baron declared he had little doubt: but perceiving that this supposition increased the anxiety of Jacqueline, which she was unable to conceal, he expressed his hope that the parties of horsemen, whom he would immediately dispatch in all directions, would overtake the knight and his conductors before they had proceeded far; and promising to inform Jacqueline as soon as they returned, he prevailed on her to retire, and seek the repose which she much required.

Although the baron, to relieve the fears of his daughter, had spoken thus

confidently of Sir Almeric's return, he really regarded it as an event more to be wished than expected. The address with which the adventure had been conducted within the castle, left little room to hope that its future plans would be defeated. Indeed the baron apprehended that the vicinity of the sea might have already placed the knight completely in the power of his enemy, and prevented the possibility of a rescue; if indeed he lived: for after the former attempt on his life, it appeared very unlikely that it would be now spared.

This idea the baron confined to his own bosom; for the distress of Jacqueline on this occasion had revealed to him her sentiments respecting Sir Almeric. Notwithstanding his family pride, the baron could scarcely blame a partiality which the extraordinary

merit of it's object justified; and had the knight's descent been noble, he would gladly have received him for his son-in-law. Under the present circumstances, the baron judged silence and an apparent ignorance on this subject most prudent. Time and absence would, he trusted, restore Jacqueline's tranquillity.

The occurrence of this night had discovered to Jacqueline that her happiness was irretrievably connected with Sir Almeric. Her affections were no longer her own; a thousand tender recollections blended their destiny. The noble virtues and respectful assiduities of Sir Almeric had alone attracted her regard; for never had he transgressed the honorable silence which he had imposed on himself; never by indirect means had he sought to obtain her esteem. But notwithstanding his guard-

ed conduct, some trivial circumstances had betrayed to Jacqueline his feelings. The sympathy that existed between their minds rendered it impossible entirely to conceal those emotions which every interview increased.

The return of all the parties dispatched by the baron without having been able to procure any tidings of Sir Almeric, reduced Jacqueline to despair. Severely did she blame herself for not having given the alarm when she first perceived the strangers; not recollecting that the distance of the centinels would have prevented their hearing her voice.

A week passed, and, although the baron was unremitting in his endeavours to trace Sir Almeric, not the slightest information could be gained;

and the knight's fate remained wrapped in impenetrable mystery.

The sufferings of Jacqueline were great, but her filial piety led her as much as possible to conceal them from the baron. Before him, she sometimes tried, by an assumed cheerfulness, to suspend his habitual melancholy, which since the loss of Sir Almeric's society had deepened.

A little before this incident Earl Godemar had returned to his castle on the borders of the baron's domains. The recent death of the baroness had hitherto prevented the renewal of his addresses to Jacqueline; but six months having elapsed since that event, he now repaired to the baron's residence, fully persuaded that he should find Jacqueline weary of the dullness which sur-

rounded her, and eager to accept his offer.

The distressing and interesting scenes in which Jacqueline had during this period been engaged, left her little leisure to reflect on the earl. Indeed from his prolonged absence, she hoped that some new attraction had released her from farther persecution. Her aversion to the earl was increased by the sentiments which she felt towards Sir Almeric, and by the contrast which she almost involuntarily drew between their characters.

With a palpitating heart, and trembling steps, she descended to the apartment in which the earl, who had requested an audience, awaited her. Having in an ostentatious manner, which only served to display his want of feeling, condoled with her on her

loss, he concluded by requesting her answer to his former proposals, which had been so unexpectedly deferred. Here he paused for Jacqueline's reply: but his allusion to her mother, for which she was wholly unprepared, brought forcibly to her mind the distress which his offer had occasioned to that beloved parent; and this recollection, joined to the present agitation of her spirits, rendered her unable to refrain from tears.

Ignorant of the cause of her emotion, and totally without suspicion that his address had produced it, the earl, after gazing at her in silence for a few moments, proceeded to enumerate the multiplied advantages of his alliance: and having dwelt at great length on these to him important topics, which as he spoke of them increased his haughtiness, he in stately terms re-

peated his former request. This behaviour restored Jacqueline's fortitude, and in a mild but dignified manner, she declined his suit.

She now rose to retire. But the earl, seising her hand, exclaimed, "Beware, madam, how you provoke my resentment. Disdain not the offer with which I honor you. Yes," he continued, perceiving the surprise of Jacqueline; "it is indeed an honor, and proves the sincerity of my passion, when I seek a union with the daughter of Baron Fitzbaynham."

"My lord," said Jacqueline, attempting to withdraw her hand, "I shall not stay to be insulted. You are the first person who ever presumed to asperse my father's fame; and allow me to say, it had been better for you to have abstained. Had my resolution

not been already formed, after this speech I should have renounced all farther intercourse."

"Enjoy, madam, your triumph," said Godemar, while his countenance expressed a horrid malignity: "I would have spared you, would have shrouded both from you and the world the disgraceful tale; but you reject my protection. Tremble at the consequences. — If the honor of your house is dear to you, if you value your father's life, do not urge me to despair."

Jacqueline, astonished and appalled at these words, sunk into a chair; while Godemar, somewhat softened by her distress, continued, "Fear not what my conduct towards you would be influenced by my knowlege of those unhappy circumstances. Once my wife, your honor, the honor of your

family, it would become me to support with my utmost power. Believe me, the baseless fabric is shaken. Do you not behold the baron's melancholy? Does not that attest the truth of my words? It is the precursor of approaching ruin."

As the earl pronounced these words, the baron entered, a tenfold gloom impressed on his countenance. Perceiving the tears of Jacqueline, who, pale and motionless, appeared the image of despair, "Is this well, my lord?" he exclaimed: "Is it thus you perform your engagements?"

"Those words would have better become other lips. Before we question the conduct of others, our own should be free from censure," replied the earl.

"These walls are your protection, my lord," rejoined the baron.

"And the secret which I know," interrupted the earl with a sarcastic laugh.

Greatly discomposed, the baron said, "Jacqueline, you may retire."

The earl offered his hand to conduct her to the door, but she repulsed it with disdain. "Next time we meet, madam, I trust your conduct will be different. Let prudence regulate your actions. Even love will not make me long submit to indignity. You know the alternative: be mine or tremble," exclaimed the earl, in a tone of suppressed anger, while his eyes flashed with resentment.

This scene had shocked Jacqueline. The idea of her father's guilt, suggested by the earl, took full possession of her imagination. With the most restless impatience she watched for the departure of Godemar. Often she was on the point of descending, apprehending some fatal consequence from the warm temper of her father, irritated by the rude attacks of the earl.

In this state of agitation nearly an hour elapsed before Godemar quitted the castle; and the baron immediately retired to his apartment, where he remained during the rest of the day.

The spirits of Jacqueline, cruelly harassed by the late distressing events, affected her head. A violent fever ensued, and for many days her life was in great danger. In the paroxysms of her disorder, while laboring under a

delirium, she uttered the most affecting exclamations respecting her father : sometimes imploring the pity of the earl, whom she imagined present ; at others, with indignation rejecting his aspersions.

Often in her wanderings she appealed to her father, of whose presence she was unconscious, and conjured him to reveal the cause of his melancholy. These pathetic addresses, urged with all the energy of affectionate entreaty, overpowered the baron, who had watched beside her with the most tender solicitude, and compelled him to withdraw.

Youth and a good constitution, aided by the skill of Father Osborne, at length triumphed, and she slowly recovered ; but her mind still retained an impression of sorrow. Her happiness,

no longer depending on herself, exposed her bosom to the inroads of care. The silence of Earl Godemar, who since her interview with him had not approached the castle, alarmed her. She dreaded to see him ; but she still more dreaded, that, exasperated by her rejection, he would execute his threat.

How many sources of misery had a few months opened to her ! Often her thoughts dwelt with painful pleasure on the remembrance of Sir Almeric. The memory of those days his society had consecrated, seemed as the sweet recollection of a delightful dream, which we in vain seek to renew.

About this time a messenger arrived at the castle from Lord Richard, who since his marriage had maintained an almost total silence to his family. His

letters announced the death of the marquis, his father-in-law, and his accession, in right of his wife, to the title and estates. The marchioness, he said, having no longer any tie to Italy, had consented to accompany him to England, and he desired that the utmost magnificence might be displayed in her reception. He added, that for a short time they should reside at Fitzbaynham castle.

This intelligence was far from agreeable to either the baron or Jacqueline, and the terms in which it was conveyed were insolently affronting. The tone of command, in which the letter was dictated, never once softened into affection. The baron's pride and tenderness were deeply wounded, by the disregard of a son whom he still loved; but stifling his indignation, he sought

excuses for this misconduct, in the glowing passions of youth inflamed by new honors.

To the silence and slowness of grief, noise and hurry succeeded in the castle. The state apartments were opened ; the hall, stripped of it's sable hangings, appeared in it's former splendor. The antient domestics, as they assisted to remove this last memorial of their beloved mistress from the dwellings of the living, melted into tears. Habit had reconciled them to this gloomy ornament, which, while it commemorated the loss of their lady, impressed also the memory of her existence.

These preparations afforded no pleasure to Jacqueline, but rather augmented her digestion by reviving her recollection of the tournament. That fes-

tival she had anticipated, in the warm colors of youthful happiness: how different were her present sensations! Those beloved objects, whose presence had enlivened that splendid scene, whose gaiety had diffused an elegant vivacity, were either dead or absent. To the arrival of her brother she looked forward with dread, apprehensive of the persecutions which she should endure from him on Earl Godemar's account.

The only solace of her grief were her walks on the neighbouring cliffs. Lost in the sublimity of nature, she sometimes for a short interval forgot her sorrow. Seated on a small promontory almost surrounded by the sea, she passed whole hours accompanying with her voice the plaintive tones of her harp. Here would she brave the wild winds, when with impetuous fury they

urged the foaming billows almost to her feet.

To minds at ease, this conflict of the elements appears terrific ; but suffering, calling forth it's energies, fortifies the soul. There was a time when Jacqueline would have shrunk from these rude blasts, which now constituted her sole amusement ; but there is a charm in danger, and it is the privilege of misfortune to comprehend with more adequate delight the stupendous wonders of creation.

CHAPTER VIII:

Time hovers o'er, impatient to destroy,
And shuts up all the avenues of joy.

JOHNSON.

ON the arrival of the avant-couriers, who, preceding at a short distance the marquis, announced his approach, the baron and Jacqueline advanced to the door of the hall to receive their new relation. The baron welcomed the marchioness with affectionate politeness; but when he turned towards his son, to express his joy at again seeing him, the cold and haughty demeanour of the marquis, who feigned not to

perceive his father's offered hand, astonished the baron, and checked the warm impulse of parental kindness.

They were accompanied by the Count Cajetan, a Neapolitan nobleman, distantly related to the marchioness, and by a young lady whom the marchioness presented to Jacqueline by the name of Blanche. She did not appear more than eighteen, and her expressive countenance, rendered more interesting by a shade of melancholy, excited a mingled emotion of piety and admiration.

During the splendid repast which followed their reception, the marchioness displayed the most captivating graces. She was exquisitely beautiful: her features and motions bespoke the most refined delicacy; while her dark eyes sparkled with intelligence and fire, and

the gaiety in which she frequently indulged extorted a smile even from the baron.

The lively turn which she had given to the conversation was successfully supported by the count, who, with the vivacity peculiar to his country, possessed much observation and knowledge of the world. He was about thirty, tall and well proportioned: his face might have been considered handsome, but a smile of obsequiousness and a designing leer, impressed an appearance of cunning.

The evening passed lightly, and the pleasures of society greatly relieved the oppression of the baron and Jacqueline. The marquis alone seemed not to join cordially in the amusements, and preserved the most marked estrangement to the baron.

The following morning Earl Godemar, impatient to congratulate the marquis on his return, hastened to the castle; not doubting that he should find his friend as zealous in his favor as formerly, and equally ready to promote his suit. But the reception which the earl experienced did not realize his expectations. He no longer found in the marquis that cordiality which had subsisted during their intimacy, and the distant coldness with which his compliments were received both offended and surprised him. After a short visit, he withdrew without ever mentioning Jacqueline.

So much was his indignation roused, that, in the first heat, he resolved to renounce all intercourse with the Fitzbaynham family: but this sudden emotion soon yielded to his long cherished passion for Jacqueline, and he return-

ed to his castle, rejoicing that he had stifled his resentment, and determined to renew his application to the baron.

A week had nearly elapsed when the marquis took an opportunity, while alone with his sister, to turn the conversation on Godemar, and expressed satisfaction that his suit had been rejected. Jacqueline, astonished by this alteration in her brother's opinion, remained silent.

“Does not this change in my sentiments please you?” continued the marquis: “after the aversion you used to express towards the earl, why is it that you now manifest no symptom of joy? Perhaps you think me fickle by my conduct in this affair, or that it is a subject on which I have no occasion to interfere. Both conclusions would be

erroneous. I rejoice, for I shall not seek to disguise my motives, that you are still free to accept the more brilliant offer that awaits you."

The decided manner in which her brother spoke of the earl's rejection, while it relieved Jacqueline from the apprehension of his persecutions, excited her fears lest the earl should fulfil his threats against the baron. Though from a knowledge of her brother's character she was averse to make him her confidant, the importance of the affair, and her extreme uneasiness, led her to mention the insinuations of Godemar. With anxiety she watched the countenance of the marquis, to perceive the effect of this communication; but it appeared to excite no emotion.

"Justice," said he, "will overtake the guilty."

Greatly shocked, in a faint voice Jacqueline said, "And you, you believe my father guilty?"

"Who can resist truth? And to doubt after conviction were folly. On this subject your ignorance is happiness."

"Is torment," exclaimed Jacqueline: "Relieve me, I entreat you, by an explanation, from the horrid anticipations of fancy."

The entrance of the count stopped the marquis, who was about to reply, and left Jacqueline to all the misery of uncertainty on a circumstance which impressed her with greater terror, the more she reflected on it.

In the evening Count Cajetan speaking of his travels, the marquis in-

quired whether he had ever been in Spain.

“ I spent several months there,” replied the count: “ It is a country which impressed me with more romantic ideas than any other. One scene in particular strongly affected my imagination; not so much from it’s peculiar beauty, as the extraordinary incident with which it was connected.”

“ I am surprised,” said the marchioness, “ that I never heard you mention this circumstance before.”

“ It is seldom in my thoughts, and I should not now have recollected it, but for the marquis’s question.”

“ Since I have been the cause of exciting curiosity,” said the marquis, “ I hope my entreaties will be able to

prevail on you, my lord, to gratify it."

The count perceiving from the general silence that he was expected to begin, said, addressing the baron, "You, my lord, probably recollect, if you were not personally acquainted with him, that distinguished commander the Marquis Villena."

At this name the baron half rose from his chair. His countenance assumed a livid hue; but, struggling with his feelings, he resumed his seat, and partly concealing his face with his hand, on which his head reclined, he remained silent.

The count proceeded, "This young nobleman, the only child of his illustrious father, was considered the ornament of his country. At the age of

three and twenty, the eyes of the Spanish nation were fixed on him with admiration. From his excellent understanding they expected him to appear with no less glory in the cabinet than in the field. Their fond hopes were never realised: his career was brilliant, but short.

“Hunting was the favorite amusement of the young marquis, and the situation of his father’s castle on the borders of the Pyrenées, afforded frequent opportunity of indulging this propensity. On one of these excursions, he separated from his party, after ordering his attendants to wait his return in a village at the foot of the mountains, where he intended to join them in a few days.

“A week elapsed, and he did not appear. In the hourly expectation of

his arrival another passed. His attendants at length alarmed and apprehensive for his safety, dispersed themselves in various directions to seek him. His route was traced across the mountains to a town in Guienne, where he had left his horse. Beyond this no intelligence could be gained, and from that period, which, when these particulars were related to me, was thirteen years past, notwithstanding the Spanish government had immediately instituted a vigorous search, his fate remained wrapped in an impenetrable mystery.

“ His father did not survive this misfortune a twelvemonth; and the whole nation, considering the loss of the marquis a public calamity, sympathised in his grief. Of the cause of his disappearance not a conjecture could be formed. The mildness of his temper,

and his easy manners, conciliated the esteem of all. No one was his enemy ; and such was his noble and dignified conduct, that he was always ready to explain his actions."

As the count uttered these words, a half-stifled groan burst from the baron, and, rising, he hastily quitted the apartment. A silence ensued. Each looked towards the other, as if for an explanation of the baron's strange behaviour, when the marquis, approaching his sister, said in a whisper, "Is this the conduct of innocence?"

Ever since his return, the marquis had maintained towards the baron the cold haughtiness which had marked their first interview. Almost daily they had private conferences, which sometimes lasted for hours ; and after these an air of triumph frequently appeared

in the manners of the marquis; but Jacqueline beheld with deep concern the ravages which grief and concealed anguish made in her father, and which these interviews greatly increased.

The assiduities of the count, and some words which appeared unintentionally to escape the marchioness, soon disclosed to Jacqueline from whom she was to expect the offer to which her brother had alluded, and opened a fresh subject of uneasiness. The society of the marchioness afforded little pleasure to Jacqueline. Her mornings were spent chiefly at her toilet, where she was constantly attended by the count; and his presence was an additional reason for Jacqueline's being less frequently with her.

The gentle manners of the Lady

Blanche were highly attractive, and Jacqueline often sought for company as a relief from her own thoughts; but the reserve which she constantly maintained prevented intimacy. Indeed the presence of Jacqueline seemed to increase the dejection which from her first introduction had oppressed her. In their conversations she always confined herself to general topics, and Jacqueline was still as much a stranger to all that related to her as on the commencement of their acquaintance. In what manner she was connected with the marchioness remained unexplained. The imperious haughtiness with which she was sometimes treated, showed that she was certainly not considered as an equal: but the mild dignity which she supported on these occasions, while tears trembled in her eyes, indicated a superior mind, and interested Jacqueline in her favor.

About this period Jacqueline received one morning a summons from the baron to attend him in his apartment. The marquis had just quitted him, and on Jacqueline's entrance she perceived that he was more than usually agitated ; while she, expecting that the suit of Count Cajetan was to be the subject of their interview, was scarcely more tranquil.

The baron, motioning to her to take a seat, remained for a few minutes silent. At length sighing he said, " I am going to speak to you, Jacqueline, on a most unpleasant subject. I have deferred it as long as was possible. Prepare yourself to hear that which I think the whole tenor of my conduct can never have led you to expect from me."

This address was far from lessening

her emotions. It appeared to her that her father was about to reveal the secret which she wished, yet dreaded to hear. Struggling with her feelings, she endeavoured to appear calm, while the baron continued: "In me you behold the punishment of guilt. The hand of heaven presses hard on my declining years. A son, the object of long cherished affection, is made the instrument of vengeance."

The baron rose from his seat, and walked hastily about the room. "You are surprised, are shocked. It is what I expected, what I knew you must feel, but I cannot endure to see it. Do not hate me, Jacqueline. I implore your pity. That angel who gave you being, knew all, yet loved me. If in her celestial abode she beholds my sufferings, heaven is to her no longer heaven!"

Jacqueline would have spoken. She wished to soothe the baron, but her extreme distress rendered her words inarticulate ; she uttered only indistinct murmurs.

“ Unhappy, I occasion the misery of all connected with me ! ” exclaimed the baron. “ My wretched destiny denies me the sad comfort of concealment. Retribution long delayed, like a slow impending storm, waits but to collect more force, and make the devastation more complete. You weep : your heart is soft. Shall I plant a dagger in it, and stab your peace for ever, to purchase a few years ? Existence is to me a load which I would gladly resign ; but I must resign it, as I received it, with honor. Shall I transmit to my descendents a tarnished name, heap infamy on the glory of my renowned

progenitors? Illustrious dead! bend from your seats on high, and teach me how to act."

After a pause the baron proceeded: "What years of anguish have I passed, while I supported life only for my children! they suffer now; I will no longer shun my fate."

As the baron uttered this, he resumed his seat. A fixed despair marked his countenance, while he regarded Jacqueline; who, overpowered by affliction, neither moved nor spoke. Taking her hand, he said, "Dry those tears, if you would have me retain my senses. You weep now: What would you do, did you know all? You think your suffering great; but you are innocent: You bear the spark of ethereal fire, pure and unstained. You can

look into the world within, nor start with horror while you review your former actions. O, happy state! such was mine once. A moment stole it from me: a moment resigned me for ever to despair and guilt."

The mere suggestion of her father's being a less worthy, a less exalted, character than she had always been accustomed to consider him, had filled Jacqueline with the most painful sensations; what then were her feelings when she heard him accuse himself? The most terrific images floated before her eyes; one dreadful supposition seised her mind; she shuddered while she looked at him. This beloved, this revered parent was a murderer! Falling on her knees before him, she exclaimed, "Let me never know it! let it be buried in eternal silence! O, my

father ! still let me honor, still love you. Instruct me how I can restore your peace."

" This is too much," said the baron, while tears stood in his eyes. " This kindness oppresses me. Hear me," raising his voice ; " hear my unworthiness. To purchase concealment I basely consented to defraud you of the possessions your grandfather has bestowed on you."

" They are yours, my lord," said Jacqueline : " Is it possible my father supposed that I could hesitate ?"

" I did not," replied the baron ; " and that conviction increased my reluctance."

" Believe me, my lord, I feel pleasure in resigning the possessions which

your bounty has rendered useless to me. Their only value in my estimation they derived from the memory of their donor, endeared by the fond recollections of childhood. They were given to me to promote my happiness: if they restore your tranquillity, the intention will indeed be accomplished."

"Think not," answered the baron, "that to deprive you of all these gifts was ever in my thoughts, or that for an instant such a proposal would have received my assent."

The baron then proceeded to inform her, that the present demand was limited to the castle and surrounding domain which belonged to her in the north. "Let not," he continued, "the vain hope of restoring my peace induce you to comply. This sacrifice will only open the path to more. What wealth can satisfy the

cravings of avarice, joined with dissipation? Importunity will succeed to importunity, while you have any thing left to lose."

"How can I employ riches better than in contributing to your ease?" said Jacqueline.

After a short silence, the baron replied, "Such is my unhappy state! I know not what is best? Were I alone to suffer, no longer would I struggle with my fate. But in my disgrace my children are involved. An unfeeling world will heap on them the infamy which belongs only to me. Can I endure the thought of your youth and beauty withering beneath it's cruel scorn; or how contemplate the agony of your brother, who, in the plains of Asia, amid hardships and perils, con-

tends for glory ? Shall I blast his laurels, and cover him with ignominy ?”

“ Forget, my father, those gloomy fancies, and continue, as you have ever been, the ornament and honor of your family.”

“ That time is past : guilt makes us slaves. I have lost the privilege of manhood. My actions no longer depend on myself. You know the disposition of the marquis. A cruel chance has placed me in his power, compelled to aid his purposes, or be dishonored. Your assent to the proposal which, with the violation of every dignified feeling, I have made to you, may retard, but cannot avert, disgrace.”

With the most tender affection Jacqueline besought the baron not to dis-

tress himself; and earnestly entreated his permission to resign these coveted gifts. Her perseverance at length overcame his scruples, and the dread of public obloquy. With mingled sensations, in which misery predominated, he beheld her subscribe the deed that conveyed to the marquis this noble estate; while Jacqueline experienced the emotion which ever accompanies and rewards a generous action. The baron did not attempt to thank her: he accused himself of selfishness in accepting this sacrifice. He was about to destroy the record, when the dreadful alternative rose to his view, and checked his hand. Jacqueline remained with him till her affectionate attentions had in some degree restored his composure; but his heart was deeply lacerated by the ungrateful conduct of his son, by the gnawings of remorse, and the undefined dread of future evils.

On quitting the baron's apartment, Jacqueline hastened to the garden. She sought the most unfrequented paths. In the present state of her mind society was insupportable. Her father guilty engrossed all her thoughts. That he was so she could no longer doubt. Sometimes she felt regret that her entreaties had prevented his revealing the secret; at others rejoiced at her ignorance. She no longer experienced that dignity, that delightful calm, which the virtues of parents shed on their children. The preceding scene appeared as a frightful dream. It haunted her imagination like a spectre; she quickened her pace as if to flee from it. All the avenues of pleasure were closed. The beauties of nature had lost their usual power to charm: the songs of the birds were mournful; their cries, as they flitted by, seemed ominous; and the wind, as it rustled amid the sur-

rounding foliage, in her fancy uttered mysterious warnings.

At the end of a long solitary walk stood a temple. It had been a favorite retreat with the baroness. Jacqueline beheld it with gladness. Within its shelter her thoughts would acquire more freedom. This place was hallowed by the remembrance of her mother's presence. She heard the murmur of the neighbouring fountain. Memory transported her to the days of former years. On that spot she had often listened to the same sound, while leaning on the arm of her beloved parent.

The door of the temple was open; and Jacqueline had advanced some steps, before she perceived that there were persons in it. Near one of the windows Blanche was standing, her

face almost concealed by her handkerchief; and before her on his knees appeared the marquis, holding her hand, which she was endeavouring to withdraw.

At sight of Jacqueline the marquis rose in confusion; and Blanche, uncovering her eyes, uttered a scream, and, in a fearful voice exclaiming, "Lost, for ever lost!" rushed from the temple.

The marquis approached his sister, who had remained a silent spectator of this unexpected incident! and while the blush of shame belied his words, he said, "The marchioness, for some unknown reason, has resolved to immure Blanche in a convent; and when you entered she was supplicating me to interfere and save her from a life which she abhors. You will easily

perceive how necessary it is to conceal this application from the marchioness."

The distress of her father had irritated Jacqueline against the marquis as the occasion of it, and the duplicity of his present conduct farther heightened her resentment. With silent indignation she turned from him, and pursued her way to the castle. The marquis had never beheld her so seriously offended, for the sweetness of her temper usually rendered her indulgent to the failings of others. Anxious to dissipate her anger, he followed her; but the forced and ill-timed mirth in which he indulged, only served to increase her disgust.

CHAPTER IX.

Propitious hours to stratagem and death.

JOHNSON.

SINCE the arrival of the marquis in England he had not renewed his intimacy with Godemar. Exasperated by this neglect, the earl repaired to Fitzbaynham castle, and demanded an interview with Jacqueline; resolved that this conference should be final.

Though the dread of injuring her father did not permit Jacqueline to refuse this unwelcome summons, she yet lingered, unwilling again to encounter the haughty insolence of the earl. On

reaching the hall she heard the voice of her brother; who speaking in a loud tone, she distinguished part of what he said. "It shall never have my consent; and without that, the baron's will not avail you."

Her entrance stopped the reply of the earl, who advanced to receive her; but the marquis interposed, and seising his sister's arm, drew her aside, at the same time saying, "Resign, my lord, all farther pretensions."

"Never," replied the earl: "honor and love engage me to persevere."

"But I forbid you," cried the marquis.

At this speech the earl placed his hand on his sword, and half drew it. Alarmed by this action, Jacqueline re-

gained her resolution, and she addressed the earl: "I entreat, I implore you, my lord, to press no farther an alliance which, notwithstanding the dignity, the lustre it would confer, it is impossible I can ever accept."

"What renders it impossible?" demanded the earl. Jacqueline remained silent and confused. "Have you so soon forgotten what passed the last time we met? I am not apt to recede from my determinations. You are acquainted with them on this subject. I must have love or vengeance. Think of your father."

Seised with a horrible dread, Jacqueline exclaimed, "Spare him, spare him." Her strength failed her, she sunk on a chair, and almost fainted. After a short interval, her senses were recalled by the terrific denunciations

of the earl, who, vowing the most terrible revenge, quitted the apartment, and instantly left the castle.

It was in vain that Jacqueline besought her brother to follow him, and prevent the execution of his destructive plans. "Recollect," said she, "the venerable age of our father, his uniform kindness. Though he is guilty, that does not exempt us from our duty: it is rather another claim on our affection."

"This is a new doctrine," replied the marquis: "How can his having dishonored us entitle him to additional respect?" Perceiving Jacqueline extremely distressed, he continued, "Godemar has threatened more than he will be able to accomplish. Your speedy acceptance of the count will annihilate all his projects, or induce him to acquiesce

in silence with your loss. Instead of tears, I expected thanks for having removed the only obstacle to your reception of Cajetan's splendid offer."

At this moment the baron entered, and not perceiving the earl, inquired for him.

"I have dismissed him," said the marquis.

"You! By what right have you acted in this affair?" inquired the baron.

"By an authority which surely you will not pretend to question," replied the marquis, with insolent coldness, as he left the room.

Shocked at this treatment of her

father, and all her filial tenderness awakened by the terror which Gode-mar's threats had inspired, Jacqueline threw herself into her father's arms, and leaning on his bosom for a few minutes, indulged the sobs which she was unable to restrain. The baron's efforts to calm her were at last successful. She was ashamed of the weakness she had manifested, and lamented that she had increased her father's uneasiness.

After a pause the baron said, "Does the offer of Count Cajetan meet your approbation, Jacqueline?"

"No, indeed, my lord, it does not."

"It is as I feared," replied the baron: "I must say that I regret it does not. To see you happily allied is my most anxious wish. The circum-

stances in which I am placed are dangerous: my health is precarious: already in the autumn of life, I hear, not remote, the winter storm that calls me to the tomb; and grief accelerates it's approach. For your sake alone I wish to linger on the bleak and barren coast of age, to me most dreary, unvisited by the sunshine of innocence."

Jacqueline had remarked with sorrow the alteration of her father since the return of her brother, and she feared that his constitution would sink under the accumulated wrongs inflicted by the marquis. The anxiety expressed by the baron for her happiness increased her regard towards him. She could not endure, even in the long perspective of futurity, to contemplate his loss; and requesting him not to indulge such mournful thoughts, she declared

that to be permitted to dedicate her time to him would constitute her greatest felicity.

“Gratifying as is this proof of your affection,” said the baron, “it is necessary that you should seek the alliance of one better able to protect you. The count’s pretensions are warmly seconded by your brother.”

“That is not a flattering introduction to my favor,” said Jacqueline.

“But it increases the difficulty of refusing him,” replied the baron: “I have stated to the marquis my objections. He scarcely deigned to listen to them, and even over-ruled, as absurd, my reluctance to the loss of your society, should the count return, as is probable, to Italy.”

“ I cannot quit you, my father. Whatever is your destiny, let me share it.”

“ I thank thee, O God !” said the baron, strongly moved by this proof of her affection ; “ thou hast not quite forsaken me. One worthy heart still feels an interest in my welfare. For you, my daughter, I will yet contend with fate ; for you will live with honor, or die without disgrace. Image of her my soul adores, even guilt has not deprived me of your tender care. Hear me, Jacqueline ; nor doubt my truth while I assert, that, in the fatal hour when innocence became a stranger to my bosom, I was as unfortunate as criminal.”

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of the marquis. “ These interviews must surely be

highly amusing," said he, with an ironical air. "Perhaps the opportunity you will shortly possess of enjoying them unmolested, will induce you to pardon my present intrusion." He then informed the baron, that on the following morning the marchioness and himself designed to quit the castle.

It was with extreme reluctance that the marchioness had remained there so long: to her it appeared insupportably dull, accustomed as she had always been to a life of gaiety and pleasure. She did not possess within herself any resource against *ennui*. Her accomplishments, more specious than solid, no longer contributed to her happiness when deprived of the flattering homage their display had always obtained. In Italy she had been surrounded by a crowd of obsequious dependents. Of all these, the count

alone remained; and the gratification which his attentions afforded was nearly overbalanced by the recollections of former adulation, which they continually revived. Her regard for him, and the anxious desire of promoting his suit with Jacqueline, had made her so long submit to what she called this living death: but finding him not likely to succeed in a short time, she had prevailed on him to acquiesce in her desire of removing.

Over the marquis she possessed an unlimited control. Stubborn and untractable as he had always been, he never attempted to dispute her wishes. In the present instance they accorded with his own; and he eagerly hastened the preparations for their departure. Since the time that Jacqueline had unintentionally discovered his interview with Blanche in the temple, he had

been in constant dread of her revealing that circumstance to the marchioness. But his apprehensions were unfounded. Jacqueline had maintained a perfect silence.

To this concealment she had been influenced by various motives; an unwillingness to expose her brother to censure, ignorance of the real purpose of their meeting, and the fear of injuring Blanche, who seemed entirely dependent on the marchioness. Since that morning, Blanche had never appeared when the family was assembled, and to the baron's inquiries respecting her absence, the marchioness replied that she was confined by a slight indisposition. After this, her continued retirement remained unnoticed except by Jacqueline, who regretted that delicacy prevented her from offering the attentions of friendship.

On the day which preceded the departure of the marquis, the weather was most inviting, and towards evening Jacqueline wandered into the garden. A universal stillness prevailed, except that at intervals were heard the waves of the sea gently creaking on the shore beneath; the air was so slight that scarcely a leaf trembled at it's touch. The sun had been set some time, when Jacqueline, reclining on a bench under the thick shade of a cassia tree, was startled by the sound of voices near her. She imagined that she heard her pronounced.

The sounds proceeded from an adjoining walk, but the trees, thickly planted on it's borders, by uniting their branches near the top, formed a natural arch, and rendered it too dark for her to discern the speakers: she could only imperfectly perceive two figures slowly

moving. Surprised by the words she had indistinctly heard, Jacqueline remained fixed to the spot, till the steps of the persons announced their return.

“How often must I repeat, there is no risque?” said one, whom speaking louder and with vehemence, Jacqueline immediately recognised to be the marchioness.

“You forget that we may be overheard,” said her companion.

“There is little danger,” replied she: “the inhabitants of this place are scarcely more animate than the trees or stones; and we, my dear count, are the first who have dared in these immaculate shades to form projects in favor of the youthful deity.”

“ May they be propitious ! ” replied Cajetan ; for it was he who accompanied the marchioness. “ It must be near the appointed hour ; the evening closes fast. ”

Their distance prevented Jacqueline’s hearing more. Judging from the echo of their steps that they were going towards the castle, she determined to wait till they had repassed, lest in her return she should encounter them.

She had not remained many minutes before a deep rough voice utterly unknown to Jacqueline informed her that they had been joined by a stranger ; and he was speaking when they approached. “ Leave that to me, and all shall be accomplished. You know that neither rank nor courage

can escape my arm. You recollect the marquis."

"All your services are gratefully remembered," said the marchioness, interrupting him: "let us arrange the present business without loss of time. Our absence will be remarked."

As she pronounced this the sound of a drum in the court of the castle was heard. "What is that?" inquired she.

"Only the signal for the troops to mount guard during the night," replied the count.

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed the marchioness, "What is to be done? How can you retreat now?"

"Fear not for me," replied the stranger; "but let us dispatch."

“It were better we remain where we are,” said the count: “your white robe may discover us to the soldiers on the battlements; for the moon will soon be risen.”

They continued nearly half an hour in conference; but their conversation was carried on in so low a tone, that only a few detached sentences, in which her name was more than once mentioned, reached Jacqueline. Twilight had long been succeeded by darkness, but she dared not move, lest the rustling of her clothes should betray her.

The time of this mysterious meeting, and the words now and then spoken in the deep voice of the unknown, which appeared to give them a fearful import, impressed her with unusual awe.

"What I will, shall be," said the stranger as they parted; and thrusting aside the branches, he passed close to Jacqueline. She felt his garment brush against her. Seised with an emotion of terror, she sprang forward and soon gained the castle.

The events of the evening disturbed her. A vague uneasiness had been excited; for the sentences which she had heard were too imperfect to convey information. During the evening, she watched the marchioness and the count. No alteration appeared. In their manners the usual easy gaiety prevailed, till the entrance of the officer on duty for the night, who informed the baron that a stranger had been observed in the garden of the castle.

On this intelligence the marquis, drawing his sword, rushed out, followed

by the baron. The color of the marchioness fled: she trembled violently, while the agitation of the count was scarcely inferior, and with visible reluctance he quitted the apartment to join in the search.

After a minute examination no one could be discovered, and the marquis did not hesitate to question the veracity of the two soldiers who had given the alarm. They asserted that a tall figure had twice appeared at the end of the terrace next to the ramparts, and each time on their challenging it had immediately retreated. A centinel on the other side of the garden declared that he had observed a dark figure moving hastily among the trees. Under their shade he lost it.

This second intrusion surprised the baron. He did not doubt that the

secret door had again enabled this mysterious visitor to escape ;. but who he was baffled all conjecture, and his designs were equally inexplicable.

On the following morning the marquis and marchioness with their guests prepared to depart. They had before warmly pressed Jacqueline to accompany them, and now renewed their solicitations with an eagerness that both pained and astonished her; but the same reasons which had made her before decline them still continued, and the conversation of the preceding night had strengthened her reluctance. Blanche, who did not appear till the last moment, seeking an opportunity while the rest were engaged, said to Jacqueline, "Accept the thanks of an orphan. Your silence merits my utmost gratitude. Indulgent to all, remember me with pity."

These words, and the look which accompanied them, made a deep impression on Jacqueline. She was going to reply in the strain of feeling which they had inspired, when the approach of the marchioness prevented her.

Their departure relieved the baron. The haughty coldness of the marquis, which the forbearance and paternal kindness of the baron had not been able to remove, wounded his feelings, and Jacqueline's society imparted to him the only comfort of which he was capable. The marchioness openly rejoiced when they had passed the drawbridge; and the marquis, impatient to take possession of the castle and domain which Jacqueline had so recently resigned, participated her sentiments.

CHAPTER X.

On this base
My great revenge shall rise.

GRAY.

THE second evening after the departure of the marquis was closing fast, when, the baron being engaged by some public affairs which required his attention, Jacqueline retired to her apartments.

From the society of the late visitors she had derived little pleasure, but solitude became more dreary on their departure. They had deranged the succession of varied occupations, by

which she had contrived to relieve the monotony of her existence ; and in the interval till her mind had regained sufficient tranquillity to resume these habits, a sentiment of listlessness and desolation oppressed her.

As she passed through the spacious rooms, amid the gloom of twilight, listening to the echoes of her own steps, she felt anew her solitary state, and recollected with keener regret the happy days of infancy and childhood. Among the companions of that period, who had diffused on it much of it's delight, was Sir Edmund, and his absence was rendered more distressing by the reports which prevailed of disastrous events in the holy land, and of the sufferings of the Europeans exposed at once to the ravages of climate and war. With her brother Sir Almeric was associated in her mind by congenial cha-

racter and merits, by similar emotions of which he was the object, and now by partnership in misfortune, and absence more distressing from it's mystery.

Sad were her reflections, and sad her future prospects, while she traversed the adjoining corridor, which communicated at one extremity with the gallery that surrounded the dome of the hall. Sometimes stopping at a window, her eye passed over the objects still visible amid the increasing darkness, without admitting any new idea ; at others, leaning over the balustrade, she contemplated the hall partially revealed by the lamps that burned in two opposite passages, the doors of which were open ; but their faint beams, unable to pervade it's vast dimensions, left the imagination to trace it's boundaries beyond the receding

pillars. It's grandeur, it's plated columns crowned with trophies, and the uninterrupted silence inspired an awe congenial with her present sensations.

While thus musing, she observed some person advance from a remote part, and station himself behind a pillar. His motions displayed an air of caution and he often stopped apparently to listen. This singular conduct surprised Jaqueline. The light was too dim for her to distinguish the countenance, but conceiving him to be one of the domestics, she was anxious to learn the cause of this secresy, and waited in the expectation of his moving.

In a few minutes the person, quitting the pillar, approached nearly in front of the gallery where Jaqueline

stood. Judging from his attitude that he was looking up, and not choosing to be seen, she immediately left the gallery, and returned to the corridor now almost wholly dark.

She had not proceeded many steps in it, when she felt herself seised behind. At the same moment a rough voice exclaimed, "If you value your life, make no noise;" and raising her in his arms, her conductor hurried to the further end of the corridor, which opened into the suit of apartments that had been occupied by the late baroness. Closing the first door, he hastily proceeded forwards.

This passed in so short a space, that they had reached the last of these rooms, which opened on a terrace communicating by a long flight of steps with the garden, before the alarm of

Jacqueline permitted her to speak; when vainly struggling to disengage herself, she demanded the reason of this outrage, and insisted on being immediately liberated. But her efforts and remonstrances were equally unavailing, and her conductor was rapidly approaching a private door in the garden, which opened on a court leading to the outer wall of the castle; when recollecting her distance from the inhabited part of the edifice, and that the watch for the night was not yet set, Jacqueline despaired of being able by her voice to bring any one to her assistance, and overcame by terror, she fainted.

On recovering her senses she found herself on horseback, confined by several bands, to one of which her hands were fastened. At first she thought it the strong impression of a dream, but the swift pace at which she pro-

ceeded, and the freshness of the air, quickly dissipated the comfort this supposition had afforded.

By the light of the moon which at intervals appeared between the breaks of the clouds, she perceived that they were in a road skirted on one side by a forest; and at a short distance before them, she discovered the turrets of a castle. To her repeated questions whither they were proceeding, the man who was mounted before her answered, in a rude, sullen manner, that time would show. How much was she shocked, when in this reply she thought she recognised the voice of the unknown, whom she had heard conversing in the garden with the marchioness and count.

In the most moving terms she supplicated her conductor to release her; but neither entreaties nor liberal pro-

mises could procure even an answer. Indignant at this treatment, Jacqueline remained silent, and beheld in mute despair their approaching the building which she imagined was to be her prison.

The howling of the wind among the trees, mingled with the echoes of horses' steps, sounded awfully amid the stillness of night, while the screams and melancholy hootings of the owls from the battlements pronounced a fearful welcome, and to the fancy of Jacqueline seemed prophetic of suffering.

On reaching the building, she perceived that the outer wall was broken down in many places. Through one of these openings they entered, and after traversing a court almost covered with weeds and rubbish, they stopped before the principal entrance.

Her conductor dismounted, and after loosening the bands, by which she was confined, lifted her down, and led her into what appeared to have been once a hall, but time and neglect had scarcely left a vestige of it's former splendor. Broken columns, richly carved, lay prostrate on the spot they before adorned ; while through the dilapidated roof and windows, the moss and clustered ivy waving in the breeze seemed to look down in proud derision on this crumbling ruin, and to display the superiority of nature over the noblest monuments erected by mortals.

Crossing with some difficulty to the opposite side, she beheld a spiral staircase. Her conductor motioned to her to ascend. The rails were fallen in many parts, and it was not without difficulty that Jacqueline reached the gallery in which it terminated.

At the extremity she discerned the faint ray of a lamp. Ordering her to remain where she was, the man hastened forward, till as he entered a doorway at some distance, she lost sight of him. Left there to herself, she was on the point of descending, in the hope of effecting her escape, when a groan which sounded close to her, followed by an indistinct murmur, took from her the power of moving. She scarcely dared to look around, lest her eyes should encounter some horrid spectacle. The dim sepulchral light only imperfectly revealed the outlines of this extensive gallery; and as the feeble flame flashed with renovated vigor between the gusts of wind, which rushing up the staircase threatened to extinguish it, Jacqueline imagined that in the dusky obscurity she beheld shadows flit by.

Again the tone of lamentation reached her, and in the same instant she heard the clank of chains. The blood froze in her veins. Was she to become an inmate in this abode of wretchedness?

A deep long drawn sigh close to her side made her start. Fully convinced that some person was near, with sudden courage she extended her hand. It touched against a door, which, though fastened, shook beneath her pressure. After a pause, a low hollow voice from within exclaimed, "He comes not, and I perish!"

Subdued by mingled sensations of horrors and distress, Jacqueline leaned against the wall for support. A mist spread before her sight, her strength and recollection almost failed. "Why

did not you obey my summons?" demanded her conductor, in his former rough tone, as, seising her arm, he hurried her along. This sudden movement restored her senses. She had not heard either his approach or repeated calls.

Stopping before an apartment the door of which was open, and releasing his hold, he directed her to enter. The gloomy appearance of this room shocked her. What suffering was she there to endure? A sensation of terror, too powerful to be subdued, made her recoil at the threshold. "For what are you waiting?" said the man; and rudely thrusting her in, he secured the door on the outside.

This brutal conduct terrified Jacqueline. She considered it as the prelude

to future ills, and shuddered at the miseries to which her forlorn state exposed her.

The desolate aspect of her prison was less calculated to banish her unpleasant sensations than inspire despair. It was spacious, and of it's once magnificent furniture and splendid ornaments time had only spared enough to show that such things had been, and to render more impressive the sad reverse. In place of the numerous tapers that formerly had blazed in the gilt branches, many of which still remained, Jacqueline by the light of a feeble lamp with difficulty traced it's outlines. Dampness and decay had defaced the hangings. Their colors were obliterated: they no longer recorded the actions of heroes, but in their turn had passed away, like the story they had been designed to commemorate.

With a listless gaze Jacqueline surveyed this dreary apartment. A sudden but indistinct recollection fixed her attention. As she eagerly scrutinised it, she retraced with horror Sir Almeric's description of the apartment which his life had been attempted.

This idea once raised gathered strength as she reflected. The outward appearance of the building, the hall, the spiral staircase, all corresponded with the knight's account. Remembering with increased distress the dismal tragedy which had there been acted, she started from before the sofa at which she was standing. On that spot the unfortunate Arthur perished. She even thought she discerned on the floor the bloody record of that fatal night.

Her eye glanced on the door through

which Sir Reginald had entered. "Here," she exclaimed, "that horrid catastrophe was accomplished." "Here," repeated a voice, in a deep despairing tone.

What words can paint the terror of Jacqueline? Eagerly she sought to pierce the surrounding gloom, almost fearing that the dreadful scenes described by Ernulph would be realised. Shivering with horror she sunk into a chair, as she beheld the side-door slowly unfolded. A dark figure appeared in the aperture. It remained stationary for a few minutes; then withdrawing, the door was again closed.

Jacqueline scarcely respired, as in trembling agitation she listened to the steps which at intervals approached and receded. From the side entrance her ears were again shocked by the

clank of chains. A heavy oppression seised her, and for a short period suspended her senses.

From this state she was recalled by a slight noise. On opening her eyes, she beheld standing near her a tall figure entirely enveloped in a sable garment. Even the countenance was concealed, the eyes alone being visible, which rested on her with an expression of malignant pleasure. One hand, raised high, supported a torch; and in the other a dagger gleamed.

At this appalling spectacle Jacqueline was unable to speak. Her supplicating looks alone entreated pity. A sigh and half-stifled groan made her hastily turn. At a short distance before her she discerned a person, his arms and feet secured by heavy chains. She shrieked. Her sight deceived her, or

it was Sir Almeric; alas, how changed! pale, emaciated, but the shadow of what he was.

She attempted to speak. Her lips moved without uttering any sound. She extended her arms towards him, and made an effort to rise. At this motion the sable figure interposed. The dagger was raised to strike the defenceless bosom of Sir Almeric. Jacqueline saw no more. With a piercing cry she sunk back, totally exhausted, her faculties benumbed by grief, surprise, and terror.

In a few moments she unclosed her eyes. The vision had vanished; the gloomy solitude of her chamber remained unbroken. She doubted whether the recent scene had been more than a creation of her imagination.

So deep an anguish did the recollection of Sir Almeric's haggard looks inflict, that the distress and confusion of her thoughts produced a kind of stupor. With a vacant eye she beheld the outer door opened. A person entered and advanced towards her. Without speaking he raised her in his arms, and quitting the room, bore her down the spiral stair-case, and across the hall to the entrance, where the horse still waited. Placing her on it, he again fastened the bands by which she was before secured, and having mounted himself, they left the ruined castle.

As soon as they had passed the outer wall, putting the horse into a quick pace, they struck into the forest. Though she had not fainted, the languor which oppressed Jacqueline rendered her almost indifferent to what

passed. She was unable to remonstrate, and in passive silence awaited the conclusion of this eventful night.

After proceeding through the forest, they continued their rapid course for a considerable time in an open country. At length the murmur of waves announced the approach to the sea.

The first grey light of morning was yet too feeble to penetrate the shades that obscured the surrounding scene. As they advanced, the noise of waters became more audible. With horror Jacqueline heard this sound. It recalled her from the deep musing in which she had hitherto been wrapped.

A new and dreadful fear occurred. Apprehensive that she was about to be torn from her native land, terror restored her strength. She endeavoured,

but in vain, to release herself; till finding her utmost efforts unavailing, she resigned herself to her fate, resolved at least to endure with fortitude the evils which seemed inevitable.

As the dark clouds of night withdrew, Jacqueline was relieved by perceiving the turrets and outwork of an immense edifice to which they were advancing. Passing under the side wall, they came to a tower, which projecting beyond the body of the building, formed one of it's angles. The opposite extremity was washed by the sea.

Here her conductor alighted, and drawing from his bosom a key, opened a small door in the turret close to the edge of the cliff.

The interior was dark, but by the

faint light admitted through the doorway, Jacqueline distinguished a winding stair-case, which they immediately began to ascend. The loop-holes, placed at short intervals, admitted a sufficient glimmer to guide their steps. Through these the wind whistled in a mournful cadence, and the dashing of the ocean against the base of the tower was prolonged in many a reverberated echo. Except these, no sound met the ear of Jacqueline, as forlorn and desolate she followed her conductor.

On reaching a gallery, her conductor unclosed a folding door; and, by a motion, having directed Jacqueline to enter, he fastened it on the outside, and immediately quitted the tower.

END OF VOL. I.

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