

CHAPTER VII.

Having seen our friend properly installed in his new office, we turned our eyes towards Windsor. The nearness of this place to London was such, as to take away the idea of painful separation, when we quitted Raymond and Perdita. We took leave of them in the Protectoral Palace. It was pretty enough to see my sister enter as it were into the spirit of the drama, and endeavour to fill her station with becoming dignity. Her internal pride and humility of manner were now more than ever at war. Her timidity was not artificial, but arose from that fear of not being properly appreciated, that slight estimation of the neglect of the world, which also characterized Raymond. But then Perdita thought more constantly of others than he; and part of her bashfulness arose from a wish to take from those around her a sense of inferiority; a feeling which never crossed her mind. From the circumstances of her birth and education, Idris would have been better fitted for the formulae of ceremony; but the very ease which accompanied such actions with her, arising from habit, rendered them tedious; while, with every drawback, Perdita evidently enjoyed her situation. She was too full of new ideas to feel much pain when we departed; she took an affectionate leave of us, and promised to visit us soon; but she did not regret the circumstances that caused our separation. The spirits of Raymond were unbounded; he did not know what to do with his new got power; his head was full of plans; he had as yet decided on none— but he promised himself, his friends, and the world, that the aera of his Protectorship should be signalized by some act of surpassing glory. Thus, we talked of them, and moralized, as with diminished numbers we returned to Windsor Castle. We felt extreme delight at our escape from political turmoil, and sought our solitude with redoubled zest. We did not want for occupation; but my eager disposition was now turned to the field of intellectual exertion only; and hard study I found to be an excellent medicine to allay a fever of spirit with which in indolence, I should doubtless have been assailed. Perdita had permitted us to take Clara back with us to Windsor; and she and my two lovely infants were perpetual sources of interest and amusement.

The only circumstance that disturbed our peace, was the health of Adrian. It evidently declined, without any symptom which could lead us to suspect his disease, unless indeed his brightened eyes, animated look, and fluttering cheeks, made us dread consumption; but he was without pain or fear. He betook himself to books with ardour, and reposed from study in the society he best loved, that of his sister and myself. Sometimes he went up to London to visit Raymond, and watch the progress of events. Clara often accompanied him in these excursions; partly that she might see her parents, partly because Adrian delighted in the prattle, and intelligent looks of this lovely child.

Meanwhile all went on well in London. The new elections were finished; parliament met, and Raymond was occupied in a thousand beneficial schemes. Canals, aqueducts, bridges, stately buildings, and various edifices for public utility, were entered upon; he was continually surrounded by projectors and projects, which were to render England one scene of fertility and magnificence; the state of poverty was to be abolished; men were to be transported from place to place almost with the same facility as the Princes Houssain, Ali, and Ahmed, in the Arabian Nights. The physical state of man would soon not yield to the beatitude of angels; disease was to be banished; labour lightened of its heaviest burden. Nor did this seem extravagant. The arts of life, and the discoveries of science had augmented in a ratio which left all calculation behind; food sprung up, so to say, spontaneously—machines existed to supply with facility every want of the population. An evil direction still survived; and men were not happy, not because they could not, but because they would not rouse themselves to vanquish self-raised obstacles. Raymond was to inspire them with his beneficial will, and the mechanism of society, once systematised according to faultless rules, would never again swerve into disorder. For these hopes he abandoned his long-cherished ambition of being enregistered in the annals of nations as a successful warrior; laying aside his sword, peace and its enduring glories became his aim—the title he coveted was that of the benefactor of his country.

Among other works of art in which he was engaged, he had projected the erection of a national gallery for statues and pictures. He possessed many himself, which he designed to present to the Republic; and, as the edifice was to be the great ornament of his Protectorship, he was very fastidious in his choice of the plan on which it would be built. Hundreds were brought to him and rejected. He sent even to Italy and Greece for drawings; but, as the design was to be characterized by originality as well as by perfect beauty, his endeavours were for a time without avail. At length a drawing came, with an address where communications might be sent, and no artist's name affixed. The design was new and elegant, but faulty; so faulty, that although drawn with the hand and eye of taste, it was evidently the work of one who was not an architect. Raymond contemplated it with delight; the more he gazed, the more pleased he was; and yet the errors multiplied under inspection. He wrote to the address given, desiring to see the draughtsman, that such alterations might be made, as should be suggested in a consultation between him and the original conceiver.

A Greek came. A middle-aged man, with some intelligence of manner, but with so common-place a physiognomy, that Raymond could scarcely believe that he was the designer. He acknowledged that he was not an architect; but the idea of the building had struck him, though he had sent it without the smallest hope of its being accepted.

He was a man of few words. Raymond questioned him; but his reserved answers soon made him turn from the man to the drawing. He pointed out the errors, and the alterations that he wished to be made; he offered the Greek a pencil that he might correct the sketch on the spot; this was refused by his visitor, who said that he perfectly understood, and would work at it at home. At length Raymond suffered him to depart.

The next day he returned. The design had been re-drawn; but many defects still remained, and several of the instructions given had been misunderstood. "Come," said Raymond, "I yielded to you yesterday, now comply with my request—take the pencil."

The Greek took it, but he handled it in no artist-like way; at length he said: "I must confess to you, my Lord, that I did not make this drawing. It is impossible for you to see the real designer; your instructions must pass through me. Condescend therefore to have patience with my ignorance, and to explain your wishes to me; in time I am certain that you will be satisfied."

Raymond questioned vainly; the mysterious Greek would say no more. Would an architect be permitted to see the artist? This also was refused. Raymond repeated his instructions, and the visitor retired. Our friend resolved however not to be foiled in his wish. He suspected, that unaccustomed poverty was the cause of the mystery, and that the artist was unwilling to be seen in the garb and abode of want. Raymond was only the more excited by this consideration to discover him; impelled by the interest he took in obscure talent, he therefore ordered a person skilled in such matters, to follow the Greek the next time he came, and observe the house in which he should enter. His emissary obeyed, and brought the desired intelligence. He had traced the man to one of the most penurious streets in the metropolis. Raymond did not wonder, that, thus situated, the artist had shrunk from notice, but he did not for this alter his resolve.

On the same evening, he went alone to the house named to him. Poverty, dirt, and squalid misery characterized its appearance. Alas! thought Raymond, I have much to do before England becomes a Paradise. He knocked; the door was opened by a string from above—the broken, wretched staircase was immediately before him, but no person appeared; he knocked again, vainly—and then, impatient of further delay, he ascended the dark, creaking stairs. His main wish, more particularly now that he witnessed the abject dwelling of the artist, was to relieve one, possessed of talent, but depressed by want. He pictured to himself a youth, whose eyes sparkled with genius, whose person was attenuated by famine. He half feared to displease him; but he

trusted that his generous kindness would be administered so delicately, as not to excite repulse. What human heart is shut to kindness? and though poverty, in its excess, might render the sufferer unapt to submit to the supposed degradation of a benefit, the zeal of the benefactor must at last relax him into thankfulness. These thoughts encouraged Raymond, as he stood at the door of the highest room of the house. After trying vainly to enter the other apartments, he perceived just within the threshold of this one, a pair of small Turkish slippers; the door was ajar, but all was silent within. It was probable that the inmate was absent, but secure that he had found the right person, our adventurous Protector was tempted to enter, to leave a purse on the table, and silently depart. In pursuance of this idea, he pushed open the door gently—but the room was inhabited.

Raymond had never visited the dwellings of want, and the scene that now presented itself struck him to the heart. The floor was sunk in many places; the walls ragged and bare—the ceiling weather-stained—a tattered bed stood in the corner; there were but two chairs in the room, and a rough broken table, on which was a light in a tin candlestick;—yet in the midst of such drear and heart sickening poverty, there was an air of order and cleanliness that surprised him. The thought was fleeting; for his attention was instantly drawn towards the inhabitant of this wretched abode. It was a female. She sat at the table; one small hand shaded her eyes from the candle; the other held a pencil; her looks were fixed on a drawing before her, which Raymond recognized as the design presented to him. Her whole appearance awakened his deepest interest. Her dark hair was braided and twined in thick knots like the head-dress of a Grecian statue; her garb was mean, but her attitude might have been selected as a model of grace. Raymond had a confused remembrance that he had seen such a form before; he walked across the room; she did not raise her eyes, merely asking in Romaic, who is there? “A friend,” replied Raymond in the same dialect. She looked up wondering, and he saw that it was Evadne Zaimi. Evadne, once the idol of Adrian’s affections; and who, for the sake of her present visitor, had disdained the noble youth, and then, neglected by him she loved, with crushed hopes and a stinging sense of misery, had returned to her native Greece. What revolution of fortune could have brought her to England, and housed her thus?

Raymond recognized her; and his manner changed from polite beneficence to the warmest protestations of kindness and sympathy. The sight of her, in her present situation, passed like an arrow into his soul. He sat by her, he took her hand, and said a thousand things which breathed the deepest spirit of compassion and affection. Evadne did not answer; her large dark eyes were cast down, at length a tear glimmered on the lashes. “Thus,” she cried, “kindness can do, what no want, no

misery ever effected; I weep." She shed indeed many tears; her head sunk unconsciously on the shoulder of Raymond; he held her hand: he kissed her sunken tear-stained cheek. He told her, that her sufferings were now over: no one possessed the art of consoling like Raymond; he did not reason or declaim, but his look shone with sympathy; he brought pleasant images before the sufferer; his caresses excited no distrust, for they arose purely from the feeling which leads a mother to kiss her wounded child; a desire to demonstrate in every possible way the truth of his feelings, and the keenness of his wish to pour balm into the lacerated mind of the unfortunate. As Evadne regained her composure, his manner became even gay; he sported with the idea of her poverty. Something told him that it was not its real evils that lay heavily at her heart, but the debasement and disgrace attendant on it; as he talked, he divested it of these; sometimes speaking of her fortitude with energetic praise; then, alluding to her past state, he called her his Princess in disguise. He made her warm offers of service; she was too much occupied by more engrossing thoughts, either to accept or reject them; at length he left her, making a promise to repeat his visit the next day. He returned home, full of mingled feelings, of pain excited by Evadne's wretchedness, and pleasure at the prospect of relieving it. Some motive for which he did not account, even to himself, prevented him from relating his adventure to Perdita.

The next day he threw such disguise over his person as a cloak afforded, and revisited Evadne. As he went, he bought a basket of costly fruits, such as were natives of her own country, and throwing over these various beautiful flowers, bore it himself to the miserable garret of his friend. "Behold," cried he, as he entered, "what bird's food I have brought for my sparrow on the house-top."

Evadne now related the tale of her misfortunes. Her father, though of high rank, had in the end dissipated his fortune, and even destroyed his reputation and influence through a course of dissolute indulgence. His health was impaired beyond hope of cure; and it became his earnest wish, before he died, to preserve his daughter from the poverty which would be the portion of her orphan state. He therefore accepted for her, and persuaded her to accede to, a proposal of marriage, from a wealthy Greek merchant settled at Constantinople. She quitted her native Greece; her father died; by degrees she was cut off from all the companions and ties of her youth.

The war, which about a year before the present time had broken out between Greece and Turkey, brought about many reverses of fortune. Her husband became bankrupt, and then in a tumult and threatened massacre on the part of the Turks, they were obliged to fly at midnight, and reached in an open boat an English vessel under sail, which brought them immediately to this island. The few jewels they had saved, supported them awhile. The whole strength of Evadne's mind was exerted to support

the failing spirits of her husband. Loss of property, hopelessness as to his future prospects, the inoccupation to which poverty condemned him, combined to reduce him to a state bordering on insanity. Five months after their arrival in England, he committed suicide.

“You will ask me,” continued Evadne, “what I have done since; why I have not applied for succour to the rich Greeks resident here; why I have not returned to my native country? My answer to these questions must needs appear to you unsatisfactory, yet they have sufficed to lead me on, day after day, enduring every wretchedness, rather than by such means to seek relief. Shall the daughter of the noble, though prodigal Zaimi, appear a beggar before her compeers or inferiors—superiors she had none. Shall I bow my head before them, and with servile gesture sell my nobility for life? Had I a child, or any tie to bind me to existence, I might descend to this—but, as it is—the world has been to me a harsh step-mother; fain would I leave the abode she seems to grudge, and in the grave forget my pride, my struggles, my despair. The time will soon come; grief and famine have already sapped the foundations of my being; a very short time, and I shall have passed away; unstained by the crime of self-destruction, unstung by the memory of degradation, my spirit will throw aside the miserable coil, and find such recompense as fortitude and resignation may deserve. This may seem madness to you, yet you also have pride and resolution; do not then wonder that my pride is tameless, my resolution unalterable.”

Having thus finished her tale, and given such an account as she deemed fit, of the motives of her abstaining from all endeavour to obtain aid from her countrymen, Evadne paused; yet she seemed to have more to say, to which she was unable to give words. In the mean time Raymond was eloquent. His desire of restoring his lovely friend to her rank in society, and to her lost prosperity, animated him, and he poured forth with energy, all his wishes and intentions on that subject. But he was checked; Evadne exacted a promise, that he should conceal from all her friends her existence in England. “The relatives of the Earl of Windsor,” said she haughtily, “doubtless think that I injured him; perhaps the Earl himself would be the first to acquit me, but probably I do not deserve acquittal. I acted then, as I ever must, from impulse. This abode of penury may at least prove the disinterestedness of my conduct. No matter: I do not wish to plead my cause before any of them, not even before your Lordship, had you not first discovered me. The tenor of my actions will prove that I had rather die, than be a mark for scorn—behold the proud Evadne in her tatters! look on the beggar-princess! There is aspic venom in the thought—promise me that my secret shall not be violated by you.”

Raymond promised; but then a new discussion ensued. Evadne required another engagement on his part, that he would not without her concurrence enter into any project for her benefit, nor himself offer relief. "Do not degrade me in my own eyes," she said; "poverty has long been my nurse; hard-visaged she is, but honest. If dishonour, or what I conceive to be dishonour, come near me, I am lost." Raymond adduced many arguments and fervent persuasions to overcome her feeling, but she remained unconvinced; and, agitated by the discussion, she wildly and passionately made a solemn vow, to fly and hide herself where he never could discover her, where famine would soon bring death to conclude her woes, if he persisted in his to her disgracing offers. She could support herself, she said. And then she shewed him how, by executing various designs and paintings, she earned a pittance for her support. Raymond yielded for the present. He felt assured, after he had for awhile humoured her self-will, that in the end friendship and reason would gain the day.

But the feelings that actuated Evadne were rooted in the depths of her being, and were such in their growth as he had no means of understanding. Evadne loved Raymond. He was the hero of her imagination, the image carved by love in the unchanged texture of her heart. Seven years ago, in her youthful prime, she had become attached to him; he had served her country against the Turks; he had in her own land acquired that military glory peculiarly dear to the Greeks, since they were still obliged inch by inch to fight for their security. Yet when he returned thence, and first appeared in public life in England, her love did not purchase his, which then vacillated between Perdita and a crown. While he was yet undecided, she had quitted England; the news of his marriage reached her, and her hopes, poorly nurtured blossoms, withered and fell. The glory of life was gone for her; the roseate halo of love, which had imbued every object with its own colour, faded;—she was content to take life as it was, and to make the best of leaden-coloured reality. She married; and, carrying her restless energy of character with her into new scenes, she turned her thoughts to ambition, and aimed at the title and power of Princess of Wallachia; while her patriotic feelings were soothed by the idea of the good she might do her country, when her husband should be chief of this principality. She lived to find ambition, as unreal a delusion as love. Her intrigues with Russia for the furtherance of her object, excited the jealousy of the Porte, and the animosity of the Greek government. She was considered a traitor by both, the ruin of her husband followed; they avoided death by a timely flight, and she fell from the height of her desires to penury in England. Much of this tale she concealed from Raymond; nor did she confess, that repulse and denial, as to a criminal convicted of the worst of crimes, that of bringing the scythe of foreign

despotism to cut away the new springing liberties of her country, would have followed her application to any among the Greeks.

She knew that she was the cause of her husband's utter ruin; and she strung herself to bear the consequences. The reproaches which agony extorted; or worse, cureless, uncomplaining depression, when his mind was sunk in a torpor, not the less painful because it was silent and moveless. She reproached herself with the crime of his death; guilt and its punishments appeared to surround her; in vain she endeavoured to allay remorse by the memory of her real integrity; the rest of the world, and she among them, judged of her actions, by their consequences. She prayed for her husband's soul; she conjured the Supreme to place on her head the crime of his self-destruction—she vowed to live to expiate his fault.

In the midst of such wretchedness as must soon have destroyed her, one thought only was matter of consolation. She lived in the same country, breathed the same air as Raymond. His name as Protector was the burthen of every tongue; his achievements, projects, and magnificence, the argument of every story. Nothing is so precious to a woman's heart as the glory and excellence of him she loves; thus in every horror Evadne revelled in his fame and prosperity. While her husband lived, this feeling was regarded by her as a crime, repressed, repented of. When he died, the tide of love resumed its ancient flow, it deluged her soul with its tumultuous waves, and she gave herself up a prey to its uncontrollable power.

But never, O, never, should he see her in her degraded state. Never should he behold her fallen, as she deemed, from her pride of beauty, the poverty-stricken inhabitant of a garret, with a name which had become a reproach, and a weight of guilt on her soul. But though impenetrably veiled from him, his public office permitted her to become acquainted with all his actions, his daily course of life, even his conversation. She allowed herself one luxury, she saw the newspapers every day, and feasted on the praise and actions of the Protector. Not that this indulgence was devoid of accompanying grief. Perdita's name was for ever joined with his; their conjugal felicity was celebrated even by the authentic testimony of facts. They were continually together, nor could the unfortunate Evadne read the monosyllable that designated his name, without, at the same time, being presented with the image of her who was the faithful companion of all his labours and pleasures. *They, their Excellencies*, met her eyes in each line, mingling an evil potion that poisoned her very blood.

It was in the newspaper that she saw the advertisement for the design for a national gallery. Combining with taste her remembrance of the edifices which she had seen in the east, and by an effort of genius enduing them with unity of design, she executed

the plan which had been sent to the Protector. She triumphed in the idea of bestowing, unknown and forgotten as she was, a benefit upon him she loved; and with enthusiastic pride looked forward to the accomplishment of a work of hers, which, immortalized in stone, would go down to posterity stamped with the name of Raymond. She awaited with eagerness the return of her messenger from the palace; she listened insatiate to his account of each word, each look of the Protector; she felt bliss in this communication with her beloved, although he knew not to whom he addressed his instructions. The drawing itself became ineffably dear to her. He had seen it, and praised it; it was again retouched by her, each stroke of her pencil was as a chord of thrilling music, and bore to her the idea of a temple raised to celebrate the deepest and most unutterable emotions of her soul. These contemplations engaged her, when the voice of Raymond first struck her ear, a voice, once heard, never to be forgotten; she mastered her gush of feelings, and welcomed him with quiet gentleness.

Pride and tenderness now struggled, and at length made a compromise together. She would see Raymond, since destiny had led him to her, and her constancy and devotion must merit his friendship. But her rights with regard to him, and her cherished independence, should not be injured by the idea of interest, or the intervention of the complicated feelings attendant on pecuniary obligation, and the relative situations of the benefactor, and benefited. Her mind was of uncommon strength; she could subdue her sensible wants to her mental wishes, and suffer cold, hunger and misery, rather than concede to fortune a contested point. Alas! that in human nature such a pitch of mental discipline, and disdainful negligence of nature itself, should not have been allied to the extreme of moral excellence! But the resolution that permitted her to resist the pains of privation, sprung from the too great energy of her passions; and the concentrated self-will of which this was a sign, was destined to destroy even the very idol, to preserve whose respect she submitted to this detail of wretchedness.

Their intercourse continued. By degrees Evadne related to her friend the whole of her story, the stain her name had received in Greece, the weight of sin which had accrued to her from the death of her husband. When Raymond offered to clear her reputation, and demonstrate to the world her real patriotism, she declared that it was only through her present sufferings that she hoped for any relief to the stings of conscience; that, in her state of mind, diseased as he might think it, the necessity of occupation was salutary medicine; she ended by extorting a promise that for the space of one month he would refrain from the discussion of her interests, engaging after that time to yield in part to his wishes. She could not disguise to herself that any

change would separate her from him; now she saw him each day. His connection with Adrian and Perdita was never mentioned; he was to her a meteor, a companionless star, which at its appointed hour rose in her hemisphere, whose appearance brought felicity, and which, although it set, was never eclipsed. He came each day to her abode of penury, and his presence transformed it to a temple redolent with sweets, radiant with heaven's own light; he partook of her delirium. "They built a wall between them and the world"—Without, a thousand harpies raved, remorse and misery, expecting the destined moment for their invasion. Within, was the peace as of innocence, reckless blindness, deluding joy, hope, whose still anchor rested on placid but unconstant water.

Thus, while Raymond had been wrapt in visions of power and fame, while he looked forward to entire dominion over the elements and the mind of man, the territory of his own heart escaped his notice; and from that unthought of source arose the mighty torrent that overwhelmed his will, and carried to the oblivious sea, fame, hope, and happiness.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the mean time what did Perdita?

During the first months of his Protectorate, Raymond and she had been inseparable; each project was discussed with her, each plan approved by her. I never beheld any one so perfectly happy as my sweet sister. Her expressive eyes were two stars whose beams were love; hope and light-heartedness sat on her cloudless brow. She fed even to tears of joy on the praise and glory of her Lord; her whole existence was one sacrifice to him, and if in the humility of her heart she felt self-complacency, it arose from the reflection that she had won the distinguished hero of the age, and had for years preserved him, even after time had taken from love its usual nourishment. Her own feeling was as entire as at its birth. Five years had failed to destroy the dazzling unreality of passion. Most men ruthlessly destroy the sacred veil, with which the female heart is wont to adorn the idol of its affections. Not so Raymond; he was an enchanter, whose reign was for ever undiminished; a king whose power never was suspended: follow him through the details of common life, still the same charm of grace and majesty adorned him; nor could he be despoiled of the innate deification with which nature had invested him. Perdita grew in beauty and excellence under his eye; I no longer recognised my reserved abstracted sister in the fascinating and open-hearted wife of Raymond. The genius that enlightened her countenance, was now united to an expression of benevolence, which gave divine perfection to her beauty.

Happiness is in its highest degree the sister of goodness. Suffering and amiability may exist together, and writers have loved to depict their conjunction; there is a human and touching harmony in the picture. But perfect happiness is an attribute of angels; and those who possess it, appear angelic. Fear has been said to be the parent of religion: even of that religion is it the generator, which leads its votaries to sacrifice human victims at its altars; but the religion which springs from happiness is a lovelier growth; the religion which makes the heart breathe forth fervent thanksgiving, and causes us to pour out the overflowings of the soul before the author of our being; that which is the parent of the imagination and the nurse of poetry; that which bestows benevolent intelligence on the visible mechanism of the world, and makes earth a temple with heaven for its cope. Such happiness, goodness, and religion inhabited the mind of Perdita.

During the five years we had spent together, a knot of happy human beings at Windsor Castle, her blissful lot had been the frequent theme of my sister's conversation. From early habit, and natural affection, she selected me in preference to Adrian or Idris, to be the partner in her overflowings of delight; perhaps, though apparently much unlike, some secret point of resemblance, the offspring of consanguinity, induced this preference. Often at sunset, I have walked with her, in the sober, enshadowed forest paths, and listened with joyful sympathy. Security gave dignity to her passion; the certainty of a full return, left her with no wish unfulfilled. The birth of her daughter, embryo copy of her Raymond, filled up the measure of her content, and produced a sacred and indissoluble tie between them. Sometimes she felt proud that he had preferred her to the hopes of a crown. Sometimes she remembered that she had suffered keen anguish, when he hesitated in his choice. But this memory of past discontent only served to enhance her present joy. What had been hardily won, was now, entirely possessed, doubly dear. She would look at him at a distance with the same rapture, (O, far more exuberant rapture!) that one might feel, who after the perils of a tempest, should find himself in the desired port; she would hasten towards him, to feel more certain in his arms, the reality of her bliss. This warmth of affection, added to the depth of her understanding, and the brilliancy of her imagination, made her beyond words dear to Raymond.

If a feeling of dissatisfaction ever crossed her, it arose from the idea that he was not perfectly happy. Desire of renown, and presumptuous ambition, had characterized his youth. The one he had acquired in Greece; the other he had sacrificed to love. His intellect found sufficient field for exercise in his domestic circle, whose members, all adorned by refinement and literature, were many of them, like himself, distinguished by genius. Yet active life was the genuine soil for his virtues; and he sometimes

suffered tedium from the monotonous succession of events in our retirement. Pride made him recoil from complaint; and gratitude and affection to Perdita, generally acted as an opiate to all desire, save that of meriting her love. We all observed the visitation of these feelings, and none regretted them so much as Perdita. Her life consecrated to him, was a slight sacrifice to reward his choice, but was not that sufficient—Did he need any gratification that she was unable to bestow? This was the only cloud in the azure of her happiness.

His passage to power had been full of pain to both. He however attained his wish; he filled the situation for which nature seemed to have moulded him. His activity was fed in wholesome measure, without either exhaustion or satiety; his taste and genius found worthy expression in each of the modes human beings have invented to engage and manifest the spirit of beauty; the goodness of his heart made him never weary of conducting to the well-being of his fellow-creatures; his magnificent spirit, and aspirations for the respect and love of mankind, now received fruition; true, his exaltation was temporary; perhaps it were better that it should be so. Habit would not dull his sense of the enjoyment of power; nor struggles, disappointment and defeat await the end of that which would expire at its maturity. He determined to extract and condense all of glory, power, and achievement, which might have resulted from a long reign, into the three years of his Protectorate.

Raymond was eminently social. All that he now enjoyed would have been devoid of pleasure to him, had it been unparticipated. But in Perdita he possessed all that his heart could desire. Her love gave birth to sympathy; her intelligence made her understand him at a word; her powers of intellect enabled her to assist and guide him. He felt her worth. During the early years of their union, the inequality of her temper, and yet unsubdued self-will which tarnished her character, had been a slight drawback to the fulness of his sentiment. Now that unchanged serenity, and gentle compliance were added to her other qualifications, his respect equalled his love. Years added to the strictness of their union. They did not now guess at, and totter on the pathway, divining the mode to please, hoping, yet fearing the continuance of bliss. Five years gave a sober certainty to their emotions, though it did not rob them of their ethereal nature. It had given them a child; but it had not detracted from the personal attractions of my sister. Timidity, which in her had almost amounted to awkwardness, was exchanged for a graceful decision of manner; frankness, instead of reserve, characterized her physiognomy; and her voice was attuned to thrilling softness. She was now three and twenty, in the pride of womanhood, fulfilling the precious duties of wife and mother, possessed of all her heart had ever coveted. Raymond was ten years older; to his previous beauty, noble mien, and commanding aspect, he now added

gentlest benevolence, winning tenderness, graceful and unwearied attention to the wishes of another.

The first secret that had existed between them was the visits of Raymond to Evadne. He had been struck by the fortitude and beauty of the ill-fated Greek; and, when her constant tenderness towards him unfolded itself, he asked with astonishment, by what act of his he had merited this passionate and unrequited love. She was for a while the sole object of his reveries; and Perdita became aware that his thoughts and time were bestowed on a subject unparticipated by her. My sister was by nature destitute of the common feelings of anxious, petulant jealousy. The treasure which she possessed in the affections of Raymond, was more necessary to her being, than the life-blood that animated her veins—more truly than Othello she might say,

To be once in doubt,
Is—once to be resolved.

On the present occasion she did not suspect any alienation of affection; but she conjectured that some circumstance connected with his high place, had occasioned this mystery. She was startled and pained. She began to count the long days, and months, and years which must elapse, before he would be restored to a private station, and unreservedly to her. She was not content that, even for a time, he should practice concealment with her. She often repined; but her trust in the singleness of his affection was undisturbed; and, when they were together, unchecked by fear, she opened her heart to the fullest delight.

Time went on. Raymond, stopping mid-way in his wild career, paused suddenly to think of consequences. Two results presented themselves in the view he took of the future. That his intercourse with Evadne should continue a secret to, or that finally it should be discovered by Perdita. The destitute condition, and highly wrought feelings of his friend prevented him from adverting to the possibility of exiling himself from her. In the first event he had bidden an eternal farewell to open-hearted converse, and entire sympathy with the companion of his life. The veil must be thicker than that invented by Turkish jealousy; the wall higher than the unscaleable tower of Vathek, which should conceal from her the workings of his heart, and hide from her view the secret of his actions. This idea was intolerably painful to him. Frankness and social feelings were the essence of Raymond's nature; without them his qualities became common-place; without these to spread glory over his intercourse with Perdita, his vaunted exchange of a throne for her love, was as weak and empty as the rainbow hues which vanish when the sun is down. But there was no remedy. Genius, devotion, and courage; the adornments of his mind, and the energies of his soul, all exerted to

their uttermost stretch, could not roll back one hair's breadth the wheel of time's chariot; that which had been written with the adamantine pen of reality, on the everlasting volume of the past; nor could agony and tears suffice to wash out one iota from the act fulfilled.

But this was the best side of the question. What, if circumstance should lead Perdita to suspect, and suspecting to be resolved? The fibres of his frame became relaxed, and cold dew stood on his forehead, at this idea. Many men may scoff at his dread; but he read the future; and the peace of Perdita was too dear to him, her speechless agony too certain, and too fearful, not to unman him. His course was speedily decided upon. If the worst befell; if she learnt the truth, he would neither stand her reproaches, or the anguish of her altered looks. He would forsake her, England, his friends, the scenes of his youth, the hopes of coming time, he would seek another country, and in other scenes begin life again. Having resolved on this, he became calmer. He endeavoured to guide with prudence the steeds of destiny through the devious road which he had chosen, and bent all his efforts the better to conceal what he could not alter.

The perfect confidence that subsisted between Perdita and him, rendered every communication common between them. They opened each other's letters, even as, until now, the inmost fold of the heart of each was disclosed to the other. A letter came unawares, Perdita read it. Had it contained confirmation, she must have been annihilated. As it was, trembling, cold, and pale, she sought Raymond. He was alone, examining some petitions lately presented. She entered silently, sat on a sofa opposite to him, and gazed on him with a look of such despair, that wildest shrieks and dire moans would have been tame exhibitions of misery, compared to the living incarnation of the thing itself exhibited by her.

At first he did not take his eyes from the papers; when he raised them, he was struck by the wretchedness manifest on her altered cheek; for a moment he forgot his own acts and fears, and asked with consternation—"Dearest girl, what is the matter; what has happened?"

"Nothing," she replied at first; "and yet not so," she continued, hurrying on in her speech; "you have secrets, Raymond; where have you been lately, whom have you seen, what do you conceal from me?—why am I banished from your confidence? Yet this is not it—I do not intend to entrap you with questions—one will suffice—am I completely a wretch?"

With trembling hand she gave him the paper, and sat white and motionless looking at him while he read it. He recognised the hand-writing of Evadne, and the colour

mounted in his cheeks. With lightning-speed he conceived the contents of the letter; all was now cast on one die; falsehood and artifice were trifles in comparison with the impending ruin. He would either entirely dispel Perdita's suspicions, or quit her for ever. "My dear girl," he said, "I have been to blame; but you must pardon me. I was in the wrong to commence a system of concealment; but I did it for the sake of sparing you pain; and each day has rendered it more difficult for me to alter my plan. Besides, I was instigated by delicacy towards the unhappy writer of these few lines."

Perdita gasped: "Well," she cried, "well, go on!"

"That is all—this paper tells all. I am placed in the most difficult circumstances. I have done my best, though perhaps I have done wrong. My love for you is inviolate."

Perdita shook her head doubtingly: "It cannot be," she cried, "I know that it is not. You would deceive me, but I will not be deceived. I have lost you, myself, my life!"

"Do you not believe me?" said Raymond haughtily.

"To believe you," she exclaimed, "I would give up all, and expire with joy, so that in death I could feel that you were true—but that cannot be!"

"Perdita," continued Raymond, "you do not see the precipice on which you stand. You may believe that I did not enter on my present line of conduct without reluctance and pain. I knew that it was possible that your suspicions might be excited; but I trusted that my simple word would cause them to disappear. I built my hope on your confidence. Do you think that I will be questioned, and my replies disdainfully set aside? Do you think that I will be suspected, perhaps watched, cross-questioned, and disbelieved? I am not yet fallen so low; my honour is not yet so tarnished. You have loved me; I adored you. But all human sentiments come to an end. Let our affection expire—but let it not be exchanged for distrust and recrimination. Heretofore we have been friends—lovers—let us not become enemies, mutual spies. I cannot live the object of suspicion—you cannot believe me—let us part!"

"Exactly so," cried Perdita, "I knew that it would come to this! Are we not already parted? Does not a stream, boundless as ocean, deep as vacuum, yawn between us?"

Raymond rose, his voice was broken, his features convulsed, his manner calm as the earthquake-cradling atmosphere, he replied: "I am rejoiced that you take my decision so philosophically. Doubtless you will play the part of the injured wife to admiration. Sometimes you may be stung with the feeling that you have wronged me, but the condolence of your relatives, the pity of the world, the complacency which the

consciousness of your own immaculate innocence will bestow, will be excellent balm;—me you will never see more!”

Raymond moved towards the door. He forgot that each word he spoke was false. He personated his assumption of innocence even to self-deception. Have not actors wept, as they portrayed imagined passion? A more intense feeling of the reality of fiction possessed Raymond. He spoke with pride; he felt injured. Perdita looked up; she saw his angry glance; his hand was on the lock of the door. She started up, she threw herself on his neck, she gasped and sobbed; he took her hand, and leading her to the sofa, sat down near her. Her head fell on his shoulder, she trembled, alternate changes of fire and ice ran through her limbs: observing her emotion he spoke with softened accents:

“The blow is given. I will not part from you in anger;—I owe you too much. I owe you six years of unalloyed happiness. But they are passed. I will not live the mark of suspicion, the object of jealousy. I love you too well. In an eternal separation only can either of us hope for dignity and propriety of action. We shall not then be degraded from our true characters. Faith and devotion have hitherto been the essence of our intercourse;—these lost, let us not cling to the seedless husk of life, the unkernelled shell. You have your child, your brother, Idris, Adrian”—

“And you,” cried Perdita, “the writer of that letter.”

Uncontrollable indignation flashed from the eyes of Raymond. He knew that this accusation at least was false. “Entertain this belief,” he cried, “hug it to your heart—make it a pillow to your head, an opiate for your eyes—I am content. But, by the God that made me, hell is not more false than the word you have spoken!”

Perdita was struck by the impassioned seriousness of his asseverations. She replied with earnestness, “I do not refuse to believe you, Raymond; on the contrary I promise to put implicit faith in your simple word. Only assure me that your love and faith towards me have never been violated; and suspicion, and doubt, and jealousy will at once be dispersed. We shall continue as we have ever done, one heart, one hope, one life.”

“I have already assured you of my fidelity,” said Raymond with disdainful coldness, “triple assertions will avail nothing where one is despised. I will say no more; for I can add nothing to what I have already said, to what you before contemptuously set aside. This contention is unworthy of both of us; and I confess that I am weary of replying to charges at once unfounded and unkind.”

Perdita tried to read his countenance, which he angrily averted. There was so much of truth and nature in his resentment, that her doubts were dispelled. Her countenance, which for years had not expressed a feeling unallied to affection, became again radiant and satisfied. She found it however no easy task to soften and reconcile Raymond. At first he refused to stay to hear her. But she would not be put off; secure of his unaltered love, she was willing to undertake any labour, use any entreaty, to dispel his anger. She obtained an hearing, he sat in haughty silence, but he listened. She first assured him of her boundless confidence; of this he must be conscious, since but for that she would not seek to detain him. She enumerated their years of happiness; she brought before him past scenes of intimacy and happiness; she pictured their future life, she mentioned their child—tears unbidden now filled her eyes. She tried to disperse them, but they refused to be checked—her utterance was choaked. She had not wept before. Raymond could not resist these signs of distress: he felt perhaps somewhat ashamed of the part he acted of the injured man, he who was in truth the injurer. And then he devoutly loved Perdita; the bend of her head, her glossy ringlets, the turn of her form were to him subjects of deep tenderness and admiration; as she spoke, her melodious tones entered his soul; he soon softened towards her, comforting and caressing her, and endeavouring to cheat himself into the belief that he had never wronged her.

Raymond staggered forth from this scene, as a man might do, who had been just put to the torture, and looked forward to when it would be again inflicted. He had sinned against his own honour, by affirming, swearing to, a direct falsehood; true this he had palmed on a woman, and it might therefore be deemed less base—by others—not by him;—for whom had he deceived?—his own trusting, devoted, affectionate Perdita, whose generous belief galled him doubly, when he remembered the parade of innocence with which it had been exacted. The mind of Raymond was not so rough cast, nor had been so rudely handled, in the circumstance of life, as to make him proof to these considerations—on the contrary, he was all nerve; his spirit was as a pure fire, which fades and shrinks from every contagion of foul atmosphere: but now the contagion had become incorporated with its essence, and the change was the more painful. Truth and falsehood, love and hate lost their eternal boundaries, heaven rushed in to mingle with hell; while his sensitive mind, turned to a field for such battle, was stung to madness. He heartily despised himself, he was angry with Perdita, and the idea of Evadne was attended by all that was hideous and cruel. His passions, always his masters, acquired fresh strength, from the long sleep in which love had cradled them, the clinging weight of destiny bent him down; he was goaded, tortured, fiercely impatient of that worst of miseries, the sense of remorse. This troubled state

yielded by degrees, to sullen animosity, and depression of spirits. His dependants, even his equals, if in his present post he had any, were startled to find anger, derision, and bitterness in one, before distinguished for suavity and benevolence of manner. He transacted public business with distaste, and hastened from it to the solitude which was at once his bane and relief. He mounted a fiery horse, that which had borne him forward to victory in Greece; he fatigued himself with deadening exercise, losing the pangs of a troubled mind in animal sensation.

He slowly recovered himself; yet, at last, as one might from the effects of poison, he lifted his head from above the vapours of fever and passion into the still atmosphere of calm reflection. He meditated on what was best to be done. He was first struck by the space of time that had elapsed, since madness, rather than any reasonable impulse, had regulated his actions. A month had gone by, and during that time he had not seen Evadne. Her power, which was linked to few of the enduring emotions of his heart, had greatly decayed. He was no longer her slave—no longer her lover: he would never see her more, and by the completeness of his return, deserve the confidence of Perdita.

Yet, as he thus determined, fancy conjured up the miserable abode of the Greek girl. An abode, which from noble and lofty principle, she had refused to exchange for one of greater luxury. He thought of the splendour of her situation and appearance when he first knew her; he thought of her life at Constantinople, attended by every circumstance of oriental magnificence; of her present penury, her daily task of industry, her lorn state, her faded, famine-struck cheek. Compassion swelled his breast; he would see her once again; he would devise some plan for restoring her to society, and the enjoyment of her rank; their separation would then follow, as a matter of course.

Again he thought, how during this long month, he had avoided Perdita, flying from her as from the stings of his own conscience. But he was awake now; all this should be remedied; and future devotion erase the memory of this only blot on the serenity of their life. He became cheerful, as he thought of this, and soberly and resolutely marked out the line of conduct he would adopt. He remembered that he had promised Perdita to be present this very evening (the 19th of October, anniversary of his election as Protector) at a festival given in his honour. Good augury should this festival be of the happiness of future years. First, he would look in on Evadne; he would not stay; but he owed her some account, some compensation for his long and unannounced absence; and then to Perdita, to the forgotten world, to the duties of society, the splendour of rank, the enjoyment of power.

After the scene sketched in the preceding pages, Perdita had contemplated an entire change in the manners and conduct of Raymond. She expected freedom of communication, and a return to those habits of affectionate intercourse which had formed the delight of her life. But Raymond did not join her in any of her avocations. He transacted the business of the day apart from her; he went out, she knew not whither. The pain inflicted by this disappointment was tormenting and keen. She looked on it as a deceitful dream, and tried to throw off the consciousness of it; but like the shirt of Nessus, it clung to her very flesh, and ate with sharp agony into her vital principle. She possessed that (though such an assertion may appear a paradox) which belongs to few, a capacity of happiness. Her delicate organization and creative imagination rendered her peculiarly susceptible of pleasurable emotion. The overflowing warmth of her heart, by making love a plant of deep root and stately growth, had attuned her whole soul to the reception of happiness, when she found in Raymond all that could adorn love and satisfy her imagination. But if the sentiment on which the fabric of her existence was founded, became common place through participation, the endless succession of attentions and graceful action snapt by transfer, his universe of love wrested from her, happiness must depart, and then be exchanged for its opposite. The same peculiarities of character rendered her sorrows agonies; her fancy magnified them, her sensibility made her for ever open to their renewed impression; love envenomed the heart-piercing sting. There was neither submission, patience, nor self-abandonment in her grief; she fought with it, struggled beneath it, and rendered every pang more sharp by resistance. Again and again the idea recurred, that he loved another. She did him justice; she believed that he felt a tender affection for her; but give a paltry prize to him who in some life-pending lottery has calculated on the possession of tens of thousands, and it will disappoint him more than a blank. The affection and amity of a Raymond might be inestimable; but, beyond that affection, embosomed deeper than friendship, was the indivisible treasure of love. Take the sum in its completeness, and no arithmetic can calculate its price; take from it the smallest portion, give it but the name of parts, separate it into degrees and sections, and like the magician's coin, the valueless gold of the mine, is turned to vilest substance. There is a meaning in the eye of love; a cadence in its voice, an irradiation in its smile, the talisman of whose enchantments one only can possess; its spirit is elemental, its essence single, its divinity an unit. The very heart and soul of Raymond and Perdita had mingled, even as two mountain brooks that join in their descent, and murmuring and sparkling flow over shining pebbles, beside starry flowers; but let one desert its primal course, or be dammed up by choking obstruction, and the other shrinks in its altered banks. Perdita was sensible of the failing of the tide that fed her life. Unable to support the slow withering of her hopes,

she suddenly formed a plan, resolving to terminate at once the period of misery, and to bring to an happy conclusion the late disastrous events.

The anniversary was at hand of the exaltation of Raymond to the office of Protector; and it was customary to celebrate this day by a splendid festival. A variety of feelings urged Perdita to shed double magnificence over the scene; yet, as she arrayed herself for the evening gala, she wondered herself at the pains she took, to render sumptuous the celebration of an event which appeared to her the beginning of her sufferings. Woe befall the day, she thought, woe, tears, and mourning betide the hour, that gave Raymond another hope than love, another wish than my devotion; and thrice joyful the moment when he shall be restored to me! God knows, I put my trust in his vows, and believe his asserted faith—but for that, I would not seek what I am now resolved to attain. Shall two years more be thus passed, each day adding to our alienation, each act being another stone piled on the barrier which separates us? No, my Raymond, my only beloved, sole possession of Perdita! This night, this splendid assembly, these sumptuous apartments, and this adornment of your tearful girl, are all united to celebrate your abdication. Once for me, you relinquished the prospect of a crown. That was in days of early love, when I could only hold out the hope, not the assurance of happiness. Now you have the experience of all that I can give, the heart's devotion, taintless love, and unhesitating subjection to you. You must choose between these and your protectorate. This, proud noble, is your last night! Perdita has bestowed on it all of magnificent and dazzling that your heart best loves—but, from these gorgeous rooms, from this princely attendance, from power and elevation, you must return with to-morrow's sun to our rural abode; for I would not buy an immortality of joy, by the endurance of one more week sister to the last.

Brooding over this plan, resolved when the hour should come, to propose, and insist upon its accomplishment, secure of his consent, the heart of Perdita was lightened, or rather exalted. Her cheek was flushed by the expectation of struggle; her eyes sparkled with the hope of triumph. Having cast her fate upon a die, and feeling secure of winning, she, whom I have named as bearing the stamp of queen of nations on her noble brow, now rose superior to humanity, and seemed in calm power, to arrest with her finger, the wheel of destiny. She had never before looked so supremely lovely.

We, the Arcadian shepherds of the tale, had intended to be present at this festivity, but Perdita wrote to entreat us not to come, or to absent ourselves from Windsor; for she (though she did not reveal her scheme to us) resolved the next morning to return with Raymond to our dear circle, there to renew a course of life in which she had found entire felicity. Late in the evening she entered the apartments appropriated to the festival. Raymond had quitted the palace the night before; he had promised to grace

the assembly, but he had not yet returned. Still she felt sure that he would come at last; and the wider the breach might appear at this crisis, the more secure she was of closing it for ever.

It was as I said, the nineteenth of October; the autumn was far advanced and dreary. The wind howled; the half bare trees were despoiled of the remainder of their summer ornament; the state of the air which induced the decay of vegetation, was hostile to cheerfulness or hope. Raymond had been exalted by the determination he had made; but with the declining day his spirits declined. First he was to visit Evadne, and then to hasten to the palace of the Protectorate. As he walked through the wretched streets in the neighbourhood of the luckless Greek's abode, his heart smote him for the whole course of his conduct towards her. First, his having entered into any engagement that should permit her to remain in such a state of degradation; and then, after a short wild dream, having left her to drear solitude, anxious conjecture, and bitter, still—disappointed expectation. What had she done the while, how supported his absence and neglect? Light grew dim in these close streets, and when the well known door was opened, the staircase was shrouded in perfect night. He groped his way up, he entered the garret, he found Evadne stretched speechless, almost lifeless on her wretched bed. He called for the people of the house, but could learn nothing from them, except that they knew nothing. Her story was plain to him, plain and distinct as the remorse and horror that darted their fangs into him. When she found herself forsaken by him, she lost the heart to pursue her usual avocations; pride forbade every application to him; famine was welcomed as the kind porter to the gates of death, within whose opening folds she should now, without sin, quickly repose. No creature came near her, as her strength failed.

If she died, where could there be found on record a murderer, whose cruel act might compare with his? What fiend more wanton in his mischief, what damned soul more worthy of perdition! But he was not reserved for this agony of self-reproach. He sent for medical assistance; the hours passed, spun by suspense into ages; the darkness of the long autumnal night yielded to day, before her life was secure. He had her then removed to a more commodious dwelling, and hovered about her, again and again to assure himself that she was safe.

In the midst of his greatest suspense and fear as to the event, he remembered the festival given in his honour, by Perdita; in his honour then, when misery and death were affixing indelible disgrace to his name, honour to him whose crimes deserved a scaffold; this was the worst mockery. Still Perdita would expect him; he wrote a few incoherent words on a scrap of paper, testifying that he was well, and bade the woman of the house take it to the palace, and deliver it into the hands of the wife of

the Lord Protector. The woman, who did not know him, contemptuously asked, how he thought she should gain admittance, particularly on a festal night, to that lady's presence? Raymond gave her his ring to ensure the respect of the menials. Thus, while Perdita was entertaining her guests, and anxiously awaiting the arrival of her lord, his ring was brought her; and she was told that a poor woman had a note to deliver to her from its wearer.

The vanity of the old gossip was raised by her commission, which, after all, she did not understand, since she had no suspicion, even now that Evadne's visitor was Lord Raymond. Perdita dreaded a fall from his horse, or some similar accident—till the woman's answers woke other fears. From a feeling of cunning blindly exercised, the officious, if not malignant messenger, did not speak of Evadne's illness; but she garrulously gave an account of Raymond's frequent visits, adding to her narration such circumstances, as, while they convinced Perdita of its truth, exaggerated the unkindness and perfidy of Raymond. Worst of all, his absence now from the festival, his message wholly unaccounted for, except by the disgraceful hints of the woman, appeared the deadliest insult. Again she looked at the ring, it was a small ruby, almost heart-shaped, which she had herself given him. She looked at the hand-writing, which she could not mistake, and repeated to herself the words—"Do not, I charge you, I entreat you, permit your guests to wonder at my absence:" the while the old crone going on with her talk, filled her ear with a strange medley of truth and falsehood. At length Perdita dismissed her.

The poor girl returned to the assembly, where her presence had not been missed. She glided into a recess somewhat obscured, and leaning against an ornamental column there placed, tried to recover herself. Her faculties were palsied. She gazed on some flowers that stood near in a carved vase: that morning she had arranged them, they were rare and lovely plants; even now all aghast as she was, she observed their brilliant colours and starry shapes.—"Divine infoliations of the spirit of beauty," she exclaimed, "Ye droop not, neither do ye mourn; the despair that clasps my heart, has not spread contagion over you!—Why am I not a partner of your insensibility, a sharer in your calm!"

She paused. "To my task," she continued mentally, "my guests must not perceive the reality, either as it regards him or me. I obey; they shall not, though I die the moment they are gone. They shall behold the antipodes of what is real—for I will appear to live—while I am—dead." It required all her self-command, to suppress the gush of tears self-pity caused at this idea. After many struggles, she succeeded, and turned to join the company.

All her efforts were now directed to the dissembling her internal conflict. She had to play the part of a courteous hostess; to attend to all; to shine the focus of enjoyment and grace. She had to do this, while in deep woe she sighed for loneliness, and would gladly have exchanged her crowded rooms for dark forest depths, or a drear, night-enshadowed heath. But she became gay. She could not keep in the medium, nor be, as was usual with her, placidly content. Every one remarked her exhilaration of spirits; as all actions appear graceful in the eye of rank, her guests surrounded her applaudingly, although there was a sharpness in her laugh, and an abruptness in her sallies, which might have betrayed her secret to an attentive observer. She went on, feeling that, if she had paused for a moment, the checked waters of misery would have deluged her soul, that her wrecked hopes would raise their wailing voices, and that those who now echoed her mirth, and provoked her repartees, would have shrunk in fear from her convulsive despair. Her only consolation during the violence which she did herself, was to watch the motions of an illuminated clock, and internally count the moments which must elapse before she could be alone.

At length the rooms began to thin. Mocking her own desires, she rallied her guests on their early departure. One by one they left her—at length she pressed the hand of her last visitor. “How cold and damp your hand is,” said her friend; “you are over fatigued, pray hasten to rest.” Perdita smiled faintly—her guest left her; the carriage rolling down the street assured the final departure. Then, as if pursued by an enemy, as if wings had been at her feet, she flew to her own apartment, she dismissed her attendants, she locked the doors, she threw herself wildly on the floor, she bit her lips even to blood to suppress her shrieks, and lay long a prey to the vulture of despair, striving not to think, while multitudinous ideas made a home of her heart; and ideas, horrid as furies, cruel as vipers, and poured in with such swift succession, that they seemed to jostle and wound each other, while they worked her up to madness.

At length she rose, more composed, not less miserable. She stood before a large mirror—she gazed on her reflected image; her light and graceful dress, the jewels that studded her hair, and encircled her beauteous arms and neck, her small feet shod in satin, her profuse and glossy tresses, all were to her clouded brow and woe-begone countenance like a gorgeous frame to a dark tempest-pourtraying picture. “Vase am I,” she thought, “vase brimful of despair’s direst essence. Farewell, Perdita! farewell, poor girl! never again will you see yourself thus; luxury and wealth are no longer yours; in the excess of your poverty you may envy the homeless beggar; most truly am I without a home! I live on a barren desert, which, wide and interminable, brings forth neither fruit or flower; in the midst is a solitary rock, to which thou, Perdita, art chained, and thou seest the dreary level stretch far away.”

She threw open her window, which looked on the palace-garden. Light and darkness were struggling together, and the orient was streaked by roseate and golden rays. One star only trembled in the depth of the kindling atmosphere. The morning air blowing freshly over the dewy plants, rushed into the heated room. "All things go on," thought Perdita, "all things proceed, decay, and perish! When noontide has passed, and the weary day has driven her team to their western stalls, the fires of heaven rise from the East, moving in their accustomed path, they ascend and descend the skiey hill. When their course is fulfilled, the dial begins to cast westward an uncertain shadow; the eye-lids of day are opened, and birds and flowers, the startled vegetation, and fresh breeze awaken; the sun at length appears, and in majestic procession climbs the capitol of heaven. All proceeds, changes and dies, except the sense of misery in my bursting heart.

"Ay, all proceeds and changes: what wonder then, that love has journied on to its setting, and that the lord of my life has changed? We call the supernal lights fixed, yet they wander about yonder plain, and if I look again where I looked an hour ago, the face of the eternal heavens is altered. The silly moon and inconstant planets vary nightly their erratic dance; the sun itself, sovereign of the sky, ever and anon deserts his throne, and leaves his dominion to night and winter. Nature grows old, and shakes in her decaying limbs,—creation has become bankrupt! What wonder then, that eclipse and death have led to destruction the light of thy life, O Perdita!"

CHAPTER IX.

Thus sad and disarranged were the thoughts of my poor sister, when she became assured of the infidelity of Raymond. All her virtues and all her defects tended to make the blow incurable. Her affection for me, her brother, for Adrian and Idris, was subject as it were to the reigning passion of her heart; even her maternal tenderness borrowed half its force from the delight she had in tracing Raymond's features and expression in the infant's countenance. She had been reserved and even stern in childhood; but love had softened the asperities of her character, and her union with Raymond had caused her talents and affections to unfold themselves; the one betrayed, and the other lost, she in some degree returned to her ancient disposition. The concentrated pride of her nature, forgotten during her blissful dream, awoke, and with its adder's sting pierced her heart; her humility of spirit augmented the power of the venom; she had been exalted in her own estimation, while distinguished by his love: of what worth was she, now that he thrust her from this preferment? She had been proud of having won and preserved him—but another had won him from her, and her exultation was as cold as a water quenched ember.

We, in our retirement, remained long in ignorance of her misfortune. Soon after the festival she had sent for her child, and then she seemed to have forgotten us. Adrian observed a change during a visit that he afterward paid them; but he could not tell its extent, or divine the cause. They still appeared in public together, and lived under the same roof. Raymond was as usual courteous, though there was, on occasions, an unbidden haughtiness, or painful abruptness in his manners, which startled his gentle friend; his brow was not clouded but disdain sat on his lips, and his voice was harsh. Perdita was all kindness and attention to her lord; but she was silent, and beyond words sad. She had grown thin and pale; and her eyes often filled with tears. Sometimes she looked at Raymond, as if to say—That it should be so! At others her countenance expressed—I will still do all I can to make you happy. But Adrian read with uncertain aim the character of her face, and might mistake.—Clara was always with her, and she seemed most at ease, when, in an obscure corner, she could sit holding her child's hand, silent and lonely. Still Adrian was unable to guess the truth; he entreated them to visit us at Windsor, and they promised to come during the following month.

It was May before they arrived: the season had decked the forest trees with leaves, and its paths with a thousand flowers. We had notice of their intention the day before; and, early in the morning, Perdita arrived with her daughter. Raymond would follow soon, she said; he had been detained by business. According to Adrian's account, I had expected to find her sad; but, on the contrary, she appeared in the highest spirits: true, she had grown thin, her eyes were somewhat hollow, and her cheeks sunk, though tinged by a bright glow. She was delighted to see us; caressed our children, praised their growth and improvement; Clara also was pleased to meet again her young friend Alfred; all kinds of childish games were entered into, in which Perdita joined. She communicated her gaiety to us, and as we amused ourselves on the Castle Terrace, it appeared that a happier, less care-worn party could not have been assembled. "This is better, Mamma," said Clara, "than being in that dismal London, where you often cry, and never laugh as you do now."—"Silence, little foolish thing," replied her mother, "and remember any one that mentions London is sent to Coventry for an hour."

Soon after, Raymond arrived. He did not join as usual in the playful spirit of the rest; but, entering into conversation with Adrian and myself, by degrees we seceded from our companions, and Idris and Perdita only remained with the children. Raymond talked of his new buildings; of his plan for an establishment for the better education of the poor; as usual Adrian and he entered into argument, and the time slipped away unperceived.

We assembled again towards evening, and Perdita insisted on our having recourse to music. She wanted, she said, to give us a specimen of her new accomplishment; for since she had been in London, she had applied herself to music, and sang, without much power, but with a great deal of sweetness. We were not permitted by her to select any but light-hearted melodies; and all the Operas of Mozart were called into service, that we might choose the most exhilarating of his airs. Among the other transcendent attributes of Mozart's music, it possesses more than any other that of appearing to come from the heart; you enter into the passions expressed by him, and are transported with grief, joy, anger, or confusion, as he, our soul's master, chooses to inspire. For some time, the spirit of hilarity was kept up; but, at length, Perdita receded from the piano, for Raymond had joined in the trio of "*Taci ingiusto core*," in Don Giovanni, whose arch entreaty was softened by him into tenderness, and thrilled her heart with memories of the changed past; it was the same voice, the same tone, the self-same sounds and words, which often before she had received, as the homage of love to her—no longer was it that; and this concord of sound with its dissonance of expression penetrated her with regret and despair. Soon after Idris, who was at the harp, turned to that passionate and sorrowful air in Figaro, "*Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro*," in which the deserted Countess laments the change of the faithless Almaviva. The soul of tender sorrow is breathed forth in this strain; and the sweet voice of Idris, sustained by the mournful chords of her instrument, added to the expression of the words. During the pathetic appeal with which it concludes, a stifled sob attracted our attention to Perdita, the cessation of the music recalled her to herself, she hastened out of the hall—I followed her. At first, she seemed to wish to shun me; and then, yielding to my earnest questioning, she threw herself on my neck, and wept aloud:—"Once more," she cried, "once more on your friendly breast, my beloved brother, can the lost Perdita pour forth her sorrows. I had imposed a law of silence on myself; and for months I have kept it. I do wrong in weeping now, and greater wrong in giving words to my grief. I will not speak! Be it enough for you to know that I am miserable—be it enough for you to know, that the painted veil of life is rent, that I sit for ever shrouded in darkness and gloom, that grief is my sister, everlasting lamentation my mate!"

I endeavoured to console her; I did not question her! but I caressed her, assured her of my deepest affection and my intense interest in the changes of her fortune:—"Dear words," she cried, "expressions of love come upon my ear, like the remembered sounds of forgotten music, that had been dear to me. They are vain, I know; how very vain in their attempt to soothe or comfort me. Dearest Lionel, you cannot guess what I have suffered during these long months. I have read of mourners in ancient days, who clothed themselves in sackcloth, scattered dust upon their heads, ate their bread

mingled with ashes, and took up their abode on the bleak mountain tops, reproaching heaven and earth aloud with their misfortunes. Why this is the very luxury of sorrow! thus one might go on from day to day contriving new extravagances, revelling in the paraphernalia of woe, wedded to all the appurtenances of despair. Alas! I must for ever conceal the wretchedness that consumes me. I must weave a veil of dazzling falsehood to hide my grief from vulgar eyes, smoothe my brow, and paint my lips in deceitful smiles—even in solitude I dare not think how lost I am, lest I become insane and rave.”

The tears and agitation of my poor sister had rendered her unfit to return to the circle we had left—so I persuaded her to let me drive her through the park; and, during the ride, I induced her to confide the tale of her unhappiness to me, fancying that talking of it would lighten the burthen, and certain that, if there were a remedy, it should be found and secured to her.

Several weeks had elapsed since the festival of the anniversary, and she had been unable to calm her mind, or to subdue her thoughts to any regular train. Sometimes she reproached herself for taking too bitterly to heart, that which many would esteem an imaginary evil; but this was no subject for reason; and, ignorant as she was of the motives and true conduct of Raymond, things assumed for her even a worse appearance, than the reality warranted. He was seldom at the palace; never, but when he was assured that his public duties would prevent his remaining alone with Perdita. They seldom addressed each other, shunning explanation, each fearing any communication the other might make. Suddenly, however, the manners of Raymond changed; he appeared to desire to find opportunities of bringing about a return to kindness and intimacy with my sister. The tide of love towards her appeared to flow again; he could never forget, how once he had been devoted to her, making her the shrine and storehouse wherein to place every thought and every sentiment. Shame seemed to hold him back; yet he evidently wished to establish a renewal of confidence and affection. From the moment Perdita had sufficiently recovered herself to form any plan of action, she had laid one down, which now she prepared to follow. She received these tokens of returning love with gentleness; she did not shun his company; but she endeavoured to place a barrier in the way of familiar intercourse or painful discussion, which mingled pride and shame prevented Raymond from surmounting. He began at last to shew signs of angry impatience, and Perdita became aware that the system she had adopted could not continue; she must explain herself to him; she could not summon courage to speak—she wrote thus:—

“Read this letter with patience, I entreat you. It will contain no reproaches. Reproach is indeed an idle word: for what should I reproach you?

“Allow me in some degree to explain my feeling; without that, we shall both grope in the dark, mistaking one another; erring from the path which may conduct, one of us at least, to a more eligible mode of life than that led by either during the last few weeks.

“I loved you—I love you—neither anger nor pride dictates these lines; but a feeling beyond, deeper, and more unalterable than either. My affections are wounded; it is impossible to heal them:—cease then the vain endeavour, if indeed that way your endeavours tend. Forgiveness! Return! Idle words are these! I forgive the pain I endure; but the trodden path cannot be retraced.

“Common affection might have been satisfied with common usages. I believed that you read my heart, and knew its devotion, its unalienable fidelity towards you. I never loved any but you. You came the embodied image of my fondest dreams. The praise of men, power and high aspirations attended your career. Love for you invested the world for me in enchanted light; it was no longer the earth I trod—the earth, common mother, yielding only trite and stale repetition of objects and circumstances old and worn out. I lived in a temple glorified by intensest sense of devotion and rapture; I walked, a consecrated being, contemplating only your power, your excellence;

For O, you stood beside me, like my youth,
Transformed for me the real to a dream,
Cloathing the palpable and familiar
With golden exhalations of the dawn.

‘The bloom has vanished from my life’—there is no morning to this all investing night; no rising to the set-sun of love. In those days the rest of the world was nothing to me: all other men—I never considered nor felt what they were; nor did I look on you as one of them. Separated from them; exalted in my heart; sole possessor of my affections; single object of my hopes, the best half of myself.

“Ah, Raymond, were we not happy? Did the sun shine on any, who could enjoy its light with purer and more intense bliss? It was not—it is not a common infidelity at which I repine. It is the disunion of an whole which may not have parts; it is the carelessness with which you have shaken off the mantle of election with which to me you were invested, and have become one among the many. Dream not to alter this. Is not love a divinity, because it is immortal? Did not I appear sanctified, even to myself, because this love had for its temple my heart? I have gazed on you as you slept, melted even to tears, as the idea filled my mind, that all I possessed lay cradled in those idolized, but mortal lineaments before me. Yet, even then, I have checked thick-coming fears with one thought; I would not fear death, for the emotions that linked us must be immortal.

“And now I do not fear death. I should be well pleased to close my eyes, never more to open them again. And yet I fear it; even as I fear all things; for in any state of being linked by the chain of memory with this, happiness would not return—even in Paradise, I must feel that your love was less enduring than the mortal beatings of my fragile heart, every pulse of which knells audibly,

The funeral note
Of love, deep buried, without resurrection.

No—no—me miserable; for love extinct there is no resurrection!

“Yet I love you. Yet, and for ever, would I contribute all I possess to your welfare. On account of a tattling world; for the sake of my—of our child, I would remain by you, Raymond, share your fortunes, partake your counsel. Shall it be thus? We are no longer lovers; nor can I call myself a friend to any; since, lost as I am, I have no thought to spare from my own wretched, engrossing self. But it will please me to see you each day! to listen to the public voice praising you; to keep up your paternal love for our girl; to hear your voice; to know that I am near you, though you are no longer mine.

“If you wish to break the chains that bind us, say the word, and it shall be done—I will take all the blame on myself, of harshness or unkindness, in the world’s eye.

“Yet, as I have said, I should be best pleased, at least for the present, to live under the same roof with you. When the fever of my young life is spent; when placid age shall tame the vulture that devours me, friendship may come, love and hope being dead. May this be true? Can my soul, inextricably linked to this perishable frame, become lethargic and cold, even as this sensitive mechanism shall lose its youthful elasticity? Then, with lack-lustre eyes, grey hairs, and wrinkled brow, though now the words sound hollow and meaningless, then, tottering on the grave’s extreme edge, I may be—your affectionate and true friend,

“PERDITA.”

Raymond’s answer was brief. What indeed could he reply to her complaints, to her griefs which she jealously paled round, keeping out all thought of remedy.

“Notwithstanding your bitter letter,” he wrote, “for bitter I must call it, you are the chief person in my estimation, and it is your happiness that I would principally consult. Do that which seems best to you: and if you can receive gratification from one mode of life in preference to another, do not let me be any obstacle. I foresee that the plan which you mark out in your letter will not endure long; but you are mistress of yourself, and it is my sincere wish to contribute as far as you will permit me to your happiness.”

“Raymond has prophesied well,” said Perdita, “alas, that it should be so! our present mode of life cannot continue long, yet I will not be the first to propose alteration. He beholds in me one whom he has injured even unto death; and I derive no hope from his kindness; no change can possibly be brought about even by his best intentions. As well might Cleopatra have worn as an ornament the vinegar which contained her dissolved pearl, as I be content with the love that Raymond can now offer me.”

I own that I did not see her misfortune with the same eyes as Perdita. At all events methought that the wound could be healed; and, if they remained together, it would be so. I endeavoured therefore to sooth and soften her mind; and it was not until after many endeavours that I gave up the task as impracticable. Perdita listened to me impatiently, and answered with some asperity:—“Do you think that any of your arguments are new to me? or that my own burning wishes and intense anguish have not suggested them all a thousand times, with far more eagerness and subtlety than you can put into them? Lionel, you cannot understand what woman’s love is. In days of happiness I have often repeated to myself, with a grateful heart and exulting spirit, all that Raymond sacrificed for me. I was a poor, uneducated, unbefriended, mountain girl, raised from nothingness by him. All that I possessed of the luxuries of life came from him. He gave me an illustrious name and noble station; the world’s respect reflected from his own glory: all this joined to his own undying love, inspired me with sensations towards him, akin to those with which we regard the Giver of life. I gave him love only. I devoted myself to him: imperfect creature that I was, I took myself to task, that I might become worthy of him. I watched over my hasty temper, subdued my burning impatience of character, schooled my self-engrossing thoughts, educating myself to the best perfection I might attain, that the fruit of my exertions might be his happiness. I took no merit to myself for this. He deserved it all—all labour, all devotion, all sacrifice; I would have toiled up a scaleless Alp, to pluck a flower that would please him. I was ready to quit you all, my beloved and gifted companions, and to live only with him, for him. I could not do otherwise, even if I had wished; for if we are said to have two souls, he was my better soul, to which the other was a perpetual slave. One only return did he owe me, even fidelity. I earned that; I deserved it. Because I was mountain bred, unallied to the noble and wealthy, shall he think to repay me by an empty name and station? Let him take them back; without his love they are nothing to me. Their only merit in my eyes was that they were his.”

Thus passionately Perdita ran on. When I adverted to the question of their entire separation, she replied: “Be it so! One day the period will arrive; I know it, and feel it. But in this I am a coward. This imperfect companionship, and our masquerade of union, are strangely dear to me. It is painful, I allow, destructive, impracticable. It

keeps up a perpetual fever in my veins; it frets my immedicable wound; it is instinct with poison. Yet I must cling to it; perhaps it will kill me soon, and thus perform a thankful office.”

In the mean time, Raymond had remained with Adrian and Idris. He was naturally frank; the continued absence of Perdita and myself became remarkable; and Raymond soon found relief from the constraint of months, by an unreserved confidence with his two friends. He related to them the situation in which he had found Evadne. At first, from delicacy to Adrian he concealed her name; but it was divulged in the course of his narrative, and her former lover heard with the most acute agitation the history of her sufferings. Idris had shared Perdita’s ill opinion of the Greek; but Raymond’s account softened and interested her. Evadne’s constancy, fortitude, even her ill-fated and ill-regulated love, were matter of admiration and pity; especially when, from the detail of the events of the nineteenth of October, it was apparent that she preferred suffering and death to any in her eyes degrading application for the pity and assistance of her lover. Her subsequent conduct did not diminish this interest. At first, relieved from famine and the grave, watched over by Raymond with the tenderest assiduity, with that feeling of repose peculiar to convalescence, Evadne gave herself up to rapturous gratitude and love. But reflection returned with health. She questioned him with regard to the motives which had occasioned his critical absence. She framed her enquiries with Greek subtlety; she formed her conclusions with the decision and firmness peculiar to her disposition. She could not divine, that the breach which she had occasioned between Raymond and Perdita was already irreparable: but she knew, that under the present system it would be widened each day, and that its result must be to destroy her lover’s happiness, and to implant the fangs of remorse in his heart. From the moment that she perceived the right line of conduct, she resolved to adopt it, and to part from Raymond for ever. Conflicting passions, long-cherished love, and self-inflicted disappointment, made her regard death alone as sufficient refuge for her woe. But the same feelings and opinions which had before restrained her, acted with redoubled force; for she knew that the reflection that he had occasioned her death, would pursue Raymond through life, poisoning every enjoyment, clouding every prospect. Besides, though the violence of her anguish made life hateful, it had not yet produced that monotonous, lethargic sense of changeless misery which for the most part produces suicide. Her energy of character induced her still to combat with the ills of life; even those attendant on hopeless love presented themselves, rather in the shape of an adversary to be overcome, than of a victor to whom she must submit. Besides, she had memories of past tenderness to cherish, smiles, words, and even tears, to

con over, which, though remembered in desertion and sorrow, were to be preferred to the forgetfulness of the grave. It was impossible to guess at the whole of her plan. Her letter to Raymond gave no clue for discovery; it assured him, that she was in no danger of wanting the means of life; she promised in it to preserve herself, and some future day perhaps to present herself to him in a station not unworthy of her. She then bade him, with the eloquence of despair and of unalterable love, a last farewell.

All these circumstances were now related to Adrian and Idris. Raymond then lamented the cureless evil of his situation with Perdita. He declared, notwithstanding her harshness, he even called it coldness, that he loved her. He had been ready once with the humility of a penitent, and the duty of a vassal, to surrender himself to her; giving up his very soul to her tutelage, to become her pupil, her slave, her bondsman. She had rejected these advances; and the time for such exuberant submission, which must be founded on love and nourished by it, was now passed. Still all his wishes and endeavours were directed towards her peace, and his chief discomfort arose from the perception that he exerted himself in vain. If she were to continue inflexible in the line of conduct she now pursued, they must part. The combinations and occurrences of this senseless mode of intercourse were maddening to him. Yet he would not propose the separation. He was haunted by the fear of causing the death of one or other of the beings implicated in these events; and he could not persuade himself to undertake to direct the course of events, lest, ignorant of the land he traversed, he should lead those attached to the car into irremediable ruin.

After a discussion on this subject, which lasted for several hours, he took leave of his friends, and returned to town, unwilling to meet Perdita before us, conscious, as we all must be, of the thoughts uppermost in the minds of both. Perdita prepared to follow him with her child. Idris endeavoured to persuade her to remain. My poor sister looked at the counsellor with affright. She knew that Raymond had conversed with her; had he instigated this request?—was this to be the prelude to their eternal separation?—I have said, that the defects of her character awoke and acquired vigour from her unnatural position. She regarded with suspicion the invitation of Idris; she embraced me, as if she were about to be deprived of my affection also: calling me her more than brother, her only friend, her last hope, she pathetically conjured me not to cease to love her; and with increased anxiety she departed for London, the scene and cause of all her misery.

The scenes that followed, convinced her that she had not yet fathomed the obscure gulph into which she had plunged. Her unhappiness assumed every day a new shape; every day some unexpected event seemed to close, while in fact it led onward, the train of calamities which now befell her.

The selected passion of the soul of Raymond was ambition. Readiness of talent, a capacity of entering into, and leading the dispositions of men; earnest desire of distinction were the awakers and nurses of his ambition. But other ingredients mingled with these, and prevented him from becoming the calculating, determined character, which alone forms a successful hero. He was obstinate, but not firm; benevolent in his first movements; harsh and reckless when provoked. Above all, he was remorseless and unyielding in the pursuit of any object of desire, however lawless. Love of pleasure, and the softer sensibilities of our nature, made a prominent part of his character, conquering the conqueror; holding him in at the moment of acquisition; sweeping away ambition's web; making him forget the toil of weeks, for the sake of one moment's indulgence of the new and actual object of his wishes. Obeying these impulses, he had become the husband of Perdita: egged on by them, he found himself the lover of Evadne. He had now lost both. He had neither the ennobling self-gratulation, which constancy inspires, to console him, nor the voluptuous sense of abandonment to a forbidden, but intoxicating passion. His heart was exhausted by the recent events; his enjoyment of life was destroyed by the resentment of Perdita, and the flight of Evadne; and the inflexibility of the former, set the last seal upon the annihilation of his hopes. As long as their disunion remained a secret, he cherished an expectation of re-awakening past tenderness in her bosom; now that we were all made acquainted with these occurrences, and that Perdita, by declaring her resolves to others, in a manner pledged herself to their accomplishment, he gave up the idea of re-union as futile, and sought only, since he was unable to influence her to change, to reconcile himself to the present state of things. He made a vow against love and its train of struggles, disappointment and remorse, and sought in mere sensual enjoyment, a remedy for the injurious inroads of passion.

Debasement of character is the certain follower of such pursuits. Yet this consequence would not have been immediately remarkable, if Raymond had continued to apply himself to the execution of his plans for the public benefit, and the fulfilling his duties as Protector. But, extreme in all things, given up to immediate impressions, he entered with ardour into this new pursuit of pleasure, and followed up the incongruous intimacies occasioned by it without reflection or foresight. The council-chamber was deserted; the crowds which attended on him as agents to his various projects were neglected. Festivity, and even libertinism, became the order of the day.

Perdita beheld with affright the encreasing disorder. For a moment she thought that she could stem the torrent, and that Raymond could be induced to hear reason from

her.—Vain hope! The moment of her influence was passed. He listened with haughtiness, replied disdainfully; and, if in truth, she succeeded in awakening his conscience, the sole effect was that he sought an opiate for the pang in oblivious riot. With the energy natural to her, Perdita then endeavoured to supply his place. Their still apparent union permitted her to do much; but no woman could, in the end, present a remedy to the encreasing negligence of the Protector; who, as if seized with a paroxysm of insanity, trampled on all ceremony, all order, all duty, and gave himself up to license.

Reports of these strange proceedings reached us, and we were undecided what method to adopt to restore our friend to himself and his country, when Perdita suddenly appeared among us. She detailed the progress of the mournful change, and entreated Adrian and myself to go up to London, and endeavour to remedy the encreasing evil:—"Tell him," she cried, "tell Lord Raymond, that my presence shall no longer annoy him. That he need not plunge into this destructive dissipation for the sake of disgusting me, and causing me to fly. This purpose is now accomplished; he will never see me more. But let me, it is my last entreaty, let me in the praises of his countrymen and the prosperity of England, find the choice of my youth justified."

During our ride up to town, Adrian and I discussed and argued upon Raymond's conduct, and his falling off from the hopes of permanent excellence on his part, which he had before given us cause to entertain. My friend and I had both been educated in one school, or rather I was his pupil in the opinion, that steady adherence to principle was the only road to honour; a ceaseless observance of the laws of general utility, the only conscientious aim of human ambition. But though we both entertained these ideas, we differed in their application. Resentment added also a sting to my censure; and I reprobated Raymond's conduct in severe terms. Adrian was more benign, more considerate. He admitted that the principles that I laid down were the best; but he denied that they were the only ones. Quoting the text, *there are many mansions in my father's house*, he insisted that the modes of becoming good or great, varied as much as the dispositions of men, of whom it might be said, as of the leaves of the forest, there were no two alike.

We arrived in London at about eleven at night. We conjectured, notwithstanding what we had heard, that we should find Raymond in St. Stephen's: thither we sped. The chamber was full—but there was no Protector; and there was an austere discontent manifest on the countenances of the leaders, and a whispering and busy tattle among the underlings, not less ominous. We hastened to the palace of the Protectorate. We found Raymond in his dining room with six others: the bottle was being pushed about

merrily, and had made considerable inroads on the understanding of one or two. He who sat near Raymond was telling a story, which convulsed the rest with laughter.

Raymond sat among them, though while he entered into the spirit of the hour, his natural dignity never forsook him. He was gay, playful, fascinating—but never did he overstep the modesty of nature, or the respect due to himself, in his wildest sallies. Yet I own, that considering the task which Raymond had taken on himself as Protector of England, and the cares to which it became him to attend, I was exceedingly provoked to observe the worthless fellows on whom his time was wasted, and the jovial if not drunken spirit which seemed on the point of robbing him of his better self. I stood watching the scene, while Adrian flitted like a shadow in among them, and, by a word and look of sobriety, endeavoured to restore order in the assembly. Raymond expressed himself delighted to see him, declaring that he should make one in the festivity of the night.

This action of Adrian provoked me. I was indignant that he should sit at the same table with the companions of Raymond—men of abandoned characters, or rather without any, the refuse of high-bred luxury, the disgrace of their country. “Let me entreat Adrian,” I cried, “not to comply: rather join with me in endeavouring to withdraw Lord Raymond from this scene, and restore him to other society.”

“My good fellow,” said Raymond, “this is neither the time nor place for the delivery of a moral lecture: take my word for it that my amusements and society are not so bad as you imagine. We are neither hypocrites or fools—for the rest, ‘Dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?’”

I turned angrily away: “Verney,” said Adrian, “you are very cynical: sit down; or if you will not, perhaps, as you are not a frequent visitor, Lord Raymond will humour you, and accompany us, as we had previously agreed upon, to parliament.”

Raymond looked keenly at him; he could read benignity only in his gentle lineaments; he turned to me, observing with scorn my moody and stern demeanour. “Come,” said Adrian, “I have promised for you, enable me to keep my engagement. Come with us.”—Raymond made an uneasy movement, and laconically replied—“I won’t!”

The party in the mean time had broken up. They looked at the pictures, strolled into the other apartments, talked of billiards, and one by one vanished. Raymond strode angrily up and down the room. I stood ready to receive and reply to his reproaches. Adrian leaned against the wall. “This is infinitely ridiculous,” he cried, “if you were school-boys, you could not conduct yourselves more unreasonably.”

“You do not understand,” said Raymond. “This is only part of a system:—a scheme of tyranny to which I will never submit. Because I am Protector of England, am I to be the only slave in its empire? My privacy invaded, my actions censured, my friends insulted? But I will get rid of the whole together.—Be you witnesses,” and he took the star, insignia of office, from his breast, and threw it on the table. “I renounce my office, I abdicate my power—assume it who will!”—

“Let him assume it,” exclaimed Adrian, “who can pronounce himself, or whom the world will pronounce to be your superior. There does not exist the man in England with adequate presumption. Know yourself, Raymond, and your indignation will cease; your complacency return. A few months ago, whenever we prayed for the prosperity of our country, or our own, we at the same time prayed for the life and welfare of the Protector, as indissolubly linked to it. Your hours were devoted to our benefit, your ambition was to obtain our commendation. You decorated our towns with edifices, you bestowed on us useful establishments, you gifted the soil with abundant fertility. The powerful and unjust cowered at the steps of your judgment-seat, and the poor and oppressed arose like morn-awakened flowers under the sunshine of your protection.

“Can you wonder that we are all aghast and mourn, when this appears changed? But, come, this splenetic fit is already passed; resume your functions; your partizans will hail you; your enemies be silenced; our love, honour, and duty will again be manifested towards you. Master yourself, Raymond, and the world is subject to you.”

“All this would be very good sense, if addressed to another,” replied Raymond, moodily, “con the lesson yourself, and you, the first peer of the land, may become its sovereign. You the good, the wise, the just, may rule all hearts. But I perceive, too soon for my own happiness, too late for England’s good, that I undertook a task to which I am unequal. I cannot rule myself. My passions are my masters; my smallest impulse my tyrant. Do you think that I renounced the Protectorate (and I have renounced it) in a fit of spleen? By the God that lives, I swear never to take up that bauble again; never again to burthen myself with the weight of care and misery, of which that is the visible sign.

“Once I desired to be a king. It was in the hey-day of youth, in the pride of boyish folly. I knew myself when I renounced it. I renounced it to gain —no matter what—for that also I have lost. For many months I have submitted to this mock majesty—this solemn jest. I am its dupe no longer. I will be free.

“I have lost that which adorned and dignified my life; that which linked me to other men. Again I am a solitary man; and I will become again, as in my early years, a

wanderer, a soldier of fortune. My friends, for Verney, I feel that you are my friend, do not endeavour to shake my resolve. Perdita, wedded to an imagination, careless of what is behind the veil, whose character is in truth faulty and vile, Perdita has renounced me. With her it was pretty enough to play a sovereign's part; and, as in the recesses of your beloved forest we acted masques, and imagined ourselves Arcadian shepherds, to please the fancy of the moment—so was I content, more for Perdita's sake than my own, to take on me the character of one of the great ones of the earth; to lead her behind the scenes of grandeur, to vary her life with a short act of magnificence and power. This was to be the colour; love and confidence the substance of our existence. But we must live, and not act our lives; pursuing the shadow, I lost the reality—now I renounce both.

“Adrian, I am about to return to Greece, to become again a soldier, perhaps a conqueror. Will you accompany me? You will behold new scenes; see a new people; witness the mighty struggle there going forward between civilization and barbarism; behold, and perhaps direct the efforts of a young and vigorous population, for liberty and order. Come with me. I have expected you. I waited for this moment; all is prepared;—will you accompany me?”

“I will,” replied Adrian. “Immediately?”

“To-morrow if you will.”

“Reflect!” I cried.

“Wherefore?” asked Raymond—“My dear fellow, I have done nothing else than reflect on this step the live-long summer; and be assured that Adrian has condensed an age of reflection into this little moment. Do not talk of reflection; from this moment I abjure it; this is my only happy moment during a long interval of time. I must go, Lionel—the Gods will it; and I must. Do not endeavour to deprive me of my companion, the out-cast's friend.

“One word more concerning unkind, unjust Perdita. For a time, I thought that, by watching a complying moment, fostering the still warm ashes, I might relume in her the flame of love. It is more cold within her, than a fire left by gypsies in winter-time, the spent embers crowned by a pyramid of snow. Then, in endeavouring to do violence to my own disposition, I made all worse than before. Still I think, that time, and even absence, may restore her to me. Remember, that I love her still, that my dearest hope is that she will again be mine. I know, though she does not, how false the veil is which she has spread over the reality—do not endeavour to rend this deceptive covering, but by degrees withdraw it. Present her with a mirror, in which she may know herself; and,

when she is an adept in that necessary but difficult science, she will wonder at her present mistake, and hasten to restore to me, what is by right mine, her forgiveness, her kind thoughts, her love.”

CHAPTER X.

After these events, it was long before we were able to attain any degree of composure. A moral tempest had wrecked our richly freighted vessel, and we, remnants of the diminished crew, were aghast at the losses and changes which we had undergone. Idris passionately loved her brother, and could ill brook an absence whose duration was uncertain; his society was dear and necessary to me—I had followed up my chosen literary occupations with delight under his tutorship and assistance; his mild philosophy, unerring reason, and enthusiastic friendship were the best ingredient, the exalted spirit of our circle; even the children bitterly regretted the loss of their kind playfellow. Deeper grief oppressed Perdita. In spite of resentment, by day and night she figured to herself the toils and dangers of the wanderers. Raymond absent, struggling with difficulties, lost to the power and rank of the Protectorate, exposed to the perils of war, became an object of anxious interest; not that she felt any inclination to recall him, if recall must imply a return to their former union. Such return she felt to be impossible; and while she believed it to be thus, and with anguish regretted that so it should be, she continued angry and impatient with him, who occasioned her misery. These perplexities and regrets caused her to bathe her pillow with nightly tears, and to reduce her in person and in mind to the shadow of what she had been. She sought solitude, and avoided us when in gaiety and unrestrained affection we met in a family circle. Lonely musings, interminable wanderings, and solemn music were her only pastimes. She neglected even her child; shutting her heart against all tenderness, she grew reserved towards me, her first and fast friend.

I could not see her thus lost, without exerting myself to remedy the evil—remediless I knew, if I could not in the end bring her to reconcile herself to Raymond. Before he went I used every argument, every persuasion to induce her to stop his journey. She answered the one with a gush of tears—telling me that to be persuaded—life and the goods of life were a cheap exchange. It was not will that she wanted, but the capacity; again and again she declared, it were as easy to enchain the sea, to put reins on the wind’s viewless courses, as for her to take truth for falsehood, deceit for honesty, heartless communion for sincere, confiding love. She answered my reasonings more briefly, declaring with disdain, that the reason was hers; and, until I could persuade her that the past could be unacted, that maturity could go back to the cradle, and that all that was could become as though it had never been, it was useless to assure her that no real change had taken place in her fate. And thus with stern pride she suffered

him to go, though her very heart-strings cracked at the fulfilling of the act, which rent from her all that made life valuable.

To change the scene for her, and even for ourselves, all unhinged by the cloud that had come over us, I persuaded my two remaining companions that it were better that we should absent ourselves for a time from Windsor. We visited the north of England, my native Ulswater, and lingered in scenes dear from a thousand associations. We lengthened our tour into Scotland, that we might see Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond; thence we crossed to Ireland, and passed several weeks in the neighbourhood of Killarney. The change of scene operated to a great degree as I expected; after a year's absence, Perdita returned in gentler and more docile mood to Windsor. The first sight of this place for a time unhinged her. Here every spot was distinct with associations now grown bitter. The forest glades, the ferny dells, and lawny uplands, the cultivated and cheerful country spread around the silver pathway of ancient Thames, all earth, air, and wave, took up one choral voice, inspired by memory, instinct with plaintive regret.

But my essay towards bringing her to a saner view of her own situation, did not end here. Perdita was still to a great degree uneducated. When first she left her peasant life, and resided with the elegant and cultivated Evadne, the only accomplishment she brought to any perfection was that of painting, for which she had a taste almost amounting to genius. This had occupied her in her lonely cottage, when she quitted her Greek friend's protection. Her pallet and easel were now thrown aside; did she try to paint, thronging recollections made her hand tremble, her eyes fill with tears. With this occupation she gave up almost every other; and her mind preyed upon itself almost to madness.

For my own part, since Adrian had first withdrawn me from my selvatic wilderness to his own paradise of order and beauty, I had been wedded to literature. I felt convinced that however it might have been in former times, in the present stage of the world, no man's faculties could be developed, no man's moral principle be enlarged and liberal, without an extensive acquaintance with books. To me they stood in the place of an active career, of ambition, and those palpable excitements necessary to the multitude. The collation of philosophical opinions, the study of historical facts, the acquirement of languages, were at once my recreation, and the serious aim of my life. I turned author myself. My productions however were sufficiently unpretending; they were confined to the biography of favourite historical characters, especially those whom I believed to have been traduced, or about whom clung obscurity and doubt.

As my authorship increased, I acquired new sympathies and pleasures. I found another and a valuable link to enchain me to my fellow-creatures; my point of sight was extended, and the inclinations and capacities of all human beings became deeply interesting to me. Kings have been called the fathers of their people. Suddenly I became as it were the father of all mankind. Posterity became my heirs. My thoughts were gems to enrich the treasure house of man's intellectual possessions; each sentiment was a precious gift I bestowed on them. Let not these aspirations be attributed to vanity. They were not expressed in words, nor even reduced to form in my own mind; but they filled my soul, exalting my thoughts, raising a glow of enthusiasm, and led me out of the obscure path in which I before walked, into the bright noon-enlightened highway of mankind, making me, citizen of the world, a candidate for immortal honors, an eager aspirant to the praise and sympathy of my fellow men.

No one certainly ever enjoyed the pleasures of composition more intensely than I. If I left the woods, the solemn music of the waving branches, and the majestic temple of nature, I sought the vast halls of the Castle, and looked over wide, fertile England, spread beneath our regal mount, and listened the while to inspiring strains of music. At such times solemn harmonies or spirit-stirring airs gave wings to my lagging thoughts, permitting them, methought, to penetrate the last veil of nature and her God, and to display the highest beauty in visible expression to the understandings of men. As the music went on, my ideas seemed to quit their mortal dwelling house; they shook their pinions and began a flight, sailing on the placid current of thought, filling the creation with new glory, and rousing sublime imagery that else had slept voiceless. Then I would hasten to my desk, weave the new-found web of mind in firm texture and brilliant colours, leaving the fashioning of the material to a calmer moment.

But this account, which might as properly belong to a former period of my life as to the present moment, leads me far afield. It was the pleasure I took in literature, the discipline of mind I found arise from it, that made me eager to lead Perdita to the same pursuits. I began with light hand and gentle allurements; first exciting her curiosity, and then satisfying it in such a way as might occasion her, at the same time that she half forgot her sorrows in occupation, to find in the hours that succeeded a reaction of benevolence and toleration.

Intellectual activity, though not directed towards books, had always been my sister's characteristic. It had been displayed early in life, leading her out to solitary musing among her native mountains, causing her to form innumerable combinations from common objects, giving strength to her perceptions, and swiftness to their arrangement. Love had come, as the rod of the master-prophet, to swallow up every

minor propensity. Love had doubled all her excellencies, and placed a diadem on her genius. Was she to cease to love? Take the colours and odour from the rose, change the sweet nutriment of mother's milk to gall and poison; as easily might you wean Perdita from love. She grieved for the loss of Raymond with an anguish, that exiled all smile from her lips, and trenched sad lines on her brow of beauty. But each day seemed to change the nature of her suffering, and every succeeding hour forced her to alter (if so I may style it) the fashion of her soul's mourning garb. For a time music was able to satisfy the cravings of her mental hunger, and her melancholy thoughts renewed themselves in each change of key, and varied with every alteration in the strain. My schooling first impelled her towards books; and, if music had been the food of sorrow, the productions of the wise became its medicine. The acquisition of unknown languages was too tedious an occupation, for one who referred every expression to the universe within, and read not, as many do, for the mere sake of filling up time; but who was still questioning herself and her author, moulding every idea in a thousand ways, ardently desirous for the discovery of truth in every sentence. She sought to improve her understanding; mechanically her heart and dispositions became soft and gentle under this benign discipline. After awhile she discovered, that amidst all her newly acquired knowledge, her own character, which formerly she fancied that she thoroughly understood, became the first in rank among the terrae incognitae, the pathless wilds of a country that had no chart. Erringly and strangely she began the task of self-examination with self-condemnation. And then again she became aware of her own excellencies, and began to balance with juster scales the shades of good and evil. I, who longed beyond words, to restore her to the happiness it was still in her power to enjoy, watched with anxiety the result of these internal proceedings.

But man is a strange animal. We cannot calculate on his forces like that of an engine; and, though an impulse draw with a forty-horse power at what appears willing to yield to one, yet in contempt of calculation the movement is not effected. Neither grief, philosophy, nor love could make Perdita think with mildness of the dereliction of Raymond. She now took pleasure in my society; towards Idris she felt and displayed a full and affectionate sense of her worth—she restored to her child in abundant measure her tenderness and care. But I could discover, amidst all her repinings, deep resentment towards Raymond, and an unfading sense of injury, that plucked from me my hope, when I appeared nearest to its fulfilment. Among other painful restrictions, she has occasioned it to become a law among us, never to mention Raymond's name before her. She refused to read any communications from Greece, desiring me only to mention when any arrived, and whether the wanderers were well. It was curious that

even little Clara observed this law towards her mother. This lovely child was nearly eight years of age. Formerly she had been a light-hearted infant, fanciful, but gay and childish. After the departure of her father, thought became impressed on her young brow. Children, unadepts in language, seldom find words to express their thoughts, nor could we tell in what manner the late events had impressed themselves on her mind. But certainly she had made deep observations while she noted in silence the changes that passed around her. She never mentioned her father to Perdita, she appeared half afraid when she spoke of him to me, and though I tried to draw her out on the subject, and to dispel the gloom that hung about her ideas concerning him, I could not succeed. Yet each foreign post-day she watched for the arrival of letters—knew the post mark, and watched me as I read. I found her often poring over the article of Greek intelligence in the newspaper.

There is no more painful sight than that of untimely care in children, and it was particularly observable in one whose disposition had heretofore been mirthful. Yet there was so much sweetness and docility about Clara, that your admiration was excited; and if the moods of mind are calculated to paint the cheek with beauty, and endow motions with grace, surely her contemplations must have been celestial; since every lineament was moulded into loveliness, and her motions were more harmonious than the elegant boundings of the fawns of her native forest. I sometimes expostulated with Perdita on the subject of her reserve; but she rejected my counsels, while her daughter's sensibility excited in her a tenderness still more passionate.

After the lapse of more than a year, Adrian returned from Greece.

When our exiles had first arrived, a truce was in existence between the Turks and Greeks; a truce that was as sleep to the mortal frame, signal of renewed activity on waking. With the numerous soldiers of Asia, with all of warlike stores, ships, and military engines, that wealth and power could command, the Turks at once resolved to crush an enemy, which creeping on by degrees, had from their stronghold in the Morea, acquired Thrace and Macedonia, and had led their armies even to the gates of Constantinople, while their extensive commercial relations gave every European nation an interest in their success. Greece prepared for a vigorous resistance; it rose to a man; and the women, sacrificing their costly ornaments, accoutred their sons for the war, and bade them conquer or die with the spirit of the Spartan mother. The talents and courage of Raymond were highly esteemed among the Greeks. Born at Athens, that city claimed him for her own, and by giving him the command of her peculiar division in the army, the commander-in-chief only possessed superior power. He was numbered among her citizens, his name was added to the list of Grecian

heroes. His judgment, activity, and consummate bravery, justified their choice. The Earl of Windsor became a volunteer under his friend.

“It is well,” said Adrian, “to prate of war in these pleasant shades, and with much ill-spent oil make a show of joy, because many thousand of our fellow-creatures leave with pain this sweet air and natal earth. I shall not be suspected of being averse to the Greek cause; I know and feel its necessity; it is beyond every other a good cause. I have defended it with my sword, and was willing that my spirit should be breathed out in its defence; freedom is of more worth than life, and the Greeks do well to defend their privilege unto death. But let us not deceive ourselves. The Turks are men; each fibre, each limb is as feeling as our own, and every spasm, be it mental or bodily, is as truly felt in a Turk’s heart or brain, as in a Greek’s. The last action at which I was present was the taking of ——. The Turks resisted to the last, the garrison perished on the ramparts, and we entered by assault. Every breathing creature within the walls was massacred. Think you, amidst the shrieks of violated innocence and helpless infancy, I did not feel in every nerve the cry of a fellow being? They were men and women, the sufferers, before they were Mahometans, and when they rise turbanless from the grave, in what except their good or evil actions will they be the better or worse than we? Two soldiers contended for a girl, whose rich dress and extreme beauty excited the brutal appetites of these wretches, who, perhaps good men among their families, were changed by the fury of the moment into incarnated evils. An old man, with a silver beard, decrepid and bald, he might be her grandfather, interposed to save her; the battle axe of one of them clove his skull. I rushed to her defence, but rage made them blind and deaf; they did not distinguish my Christian garb or heed my words—words were blunt weapons then, for while war cried “havoc,” and murder gave fit echo, how could I—

Turn back the tide of ills, relieving wrong
With mild accost of soothing eloquence?

One of the fellows, enraged at my interference, struck me with his bayonet in the side, and I fell senseless.

“This wound will probably shorten my life, having shattered a frame, weak of itself. But I am content to die. I have learnt in Greece that one man, more or less, is of small import, while human bodies remain to fill up the thinned ranks of the soldiery; and that the identity of an individual may be overlooked, so that the muster roll contain its full numbers. All this has a different effect upon Raymond. He is able to contemplate the ideal of war, while I am sensible only to its realities. He is a soldier, a general. He can influence the blood-thirsty war-dogs, while I resist their propensities vainly. The

cause is simple. Burke has said that, 'in all bodies those who would lead, must also, in a considerable degree, follow.' —I cannot follow; for I do not sympathize in their dreams of massacre and glory—to follow and to lead in such a career, is the natural bent of Raymond's mind. He is always successful, and bids fair, at the same time that he acquires high name and station for himself, to secure liberty, probably extended empire, to the Greeks."

Perdita's mind was not softened by this account. He, she thought, can be great and happy without me. Would that I also had a career! Would that I could freight some untried bark with all my hopes, energies, and desires, and launch it forth into the ocean of life—bound for some attainable point, with ambition or pleasure at the helm! But adverse winds detain me on shore; like Ulysses, I sit at the water's edge and weep. But my nerveless hands can neither fell the trees, nor smooth the planks. Under the influence of these melancholy thoughts, she became more than ever in love with sorrow. Yet Adrian's presence did some good; he at once broke through the law of silence observed concerning Raymond. At first she started from the unaccustomed sound; soon she got used to it and to love it, and she listened with avidity to the account of his achievements. Clara got rid also of her restraint; Adrian and she had been old playfellows; and now, as they walked or rode together, he yielded to her earnest entreaty, and repeated, for the hundredth time, some tale of her father's bravery, munificence, or justice.

Each vessel in the mean time brought exhilarating tidings from Greece. The presence of a friend in its armies and councils made us enter into the details with enthusiasm; and a short letter now and then from Raymond told us how he was engrossed by the interests of his adopted country. The Greeks were strongly attached to their commercial pursuits, and would have been satisfied with their present acquisitions, had not the Turks roused them by invasion. The patriots were victorious; a spirit of conquest was instilled; and already they looked on Constantinople as their own. Raymond rose perpetually in their estimation; but one man held a superior command to him in their armies. He was conspicuous for his conduct and choice of position in a battle fought in the plains of Thrace, on the banks of the Hebrus, which was to decide the fate of Islam. The Mahometans were defeated, and driven entirely from the country west of this river. The battle was sanguinary, the loss of the Turks apparently irreparable; the Greeks, in losing one man, forgot the nameless crowd strewn upon the bloody field, and they ceased to value themselves on a victory, which cost them—Raymond.

At the battle of Makri he had led the charge of cavalry, and pursued the fugitives even to the banks of the Hebrus. His favourite horse was found grazing by the margin of the

tranquil river. It became a question whether he had fallen among the unrecognized; but no broken ornament or stained trapping betrayed his fate. It was suspected that the Turks, finding themselves possessed of so illustrious a captive, resolved to satisfy their cruelty rather than their avarice, and fearful of the interference of England, had come to the determination of concealing for ever the cold-blooded murder of the soldier they most hated and feared in the squadrons of their enemy.

Raymond was not forgotten in England. His abdication of the Protectorate had caused an unexampled sensation; and, when his magnificent and manly system was contrasted with the narrow views of succeeding politicians, the period of his elevation was referred to with sorrow. The perpetual recurrence of his name, joined to most honourable testimonials, in the Greek gazettes, kept up the interest he had excited. He seemed the favourite child of fortune, and his untimely loss eclipsed the world, and shewed forth the remnant of mankind with diminished lustre. They clung with eagerness to the hope held out that he might yet be alive. Their minister at Constantinople was urged to make the necessary perquisitions, and should his existence be ascertained, to demand his release. It was to be hoped that their efforts would succeed, and that though now a prisoner, the sport of cruelty and the mark of hate, he would be rescued from danger and restored to the happiness, power, and honour which he deserved.

The effect of this intelligence upon my sister was striking. She never for a moment credited the story of his death; she resolved instantly to go to Greece. Reasoning and persuasion were thrown away upon her; she would endure no hindrance, no delay. It may be advanced for a truth, that, if argument or entreaty can turn any one from a desperate purpose, whose motive and end depends on the strength of the affections only, then it is right so to turn them, since their docility shews, that neither the motive nor the end were of sufficient force to bear them through the obstacles attendant on their undertaking. If, on the contrary, they are proof against expostulation, this very steadiness is an omen of success; and it becomes the duty of those who love them, to assist in smoothing the obstructions in their path. Such sentiments actuated our little circle. Finding Perdita immovable, we consulted as to the best means of furthering her purpose. She could not go alone to a country where she had no friends, where she might arrive only to hear the dreadful news, which must overwhelm her with grief and remorse. Adrian, whose health had always been weak, now suffered considerable aggravation of suffering from the effects of his wound. Idris could not endure to leave him in this state; nor was it right either to quit or take with us a young family for a journey of this description. I resolved at length to accompany Perdita. The separation from my Idris was painful—but necessity reconciled us to it in some degree: necessity

and the hope of saving Raymond, and restoring him again to happiness and Perdita. No delay was to ensue. Two days after we came to our determination, we set out for Portsmouth, and embarked. The season was May, the weather stormless; we were promised a prosperous voyage. Cherishing the most fervent hopes, embarked on the waste ocean, we saw with delight the receding shore of Britain, and on the wings of desire outspeeded our well filled sails towards the South. The light curling waves bore us onward, and old ocean smiled at the freight of love and hope committed to his charge; it stroked gently its tempestuous plains, and the path was smoothed for us. Day and night the wind right aft, gave steady impulse to our keel—nor did rough gale, or treacherous sand, or destructive rock interpose an obstacle between my sister and the land which was to restore her to her first beloved,

Her dear heart's confessor—a heart within that heart.

VOL. II.

CHAPTER I.

During this voyage, when on calm evenings we conversed on deck, watching the glancing of the waves and the changeful appearances of the sky, I discovered the total revolution that the disasters of Raymond had wrought in the mind of my sister. Were they the same waters of love, which, lately cold and cutting as ice, repelling as that, now loosened from their frozen chains, flowed through the regions of her soul in gushing and grateful exuberance? She did not believe that he was dead, but she knew that he was in danger, and the hope of assisting in his liberation, and the idea of soothing by tenderness the ills that he might have undergone, elevated and harmonized the late jarring element of her being. I was not so sanguine as she as to the result of our voyage. She was not sanguine, but secure; and the expectation of seeing the lover she had banished, the husband, friend, heart's companion from whom she had long been alienated, wrapt her senses in delight, her mind in placidity. It was beginning life again; it was leaving barren sands for an abode of fertile beauty; it was a harbour after a tempest, an opiate after sleepless nights, a happy waking from a terrible dream.

Little Clara accompanied us; the poor child did not well understand what was going forward. She heard that we were bound for Greece, that she would see her father, and now, for the first time, she prattled of him to her mother.

On landing at Athens we found difficulties encrease upon us: nor could the storied earth or balmy atmosphere inspire us with enthusiasm or pleasure, while the fate of Raymond was in jeopardy. No man had ever excited so strong an interest in the public

mind; this was apparent even among the phlegmatic English, from whom he had long been absent. The Athenians had expected their hero to return in triumph; the women had taught their children to lisp his name joined to thanksgiving; his manly beauty, his courage, his devotion to their cause, made him appear in their eyes almost as one of the ancient deities of the soil descended from their native Olympus to defend them. When they spoke of his probable death and certain captivity, tears streamed from their eyes; even as the women of Syria sorrowed for Adonis, did the wives and mothers of Greece lament our English Raymond—Athens was a city of mourning.

All these shews of despair struck Perdita with affright. With that sanguine but confused expectation, which desire engendered while she was at a distance from reality, she had formed an image in her mind of instantaneous change, when she should set her foot on Grecian shores. She fancied that Raymond would already be free, and that her tender attentions would come to entirely obliterate even the memory of his mischance. But his fate was still uncertain; she began to fear the worst, and to feel that her soul's hope was cast on a chance that might prove a blank. The wife and lovely child of Lord Raymond became objects of intense interest in Athens. The gates of their abode were besieged, audible prayers were breathed for his restoration; all these circumstances added to the dismay and fears of Perdita.

My exertions were unremitted: after a time I left Athens, and joined the army stationed at Kishan in Thrace. Bribery, threats, and intrigue, soon discovered the secret that Raymond was alive, a prisoner, suffering the most rigorous confinement and wanton cruelties. We put in movement every impulse of policy and money to redeem him from their hands.

The impatience of my sister's disposition now returned on her, awakened by repentance, sharpened by remorse. The very beauty of the Grecian climate, during the season of spring, added torture to her sensations. The unexampled loveliness of the flower-clad earth—the genial sunshine and grateful shade—the melody of the birds—the majesty of the woods—the splendour of the marble ruins—the clear effulgence of the stars by night—the combination of all that was exciting and voluptuous in this transcending land, by inspiring a quicker spirit of life and an added sensitiveness to every articulation of her frame, only gave edge to the poignancy of her grief. Each long hour was counted, and “*He suffers*” was the burthen of all her thoughts. She abstained from food; she lay on the bare earth, and, by such mimicry of his enforced torments, endeavoured to hold communion with his distant pain. I remembered in one of her harshest moments a quotation of mine had roused her to anger and disdain. “Perdita,” I had said, “some day you will discover that you have done wrong in again casting Raymond on the thorns of life. When disappointment has sullied his

beauty, when a soldier's hardships have bent his manly form, and loneliness made even triumph bitter to him, then you will repent; and regret for the irreparable change

“will move

In hearts all rocky now, the late remorse of love.”^[1]

The stinging “remorse of love” now pierced her heart. She accused herself of his journey to Greece—his dangers—his imprisonment. She pictured to herself the anguish of his solitude; she remembered with what eager delight he had in former days made her the partner of his joyful hopes— with what grateful affection he received her sympathy in his cares. She called to mind how often he had declared that solitude was to him the greatest of all evils, and how death itself was to him more full of fear and pain when he pictured to himself a lonely grave. “My best girl,” he had said, “relieves me from these phantasies. United to her, cherished in her dear heart, never again shall I know the misery of finding myself alone. Even if I die before you, my Perdita, treasure up my ashes till yours may mingle with mine. It is a foolish sentiment for one who is not a materialist, yet, methinks, even in that dark cell, I may feel that my inanimate dust mingles with yours, and thus have a companion in decay.” In her resentful mood, these expressions had been remembered with acrimony and disdain; they visited her in her softened hour, taking sleep from her eyes, all hope of rest from her uneasy mind.

Two months passed thus, when at last we obtained a promise of Raymond's release. Confinement and hardship had undermined his health; the Turks feared an accomplishment of the threats of the English government, if he died under their hands; they looked upon his recovery as impossible; they delivered him up as a dying man, willingly making over to us the rites of burial.

He came by sea from Constantinople to Athens. The wind, favourable to him, blew so strongly in shore, that we were unable, as we had at first intended, to meet him on his watery road. The watchtower of Athens was besieged by inquirers, each sail eagerly looked out for; till on the first of May the gallant frigate bore in sight, freighted with treasure more invaluable than the wealth which, piloted from Mexico, the vexed Pacific swallowed, or that was conveyed over its tranquil bosom to enrich the crown of Spain. At early dawn the vessel was discovered bearing in shore; it was conjectured that it would cast anchor about five miles from land. The news spread through Athens, and the whole city poured out at the gate of the Piraeus, down the roads, through the vineyards, the olive woods and plantations of fig-trees, towards the harbour. The noisy joy of the populace, the gaudy colours of their dress, the tumult of carriages and horses, the march of soldiers intermixed, the waving of banners and sound of martial

music added to the high excitement of the scene; while round us reposed in solemn majesty the relics of antient time. To our right the Acropolis rose high, spectatress of a thousand changes, of ancient glory, Turkish slavery, and the restoration of dear-bought liberty; tombs and cenotaphs were strewn thick around, adorned by ever renewing vegetation; the mighty dead hovered over their monuments, and beheld in our enthusiasm and congregated numbers a renewal of the scenes in which they had been the actors. Perdita and Clara rode in a close carriage; I attended them on horseback. At length we arrived at the harbour; it was agitated by the outward swell of the sea; the beach, as far could be discerned, was covered by a moving multitude, which, urged by those behind toward the sea, again rushed back as the heavy waves with sullen roar burst close to them. I applied my glass, and could discern that the frigate had already cast anchor, fearful of the danger of approaching nearer to a lee shore: a boat was lowered; with a pang I saw that Raymond was unable to descend the vessel's side; he was let down in a chair, and lay wrapt in cloaks at the bottom of the boat.

I dismounted, and called to some sailors who were rowing about the harbour to pull up, and take me into their skiff; Perdita at the same moment alighted from her carriage—she seized my arm—“Take me with you,” she cried; she was trembling and pale; Clara clung to her—“You must not,” I said, “the sea is rough—he will soon be here—do you not see his boat?” The little bark to which I had beckoned had now pulled up; before I could stop her, Perdita, assisted by the sailors was in it—Clara followed her mother—a loud shout echoed from the crowd as we pulled out of the inner harbour; while my sister at the prow, had caught hold of one of the men who was using a glass, asking a thousand questions, careless of the spray that broke over her, deaf, sightless to all, except the little speck that, just visible on the top of the waves, evidently neared. We approached with all the speed six rowers could give; the orderly and picturesque dress of the soldiers on the beach, the sounds of exulting music, the stirring breeze and waving flags, the unchecked exclamations of the eager crowd, whose dark looks and foreign garb were purely eastern; the sight of temple-crowned rock, the white marble of the buildings glittering in the sun, and standing in bright relief against the dark ridge of lofty mountains beyond; the near roar of the sea, the splash of oars, and dash of spray, all steeped my soul in a delirium, unfelt, unimagined in the common course of common life. Trembling, I was unable to continue to look through the glass with which I had watched the motion of the crew, when the frigate's boat had first been launched. We rapidly drew near, so that at length the number and forms of those within could be discerned; its dark sides grew

big, and the splash of its oars became audible: I could distinguish the languid form of my friend, as he half raised himself at our approach.

Perdita's questions had ceased; she leaned on my arm, panting with emotions too acute for tears—our men pulled alongside the other boat. As a last effort, my sister mustered her strength, her firmness; she stepped from one boat to the other, and then with a shriek she sprang towards Raymond, knelt at his side, and glueing her lips to the hand she seized, her face shrouded by her long hair, gave herself up to tears.

Raymond had somewhat raised himself at our approach, but it was with difficulty that he exerted himself even thus much. With sunken cheek and hollow eyes, pale and gaunt, how could I recognize the beloved of Perdita? I continued awe-struck and mute—he looked smilingly on the poor girl; the smile was his. A day of sun-shine falling on a dark valley, displays its before hidden characteristics; and now this smile, the same with which he first spoke love to Perdita, with which he had welcomed the protectorate, playing on his altered countenance, made me in my heart's core feel that this was Raymond.

He stretched out to me his other hand; I discerned the trace of manacles on his bared wrist. I heard my sister's sobs, and thought, happy are women who can weep, and in a passionate caress disburthen the oppression of their feelings; shame and habitual restraint hold back a man. I would have given worlds to have acted as in days of boyhood, have strained him to my breast, pressed his hand to my lips, and wept over him; my swelling heart choked me; the natural current would not be checked; the big rebellious tears gathered in my eyes; I turned aside, and they dropped in the sea—they came fast and faster;—yet I could hardly be ashamed, for I saw that the rough sailors were not unmoved, and Raymond's eyes alone were dry from among our crew. He lay in that blessed calm which convalescence always induces, enjoying in secure tranquillity his liberty and re-union with her whom he adored. Perdita at length subdued her burst of passion, and rose, —she looked round for Clara; the child frightened, not recognizing her father, and neglected by us, had crept to the other end of the boat; she came at her mother's call. Perdita presented her to Raymond; her first words were: "Beloved, embrace our child!"

"Come hither, sweet one," said her father, "do you not know me?" she knew his voice, and cast herself in his arms with half bashful but uncontrollable emotion.

Perceiving the weakness of Raymond, I was afraid of ill consequences from the pressure of the crowd on his landing. But they were awed as I had been, at the change of his appearance. The music died away, the shouts abruptly ended; the soldiers had cleared a space in which a carriage was drawn up. He was placed in it; Perdita and

Clara entered with him, and his escort closed round it; a hollow murmur, akin to the roaring of the near waves, went through the multitude; they fell back as the carriage advanced, and fearful of injuring him they had come to welcome, by loud testimonies of joy, they satisfied themselves with bending in a low salaam as the carriage passed; it went slowly along the road of the Piraeus; passed by antique temple and heroic tomb, beneath the craggy rock of the citadel. The sound of the waves was left behind; that of the multitude continued at intervals, suppressed and hoarse; and though, in the city, the houses, churches, and public buildings were decorated with tapestry and banners—though the soldiery lined the streets, and the inhabitants in thousands were assembled to give him hail, the same solemn silence prevailed, the soldiery presented arms, the banners veiled, many a white hand waved a streamer, and vainly sought to discern the hero in the vehicle, which, closed and encompassed by the city guards, drew him to the palace allotted for his abode.

Raymond was weak and exhausted, yet the interest he perceived to be excited on his account, filled him with proud pleasure. He was nearly killed with kindness. It is true, the populace retained themselves; but there arose a perpetual hum and bustle from the throng round the palace, which added to the noise of fireworks, the frequent explosion of arms, the tramp to and fro of horsemen and carriages, to which effervescence he was the focus, retarded his recovery. So we retired awhile to Eleusis, and here rest and tender care added each day to the strength of our invalid. The zealous attention of Perdita claimed the first rank in the causes which induced his rapid recovery; but the second was surely the delight he felt in the affection and good will of the Greeks. We are said to love much those whom we greatly benefit. Raymond had fought and conquered for the Athenians; he had suffered, on their account, peril, imprisonment, and hardship; their gratitude affected him deeply, and he inly vowed to unite his fate for ever to that of a people so enthusiastically devoted to him.

Social feeling and sympathy constituted a marked feature in my disposition. In early youth, the living drama acted around me, drew me heart and soul into its vortex. I was now conscious of a change. I loved, I hoped, I enjoyed; but there was something besides this. I was inquisitive as to the internal principles of action of those around me: anxious to read their thoughts justly, and for ever occupied in divining their inmost mind. All events, at the same time that they deeply interested me, arranged themselves in pictures before me. I gave the right place to every personage in the groupe, the just balance to every sentiment. This undercurrent of thought, often soothed me amidst distress, and even agony. It gave ideality to that, from which, taken in naked truth, the soul would have revolted: it bestowed pictorial colours on misery and disease, and not unfrequently relieved me from despair in deplorable changes.

This faculty, or instinct, was now roused. I watched the re-awakened devotion of my sister; Clara's timid, but concentrated admiration of her father, and Raymond's appetite for renown, and sensitiveness to the demonstrations of affection of the Athenians. Attentively perusing this animated volume, I was the less surprised at the tale I read on the new-turned page.

The Turkish army were at this time besieging Rodosto; and the Greeks, hastening their preparations, and sending each day reinforcements, were on the eve of forcing the enemy to battle. Each people looked on the coming struggle as that which would be to a great degree decisive; as, in case of victory, the next step would be the siege of Constantinople by the Greeks. Raymond, being somewhat recovered, prepared to re-assume his command in the army.

Perdita did not oppose herself to his determination. She only stipulated to be permitted to accompany him. She had set down no rule of conduct for herself; but for her life she could not have opposed his slightest wish, or do other than acquiesce cheerfully in all his projects. One word, in truth, had alarmed her more than battles or sieges, during which she trusted Raymond's high command would exempt him from danger. That word, as yet it was not more to her, was PLAGUE. This enemy to the human race had begun early in June to raise its serpent-head on the shores of the Nile; parts of Asia, not usually subject to this evil, were infected. It was in Constantinople; but as each year that city experienced a like visitation, small attention was paid to those accounts which declared more people to have died there already, than usually made up the accustomed prey of the whole of the hotter months. However it might be, neither plague nor war could prevent Perdita from following her lord, or induce her to utter one objection to the plans which he proposed. To be near him, to be loved by him, to feel him again her own, was the limit of her desires. The object of her life was to do him pleasure: it had been so before, but with a difference. In past times, without thought or foresight she had made him happy, being so herself, and in any question of choice, consulted her own wishes, as being one with his. Now she sedulously put herself out of the question, sacrificing even her anxiety for his health and welfare to her resolve not to oppose any of his desires. Love of the Greek people, appetite for glory, and hatred of the barbarian government under which he had suffered even to the approach of death, stimulated him. He wished to repay the kindness of the Athenians, to keep alive the splendid associations connected with his name, and to eradicate from Europe a power which, while every other nation advanced in civilization, stood still, a monument of antique barbarism. Having effected the reunion of Raymond and Perdita, I was eager to return to England; but his earnest request, added to awakening curiosity, and an indefinable anxiety to

behold the catastrophe, now apparently at hand, in the long drawn history of Grecian and Turkish warfare, induced me to consent to prolong until the autumn, the period of my residence in Greece.

As soon as the health of Raymond was sufficiently re-established, he prepared to join the Grecian camp, near Kishan, a town of some importance, situated to the east of the Hebrus; in which Perdita and Clara were to remain until the event of the expected battle. We quitted Athens on the 2nd of June. Raymond had recovered from the gaunt and pallid looks of fever. If I no longer saw the fresh glow of youth on his matured countenance, if care had besieged his brow,

“And dug deep trenches in his beauty’s field,”^[2]

if his hair, slightly mingled with grey, and his look, considerate even in its eagerness, gave signs of added years and past sufferings, yet there was something irresistibly affecting in the sight of one, lately snatched from the grave, renewing his career, untamed by sickness or disaster. The Athenians saw in him, not as heretofore, the heroic boy or desperate man, who was ready to die for them; but the prudent commander, who for their sakes was careful of his life, and could make his own warrior-propensities second to the scheme of conduct policy might point out.

All Athens accompanied us for several miles. When he had landed a month ago, the noisy populace had been hushed by sorrow and fear; but this was a festival day to all. The air resounded with their shouts; their picturesque costume, and the gay colours of which it was composed, flaunted in the sunshine; their eager gestures and rapid utterance accorded with their wild appearance. Raymond was the theme of every tongue, the hope of each wife, mother or betrothed bride, whose husband, child, or lover, making a part of the Greek army, were to be conducted to victory by him.

Notwithstanding the hazardous object of our journey, it was full of romantic interest, as we passed through the vallies, and over the hills, of this divine country. Raymond was inspirited by the intense sensations of recovered health; he felt that in being general of the Athenians, he filled a post worthy of his ambition; and, in his hope of the conquest of Constantinople, he counted on an event which would be as a landmark in the waste of ages, an exploit unequalled in the annals of man; when a city of grand historic association, the beauty of whose site was the wonder of the world, which for many hundred years had been the strong hold of the Moslems, should be rescued from slavery and barbarism, and restored to a people illustrious for genius, civilization, and a spirit of liberty. Perdita rested on his restored society, on his love, his hopes and fame, even as a Sybarite on a luxurious couch; every thought was transport, each emotion bathed as it were in a congenial and balmy element.

We arrived at Kishan on the 7th of July. The weather during our journey had been serene. Each day, before dawn, we left our night's encampment, and watched the shadows as they retreated from hill and valley, and the golden splendour of the sun's approach. The accompanying soldiers received, with national vivacity, enthusiastic pleasure from the sight of beautiful nature. The uprising of the star of day was hailed by triumphant strains, while the birds, heard by snatches, filled up the intervals of the music. At noon, we pitched our tents in some shady valley, or embowering wood among the mountains, while a stream prattling over pebbles induced grateful sleep. Our evening march, more calm, was yet more delightful than the morning restlessness of spirit. If the band played, involuntarily they chose airs of moderated passion; the farewell of love, or lament at absence, was followed and closed by some solemn hymn, which harmonized with the tranquil loveliness of evening, and elevated the soul to grand and religious thought. Often all sounds were suspended, that we might listen to the nightingale, while the fire-flies danced in bright measure, and the soft cooing of the aziolo spoke of fair weather to the travellers. Did we pass a valley? Soft shades encompassed us, and rocks tinged with beautiful hues. If we traversed a mountain, Greece, a living map, was spread beneath, her renowned pinnacles cleaving the ether; her rivers threading in silver line the fertile land. Afraid almost to breathe, we English travellers surveyed with extasy this splendid landscape, so different from the sober hues and melancholy graces of our native scenery. When we quitted Macedonia, the fertile but low plains of Thrace afforded fewer beauties; yet our journey continued to be interesting. An advanced guard gave information of our approach, and the country people were quickly in motion to do honour to Lord Raymond. The villages were decorated by triumphal arches of greenery by day, and lamps by night; tapestry waved from the windows, the ground was strewn with flowers, and the name of Raymond, joined to that of Greece, was echoed in the *Evive* of the peasant crowd.

When we arrived at Kishan, we learnt, that on hearing of the advance of Lord Raymond and his detachment, the Turkish army had retreated from Rodosto; but meeting with a reinforcement, they had re-trod their steps. In the meantime, Argyropylo, the Greek commander-in-chief, had advanced, so as to be between the Turks and Rodosto; a battle, it was said, was inevitable. Perdita and her child were to remain at Kishan. Raymond asked me, if I would not continue with them. "Now by the fells of Cumberland," I cried, "by all of the vagabond and poacher that appertains to me, I will stand at your side, draw my sword in the Greek cause, and be hailed as a victor along with you!"

All the plain, from Kishan to Rodosto, a distance of sixteen leagues, was alive with troops, or with the camp-followers, all in motion at the approach of a battle. The small

garrisons were drawn from the various towns and fortresses, and went to swell the main army. We met baggage waggons, and many females of high and low rank returning to Fairy or Kishan, there to wait the issue of the expected day. When we arrived at Rodosto, we found that the field had been taken, and the scheme of the battle arranged. The sound of firing, early on the following morning, informed us that advanced posts of the armies were engaged. Regiment after regiment advanced, their colours flying and bands playing. They planted the cannon on the tumuli, sole elevations in this level country, and formed themselves into column and hollow square; while the pioneers threw up small mounds for their protection.

These then were the preparations for a battle, nay, the battle itself; far different from any thing the imagination had pictured. We read of centre and wing in Greek and Roman history; we fancy a spot, plain as a table, and soldiers small as chessmen; and drawn forth, so that the most ignorant of the game can discover science and order in the disposition of the forces. When I came to the reality, and saw regiments file off to the left far out of sight, fields intervening between the battalions, but a few troops sufficiently near me to observe their motions, I gave up all idea of understanding, even of seeing a battle, but attaching myself to Raymond attended with intense interest to his actions. He shewed himself collected, gallant and imperial; his commands were prompt, his intuition of the events of the day to me miraculous. In the mean time the cannon roared; the music lifted up its enlivening voice at intervals; and we on the highest of the mounds I mentioned, too far off to observe the fallen sheaves which death gathered into his storehouse, beheld the regiments, now lost in smoke, now banners and staves peering above the cloud, while shout and clamour drowned every sound.

Early in the day, Argyropylo was wounded dangerously, and Raymond assumed the command of the whole army. He made few remarks, till, on observing through his glass the sequel of an order he had given, his face, clouded for awhile with doubt, became radiant. "The day is ours," he cried, "the Turks fly from the bayonet." And then swiftly he dispatched his aides-de-camp to command the horse to fall on the routed enemy. The defeat became total; the cannon ceased to roar; the infantry rallied, and horse pursued the flying Turks along the dreary plain; the staff of Raymond was dispersed in various directions, to make observations, and bear commands. Even I was dispatched to a distant part of the field.

The ground on which the battle was fought, was a level plain—so level, that from the tumuli you saw the waving line of mountains on the wide-stretched horizon; yet the intervening space was unvaried by the least irregularity, save such undulations as resembled the waves of the sea. The whole of this part of Thrace had been so long a

scene of contest, that it had remained uncultivated, and presented a dreary, barren appearance. The order I had received, was to make an observation of the direction which a detachment of the enemy might have taken, from a northern tumulus; the whole Turkish army, followed by the Greek, had poured eastward; none but the dead remained in the direction of my side. From the top of the mound, I looked far round—all was silent and deserted.

The last beams of the nearly sunken sun shot up from behind the far summit of Mount Athos; the sea of Marmora still glittered beneath its rays, while the Asiatic coast beyond was half hid in a haze of low cloud. Many a casque, and bayonet, and sword, fallen from unnerved arms, reflected the departing ray; they lay scattered far and near. From the east, a band of ravens, old inhabitants of the Turkish cemeteries, came sailing along towards their harvest; the sun disappeared. This hour, melancholy yet sweet, has always seemed to me the time when we are most naturally led to commune with higher powers; our mortal sternness departs, and gentle complacency invests the soul. But now, in the midst of the dying and the dead, how could a thought of heaven or a sensation of tranquillity possess one of the murderers? During the busy day, my mind had yielded itself a willing slave to the state of things presented to it by its fellow-beings; historical association, hatred of the foe, and military enthusiasm had held dominion over me. Now, I looked on the evening star, as softly and calmly it hung pendulous in the orange hues of sunset. I turned to the corpse-strewn earth; and felt ashamed of my species. So perhaps were the placid skies; for they quickly veiled themselves in mist, and in this change assisted the swift disappearance of twilight usual in the south; heavy masses of cloud floated up from the south east, and red and turbid lightning shot from their dark edges; the rushing wind disturbed the garments of the dead, and was chilled as it passed over their icy forms. Darkness gathered round; the objects about me became indistinct, I descended from my station, and with difficulty guided my horse, so as to avoid the slain.

Suddenly I heard a piercing shriek; a form seemed to rise from the earth; it flew swiftly towards me, sinking to the ground again as it drew near. All this passed so suddenly, that I with difficulty reined in my horse, so that it should not trample on the prostrate being. The dress of this person was that of a soldier, but the bared neck and arms, and the continued shrieks discovered a female thus disguised. I dismounted to her aid, while she, with heavy groans, and her hand placed on her side, resisted my attempt to lead her on. In the hurry of the moment I forgot that I was in Greece, and in my native accents endeavoured to soothe the sufferer. With wild and terrific exclamations did the lost, dying Evadne (for it was she) recognize the language of her lover; pain and fever from her wound had deranged her intellects, while her piteous cries and feeble

efforts to escape, penetrated me with compassion. In wild delirium she called upon the name of Raymond; she exclaimed that I was keeping him from her, while the Turks with fearful instruments of torture were about to take his life. Then again she sadly lamented her hard fate; that a woman, with a woman's heart and sensibility, should be driven by hopeless love and vacant hopes to take up the trade of arms, and suffer beyond the endurance of man privation, labour, and pain—the while her dry, hot hand pressed mine, and her brow and lips burned with consuming fire.

As her strength grew less, I lifted her from the ground; her emaciated form hung over my arm, her sunken cheek rested on my breast; in a sepulchral voice she murmured:—"This is the end of love!—Yet not the end!"— and frenzy lent her strength as she cast her arm up to heaven: "there is the end! there we meet again. Many living deaths have I borne for thee, O Raymond, and now I expire, thy victim!—By my death I purchase thee— lo! the instruments of war, fire, the plague are my servitors. I dared, I conquered them all, till now! I have sold myself to death, with the sole condition that thou shouldst follow me—Fire, and war, and plague, unite for thy destruction—O my Raymond, there is no safety for thee!"

With an heavy heart I listened to the changes of her delirium; I made her a bed of cloaks; her violence decreased and a clammy dew stood on her brow as the paleness of death succeeded to the crimson of fever, I placed her on the cloaks. She continued to rave of her speedy meeting with her beloved in the grave, of his death nigh at hand; sometimes she solemnly declared that he was summoned; sometimes she bewailed his hard destiny. Her voice grew feebler, her speech interrupted; a few convulsive movements, and her muscles relaxed, the limbs fell, no more to be sustained, one deep sigh, and life was gone.

I bore her from the near neighbourhood of the dead; wrapt in cloaks, I placed her beneath a tree. Once more I looked on her altered face; the last time I saw her she was eighteen; beautiful as poet's vision, splendid as a Sultana of the East—Twelve years had past; twelve years of change, sorrow and hardship; her brilliant complexion had become worn and dark, her limbs had lost the roundness of youth and womanhood; her eyes had sunk deep,

Crushed and o'erworn,
The hours had drained her blood, and filled her brow
With lines and wrinkles.

With shuddering horror I veiled this monument of human passion and human misery; I heaped over her all of flags and heavy accoutrements I could find, to guard her from birds and beasts of prey, until I could bestow on her a fitting grave. Sadly and slowly I

stemmed my course from among the heaps of slain, and, guided by the twinkling lights of the town, at length reached Rodosto.

[1] Lord Byron's Fourth Canto of Childe Harolde.

[2] Shakspeare's Sonnets.

CHAPTER II.

On my arrival, I found that an order had already gone forth for the army to proceed immediately towards Constantinople; and the troops which had suffered least in the battle were already on their way. The town was full of tumult. The wound, and consequent inability of Argyropylo, caused Raymond to be the first in command. He rode through the town, visiting the wounded, and giving such orders as were necessary for the siege he meditated. Early in the morning the whole army was in motion. In the hurry I could hardly find an opportunity to bestow the last offices on Evadne. Attended only by my servant, I dug a deep grave for her at the foot of the tree, and without disturbing her warrior shroud, I placed her in it, heaping stones upon the grave. The dazzling sun and glare of daylight, deprived the scene of solemnity; from Evadne's low tomb, I joined Raymond and his staff, now on their way to the Golden City.

Constantinople was invested, trenches dug, and advances made. The whole Greek fleet blockaded it by sea; on land from the river Kyat Kbanah, near the Sweet Waters, to the Tower of Marmora, on the shores of the Propontis, along the whole line of the ancient walls, the trenches of the siege were drawn. We already possessed Pera; the Golden Horn itself, the city, bastioned by the sea, and the ivy-mantled walls of the Greek emperors was all of Europe that the Mahometans could call theirs. Our army looked on her as certain prey. They counted the garrison; it was impossible that it should be relieved; each sally was a victory; for, even when the Turks were triumphant, the loss of men they sustained was an irreparable injury. I rode one morning with Raymond to the lofty mound, not far from the Top Kapou, (Cannon-gate), on which Mahmoud planted his standard, and first saw the city. Still the same lofty domes and minarets towered above the verdurous walls, where Constantine had died, and the Turk had entered the city. The plain around was interspersed with cemeteries, Turk, Greek, and Armenian, with their growth of cypress trees; and other woods of more cheerful aspect, diversified the scene. Among them the Greek army was encamped, and their squadrons moved to and fro—now in regular march, now in swift career.

Raymond's eyes were fixed on the city. "I have counted the hours of her life," said he; "one month, and she falls. Remain with me till then; wait till you see the cross on St. Sophia; and then return to your peaceful glades."

"You then," I asked, "still remain in Greece?"

"Assuredly," replied Raymond. "Yet Lionel, when I say this, believe me I look back with regret to our tranquil life at Windsor. I am but half a soldier; I love the renown, but not the trade of war. Before the battle of Rodosto I was full of hope and spirit; to conquer there, and afterwards to take Constantinople, was the hope, the bourne, the fulfilment of my ambition. This enthusiasm is now spent, I know not why; I seem to myself to be entering a darksome gulph; the ardent spirit of the army is irksome to me, the rapture of triumph null."

He paused, and was lost in thought. His serious mien recalled, by some association, the half-forgotten Evadne to my mind, and I seized this opportunity to make enquiries from him concerning her strange lot. I asked him, if he had ever seen among the troops any one resembling her; if since he had returned to Greece he had heard of her?

He started at her name,—he looked uneasily on me. "Even so," he cried, "I knew you would speak of her. Long, long I had forgotten her. Since our encampment here, she daily, hourly visits my thoughts. When I am addressed, her name is the sound I expect: in every communication, I imagine that she will form a part. At length you have broken the spell; tell me what you know of her."

I related my meeting with her; the story of her death was told and re-told. With painful earnestness he questioned me concerning her prophecies with regard to him. I treated them as the ravings of a maniac. "No, no," he said, "do not deceive yourself,—me you cannot. She has said nothing but what I knew before—though this is confirmation. Fire, the sword, and plague! They may all be found in yonder city; on my head alone may they fall!"

From this day Raymond's melancholy increased. He secluded himself as much as the duties of his station permitted. When in company, sadness would in spite of every effort steal over his features, and he sat absent and mute among the busy crowd that thronged about him. Perdita rejoined him, and before her he forced himself to appear cheerful, for she, even as a mirror, changed as he changed, and if he were silent and anxious, she solicitously inquired concerning, and endeavoured to remove the cause of his seriousness. She resided at the palace of Sweet Waters, a summer seraglio of the Sultan; the beauty of the surrounding scenery, undefiled by war, and the freshness

of the river, made this spot doubly delightful. Raymond felt no relief, received no pleasure from any show of heaven or earth. He often left Perdita, to wander in the grounds alone; or in a light shallop he floated idly on the pure waters, musing deeply. Sometimes I joined him; at such times his countenance was invariably solemn, his air dejected. He seemed relieved on seeing me, and would talk with some degree of interest on the affairs of the day. There was evidently something behind all this; yet, when he appeared about to speak of that which was nearest his heart, he would abruptly turn away, and with a sigh endeavour to deliver the painful idea to the winds.

It had often occurred, that, when, as I said, Raymond quitted Perdita's drawing-room, Clara came up to me, and gently drawing me aside, said, "Papa is gone; shall we go to him? I dare say he will be glad to see you." And, as accident permitted, I complied with or refused her request. One evening a numerous assembly of Greek chieftains were gathered together in the palace. The intriguing Palli, the accomplished Karazza, the warlike Ypsilanti, were among the principal. They talked of the events of the day; the skirmish at noon; the diminished numbers of the Infidels; their defeat and flight: they contemplated, after a short interval of time, the capture of the Golden City. They endeavoured to picture forth what would then happen, and spoke in lofty terms of the prosperity of Greece, when Constantinople should become its capital. The conversation then reverted to Asiatic intelligence, and the ravages the plague made in its chief cities; conjectures were hazarded as to the progress that disease might have made in the besieged city.

Raymond had joined in the former part of the discussion. In lively terms he demonstrated the extremities to which Constantinople was reduced; the wasted and haggard, though ferocious appearance of the troops; famine and pestilence was at work for them, he observed, and the infidels would soon be obliged to take refuge in their only hope—submission. Suddenly in the midst of his harangue he broke off, as if stung by some painful thought; he rose uneasily, and I perceived him at length quit the hall, and through the long corridor seek the open air. He did not return; and soon Clara crept round to me, making the accustomed invitation. I consented to her request, and taking her little hand, followed Raymond. We found him just about to embark in his boat, and he readily agreed to receive us as companions. After the heats of the day, the cooling land-breeze ruffled the river, and filled our little sail. The city looked dark to the south, while numerous lights along the near shores, and the beautiful aspect of the banks reposing in placid night, the waters keenly reflecting the heavenly lights, gave to this beauteous river a dower of loveliness that might have characterized a retreat in Paradise. Our single boatman attended to the sail; Raymond steered; Clara

sat at his feet, clasping his knees with her arms, and laying her head on them. Raymond began the conversation somewhat abruptly.

“This, my friend, is probably the last time we shall have an opportunity of conversing freely; my plans are now in full operation, and my time will become more and more occupied. Besides, I wish at once to tell you my wishes and expectations, and then never again to revert to so painful a subject. First, I must thank you, Lionel, for having remained here at my request. Vanity first prompted me to ask you: vanity, I call it; yet even in this I see the hand of fate—your presence will soon be necessary; you will become the last resource of Perdita, her protector and consoler. You will take her back to Windsor.”—

“Not without you,” I said. “You do not mean to separate again?”

“Do not deceive yourself,” replied Raymond, “the separation at hand is one over which I have no control; most near at hand is it; the days are already counted. May I trust you? For many days I have longed to disclose the mysterious presentiments that weigh on me, although I fear that you will ridicule them. Yet do not, my gentle friend; for, all childish and unwise as they are, they have become a part of me, and I dare not expect to shake them off.

“Yet how can I expect you to sympathize with me? You are of this world; I am not. You hold forth your hand; it is even as a part of yourself; and you do not yet divide the feeling of identity from the mortal form that shapes forth Lionel. How then can you understand me? Earth is to me a tomb, the firmament a vault, shrouding mere corruption. Time is no more, for I have stepped within the threshold of eternity; each man I meet appears a corse, which will soon be deserted of its animating spark, on the eve of decay and corruption.

Cada piedra un piramide levanta,
y cada flor costruye un monumento,
cada edificio es un sepulcro altivo,
cada soldado un esqueleto vivo.”^[3]

His accent was mournful,—he sighed deeply. “A few months ago,” he continued, “I was thought to be dying; but life was strong within me. My affections were human; hope and love were the day-stars of my life. Now— they dream that the brows of the conqueror of the infidel faith are about to be encircled by triumphant laurel; they talk of honourable reward, of title, power, and wealth—all I ask of Greece is a grave. Let them raise a mound above my lifeless body, which may stand even when the dome of St. Sophia has fallen.

“Wherefore do I feel thus? At Rodosto I was full of hope; but when first I saw Constantinople, that feeling, with every other joyful one, departed. The last words of Evadne were the seal upon the warrant of my death. Yet I do not pretend to account for my mood by any particular event. All I can say is, that it is so. The plague I am told is in Constantinople, perhaps I have imbibed its effluvia—perhaps disease is the real cause of my prognostications. It matters little why or wherefore I am affected, no power can avert the stroke, and the shadow of Fate’s uplifted hand already darkens me.

“To you, Lionel, I entrust your sister and her child. Never mention to her the fatal name of Evadne. She would doubly sorrow over the strange link that enchains me to her, making my spirit obey her dying voice, following her, as it is about to do, to the unknown country.”

I listened to him with wonder; but that his sad demeanour and solemn utterance assured me of the truth and intensity of his feelings, I should with light derision have attempted to dissipate his fears. Whatever I was about to reply, was interrupted by the powerful emotions of Clara. Raymond had spoken, thoughtless of her presence, and she, poor child, heard with terror and faith the prophecy of his death. Her father was moved by her violent grief; he took her in his arms and soothed her, but his very soothings were solemn and fearful. “Weep not, sweet child,” said he, “the coming death of one you have hardly known. I may die, but in death I can never forget or desert my own Clara. In after sorrow or joy, believe that your father’s spirit is near, to save or sympathize with you. Be proud of me, and cherish your infant remembrance of me. Thus, sweetest, I shall not appear to die. One thing you must promise,—not to speak to any one but your uncle, of the conversation you have just overheard. When I am gone, you will console your mother, and tell her that death was only bitter because it divided me from her; that my last thoughts will be spent on her. But while I live, promise not to betray me; promise, my child.”

With faltering accents Clara promised, while she still clung to her father in a transport of sorrow. Soon we returned to shore, and I endeavoured to obviate the impression made on the child’s mind, by treating Raymond’s fears lightly. We heard no more of them; for, as he had said, the siege, now drawing to a conclusion, became paramount in interest, engaging all his time and attention.

The empire of the Mahometans in Europe was at its close. The Greek fleet blockading every port of Stamboul, prevented the arrival of succour from Asia; all egress on the side towards land had become impracticable, except to such desperate sallies, as reduced the numbers of the enemy without making any impression on our lines. The

garrison was now so much diminished, that it was evident that the city could easily have been carried by storm; but both humanity and policy dictated a slower mode of proceeding. We could hardly doubt that, if pursued to the utmost, its palaces, its temples and store of wealth would be destroyed in the fury of contending triumph and defeat. Already the defenceless citizens had suffered through the barbarity of the Janisaries; and, in time of storm, tumult and massacre, beauty, infancy and decrepitude, would have alike been sacrificed to the brutal ferocity of the soldiers. Famine and blockade were certain means of conquest; and on these we founded our hopes of victory.

Each day the soldiers of the garrison assaulted our advanced posts, and impeded the accomplishment of our works. Fire-boats were launched from the various ports, while our troops sometimes recoiled from the devoted courage of men who did not seek to live, but to sell their lives dearly. These contests were aggravated by the season: they took place during summer, when the southern Asiatic wind came laden with intolerable heat, when the streams were dried up in their shallow beds, and the vast basin of the sea appeared to glow under the unmitigated rays of the solstitial sun. Nor did night refresh the earth. Dew was denied; herbage and flowers there were none; the very trees drooped; and summer assumed the blighted appearance of winter, as it went forth in silence and flame to abridge the means of sustenance to man. In vain did the eye strive to find the wreck of some northern cloud in the stainless empyrean, which might bring hope of change and moisture to the oppressive and windless atmosphere. All was serene, burning, annihilating. We the besiegers were in the comparison little affected by these evils. The woods around afforded us shade,—the river secured to us a constant supply of water; nay, detachments were employed in furnishing the army with ice, which had been laid up on Haemus, and Athos, and the mountains of Macedonia, while cooling fruits and wholesome food renovated the strength of the labourers, and made us bear with less impatience the weight of the unrefreshing air. But in the city things wore a different face. The sun's rays were refracted from the pavement and buildings—the stoppage of the public fountains—the bad quality of the food, and scarcity even of that, produced a state of suffering, which was aggravated by the scourge of disease; while the garrison arrogated every superfluity to themselves, adding by waste and riot to the necessary evils of the time. Still they would not capitulate.

Suddenly the system of warfare was changed. We experienced no more assaults; and by night and day we continued our labours unimpeded. Stranger still, when the troops advanced near the city, the walls were vacant, and no cannon was pointed against the intruders. When these circumstances were reported to Raymond, he caused minute

observations to be made as to what was doing within the walls, and when his scouts returned, reporting only the continued silence and desolation of the city, he commanded the army to be drawn out before the gates. No one appeared on the walls; the very portals, though locked and barred, seemed unguarded; above, the many domes and glittering crescents pierced heaven; while the old walls, survivors of ages, with ivy-crowned tower and weed-tangled buttress, stood as rocks in an uninhabited waste. From within the city neither shout nor cry, nor aught except the casual howling of a dog, broke the noon-day stillness. Even our soldiers were awed to silence; the music paused; the clang of arms was hushed. Each man asked his fellow in whispers, the meaning of this sudden peace; while Raymond from an height endeavoured, by means of glasses, to discover and observe the stratagem of the enemy. No form could be discerned on the terraces of the houses; in the higher parts of the town no moving shadow bespoke the presence of any living being: the very trees waved not, and mocked the stability of architecture with like immovability.

The tramp of horses, distinctly heard in the silence, was at length discerned. It was a troop sent by Karazza, the Admiral; they bore dispatches to the Lord General. The contents of these papers were important. The night before, the watch, on board one of the smaller vessels anchored near the seraglio wall, was roused by a slight splashing as of muffled oars; the alarm was given: twelve small boats, each containing three Janizaries, were descried endeavouring to make their way through the fleet to the opposite shore of Scutari. When they found themselves discovered they discharged their muskets, and some came to the front to cover the others, whose crews, exerting all their strength, endeavoured to escape with their light barks from among the dark hulls that environed them. They were in the end all sunk, and, with the exception of two or three prisoners, the crews drowned. Little could be got from the survivors; but their cautious answers caused it to be surmised that several expeditions had preceded this last, and that several Turks of rank and importance had been conveyed to Asia. The men disdainfully repelled the idea of having deserted the defence of their city; and one, the youngest among them, in answer to the taunt of a sailor, exclaimed, "Take it, Christian dogs! take the palaces, the gardens, the mosques, the abode of our fathers—take plague with them; pestilence is the enemy we fly; if she be your friend, hug her to your bosoms. The curse of Allah is on Stamboul, share ye her fate."

Such was the account sent by Karazza to Raymond: but a tale full of monstrous exaggerations, though founded on this, was spread by the accompanying troop among our soldiers. A murmur arose, the city was the prey of pestilence; already had a mighty power subjugated the inhabitants; Death had become lord of Constantinople.

I have heard a picture described, wherein all the inhabitants of earth were drawn out in fear to stand the encounter of Death. The feeble and decrepid fled; the warriors retreated, though they threatened even in flight. Wolves and lions, and various monsters of the desert roared against him; while the grim Unreality hovered shaking his spectral dart, a solitary but invincible assailant. Even so was it with the army of Greece. I am convinced, that had the myriad troops of Asia come from over the Propontis, and stood defenders of the Golden City, each and every Greek would have marched against the overwhelming numbers, and have devoted himself with patriotic fury for his country. But here no hedge of bayonets opposed itself, no death-dealing artillery, no formidable array of brave soldiers—the unguarded walls afforded easy entrance—the vacant palaces luxurious dwellings; but above the dome of St. Sophia the superstitious Greek saw Pestilence, and shrunk in trepidation from her influence.

Raymond was actuated by far other feelings. He descended the hill with a face beaming with triumph, and pointing with his sword to the gates, commanded his troops to—down with those barricades—the only obstacles now to completest victory. The soldiers answered his cheerful words with aghast and awe-struck looks; instinctively they drew back, and Raymond rode in the front of the lines:—“By my sword I swear,” he cried, “that no ambush or stratagem endangers you. The enemy is already vanquished; the pleasant places, the noble dwellings and spoil of the city are already yours; force the gate; enter and possess the seats of your ancestors, your own inheritance!”

An universal shudder and fearful whispering passed through the lines; not a soldier moved. “Cowards!” exclaimed their general, exasperated, “give me an hatchet! I alone will enter! I will plant your standard; and when you see it wave from yon highest minaret, you may gain courage, and rally round it!”

One of the officers now came forward: “General,” he said, “we neither fear the courage, nor arms, the open attack, nor secret ambush of the Moslems. We are ready to expose our breasts, exposed ten thousand times before, to the balls and scymetars of the infidels, and to fall gloriously for Greece. But we will not die in heaps, like dogs poisoned in summer-time, by the pestilential air of that city—we dare not go against the plague!”

A multitude of men are feeble and inert, without a voice, a leader; give them that, and they regain the strength belonging to their numbers. Shouts from a thousand voices now rent the air—the cry of applause became universal. Raymond saw the danger; he was willing to save his troops from the crime of disobedience; for he knew, that contention once begun between the commander and his army, each act and word

added to the weakness of the former, and bestowed power on the latter. He gave orders for the retreat to be sounded, and the regiments repaired in good order to the camp.

I hastened to carry the intelligence of these strange proceedings to Perdita; and we were soon joined by Raymond. He looked gloomy and perturbed. My sister was struck by my narrative: “How beyond the imagination of man,” she exclaimed, “are the decrees of heaven, wondrous and inexplicable!”

“Foolish girl,” cried Raymond angrily, “are you like my valiant soldiers, panic-struck? What is there inexplicable, pray, tell me, in so very natural an occurrence? Does not the plague rage each year in Stamboul? What wonder, that this year, when as we are told, its virulence is unexampled in Asia, that it should have occasioned double havoc in that city? What wonder then, in time of siege, want, extreme heat, and drought, that it should make unaccustomed ravages? Less wonder far is it, that the garrison, despairing of being able to hold out longer, should take advantage of the negligence of our fleet to escape at once from siege and capture. It is not pestilence —by the God that lives! it is not either plague or impending danger that makes us, like birds in harvest-time, terrified by a scarecrow, abstain from the ready prey—it is base superstition—And thus the aim of the valiant is made the shuttlecock of fools; the worthy ambition of the high-souled, the plaything of these tamed hares! But yet Stamboul shall be ours! By my past labours, by torture and imprisonment suffered for them, by my victories, by my sword, I swear—by my hopes of fame, by my former deserts now awaiting their reward, I deeply vow, with these hands to plant the cross on yonder mosque!”

“Dearest Raymond!” interrupted Perdita, in a supplicating accent.

He had been walking to and fro in the marble hall of the seraglio; his very lips were pale with rage, while, quivering, they shaped his angry words— his eyes shot fire—his gestures seemed restrained by their very vehemence. “Perdita,” he continued, impatiently, “I know what you would say; I know that you love me, that you are good and gentle; but this is no woman’s work—nor can a female heart guess at the hurricane which tears me!”

He seemed half afraid of his own violence, and suddenly quitted the hall: a look from Perdita shewed me her distress, and I followed him. He was pacing the garden: his passions were in a state of inconceivable turbulence. “Am I for ever,” he cried, “to be the sport of fortune! Must man, the heaven-climber, be for ever the victim of the crawling reptiles of his species! Were I as you, Lionel, looking forward to many years of life, to a succession of love-enlightened days, to refined enjoyments and fresh-

springing hopes, I might yield, and breaking my General's staff, seek repose in the glades of Windsor. But I am about to die!—nay, interrupt me not—soon I shall die. From the many-peopled earth, from the sympathies of man, from the loved resorts of my youth, from the kindness of my friends, from the affection of my only beloved Perdita, I am about to be removed. Such is the will of fate! Such the decree of the High Ruler from whom there is no appeal: to whom I submit. But to lose all—to lose with life and love, glory also! It shall not be!

“I, and in a few brief years, all you,—this panic-struck army, and all the population of fair Greece, will no longer be. But other generations will arise, and ever and for ever will continue, to be made happier by our present acts, to be glorified by our valour. The prayer of my youth was to be one among those who render the pages of earth's history splendid; who exalt the race of man, and make this little globe a dwelling of the mighty. Alas, for Raymond! the prayer of his youth is wasted—the hopes of his manhood are null!

“From my dungeon in yonder city I cried, soon I will be thy lord! When Evadne pronounced my death, I thought that the title of Victor of Constantinople would be written on my tomb, and I subdued all mortal fear. I stand before its vanquished walls, and dare not call myself a conqueror. So shall it not be! Did not Alexander leap from the walls of the city of the Oxydracae, to shew his coward troops the way to victory, encountering alone the swords of its defenders? Even so will I brave the plague—and though no man follow, I will plant the Grecian standard on the height of St. Sophia.”

Reason came unavailing to such high-wrought feelings. In vain I shewed him, that when winter came, the cold would dissipate the pestilential air, and restore courage to the Greeks. “Talk not of other season than this!” he cried. “I have lived my last winter, and the date of this year, 2092, will be carved upon my tomb. Already do I see,” he continued, looking up mournfully, “the bourne and precipitate edge of my existence, over which I plunge into the gloomy mystery of the life to come. I am prepared, so that I leave behind a trail of light so radiant, that my worst enemies cannot cloud it. I owe this to Greece, to you, to my surviving Perdita, and to myself, the victim of ambition.”

We were interrupted by an attendant, who announced, that the staff of Raymond was assembled in the council-chamber. He requested me in the meantime to ride through the camp, and to observe and report to him the dispositions of the soldiers; he then left me. I had been excited to the utmost by the proceedings of the day, and now more than ever by the passionate language of Raymond. Alas! for human reason! He accused the Greeks of superstition: what name did he give to the faith he lent to the predictions of Evadne? I passed from the palace of Sweet Waters to the plain on which

the encampment lay, and found its inhabitants in commotion. The arrival of several with fresh stories of marvels, from the fleet; the exaggerations bestowed on what was already known; tales of old prophecies, of fearful histories of whole regions which had been laid waste during the present year by pestilence, alarmed and occupied the troops. Discipline was lost; the army disbanded itself. Each individual, before a part of a great whole moving only in unison with others, now became resolved into the unit nature had made him, and thought of himself only. They stole off at first by ones and twos, then in larger companies, until, unimpeded by the officers, whole battalions sought the road that led to Macedonia.

About midnight I returned to the palace and sought Raymond; he was alone, and apparently composed; such composure, at least, was his as is inspired by a resolve to adhere to a certain line of conduct. He heard my account of the self-dissolution of the army with calmness, and then said, "You know, Verney, my fixed determination not to quit this place, until in the light of day Stamboul is confessedly ours. If the men I have about me shrink from following me, others, more courageous, are to be found. Go you before break of day, bear these dispatches to Karazza, add to them your own entreaties that he send me his marines and naval force; if I can get but one regiment to second me, the rest would follow of course. Let him send me this regiment. I shall expect your return by to-morrow noon."

Methought this was but a poor expedient; but I assured him of my obedience and zeal. I quitted him to take a few hours rest. With the breaking of morning I was accoutred for my ride. I lingered awhile, desirous of taking leave of Perdita, and from my window observed the approach of the sun. The golden splendour arose, and weary nature awoke to suffer yet another day of heat and thirsty decay. No flowers lifted up their dew-laden cups to meet the dawn; the dry grass had withered on the plains; the burning fields of air were vacant of birds; the cicale alone, children of the sun, began their shrill and deafening song among the cypresses and olives. I saw Raymond's coal-black charger brought to the palace gate; a small company of officers arrived soon after; care and fear was painted on each cheek, and in each eye, unrefreshed by sleep. I found Raymond and Perdita together. He was watching the rising sun, while with one arm he encircled his beloved's waist; she looked on him, the sun of her life, with earnest gaze of mingled anxiety and tenderness. Raymond started angrily when he saw me. "Here still?" he cried. "Is this your promised zeal?"

"Pardon me," I said, "but even as you speak, I am gone."

"Nay, pardon me," he replied; "I have no right to command or reproach; but my life hangs on your departure and speedy return. Farewell!"

His voice had recovered its bland tone, but a dark cloud still hung on his features. I would have delayed; I wished to recommend watchfulness to Perdita, but his presence restrained me. I had no pretence for my hesitation; and on his repeating his farewell, I clasped his outstretched hand; it was cold and clammy. "Take care of yourself, my dear Lord," I said.

"Nay," said Perdita, "that task shall be mine. Return speedily, Lionel." With an air of absence he was playing with her auburn locks, while she leaned on him; twice I turned back, only to look again on this matchless pair. At last, with slow and heavy steps, I had paced out of the hall, and sprung upon my horse. At that moment Clara flew towards me; clasping my knee she cried, "Make haste back, uncle! Dear uncle, I have such fearful dreams; I dare not tell my mother. Do not be long away!" I assured her of my impatience to return, and then, with a small escort rode along the plain towards the tower of Marmora.

I fulfilled my commission; I saw Karazza. He was somewhat surprised; he would see, he said, what could be done; but it required time; and Raymond had ordered me to return by noon. It was impossible to effect any thing in so short a time. I must stay till the next day; or come back, after having reported the present state of things to the general. My choice was easily made. A restlessness, a fear of what was about to betide, a doubt as to Raymond's purposes, urged me to return without delay to his quarters. Quitting the Seven Towers, I rode eastward towards the Sweet Waters. I took a circuitous path, principally for the sake of going to the top of the mount before mentioned, which commanded a view of the city. I had my glass with me. The city basked under the noon-day sun, and the venerable walls formed its picturesque boundary. Immediately before me was the Top Kapou, the gate near which Mahomet had made the breach by which he entered the city. Trees gigantic and aged grew near; before the gate I discerned a crowd of moving human figures—with intense curiosity I lifted my glass to my eye. I saw Lord Raymond on his charger; a small company of officers had gathered about him; and behind was a promiscuous concourse of soldiers and subalterns, their discipline lost, their arms thrown aside; no music sounded, no banners streamed. The only flag among them was one which Raymond carried; he pointed with it to the gate of the city. The circle round him fell back. With angry gestures he leapt from his horse, and seizing a hatchet that hung from his saddle-bow, went with the apparent intention of battering down the opposing gate. A few men came to aid him; their numbers increased; under their united blows the obstacle was vanquished, gate, portcullis, and fence were demolished; and the wide sun-lit way, leading to the heart of the city, now lay open before them. The men shrank back; they seemed afraid of what they had already done, and stood as if they expected

some Mighty Phantom to stalk in offended majesty from the opening. Raymond sprung lightly on his horse, grasped the standard, and with words which I could not hear (but his gestures, being their fit accompaniment, were marked by passionate energy,) he seemed to adjure their assistance and companionship; even as he spoke, the crowd receded from him. Indignation now transported him; his words I guessed were fraught with disdain—then turning from his coward followers, he addressed himself to enter the city alone. His very horse seemed to back from the fatal entrance; his dog, his faithful dog, lay moaning and supplicating in his path—in a moment more, he had plunged the rowels into the sides of the stung animal, who bounded forward, and he, the gateway passed, was galloping up the broad and desert street.

Until this moment my soul had been in my eyes only. I had gazed with wonder, mixed with fear and enthusiasm. The latter feeling now predominated. I forgot the distance between us: “I will go with thee, Raymond!” I cried; but, my eye removed from the glass, I could scarce discern the pigmy forms of the crowd, which about a mile from me surrounded the gate; the form of Raymond was lost. Stung with impatience, I urged my horse with force of spur and loosened reins down the acclivity, that, before danger could arrive, I might be at the side of my noble, godlike friend. A number of buildings and trees intervened, when I had reached the plain, hiding the city from my view. But at that moment a crash was heard. Thunderlike it reverberated through the sky, while the air was darkened. A moment more and the old walls again met my sight, while over them hovered a murky cloud; fragments of buildings whirled above, half seen in smoke, while flames burst out beneath, and continued explosions filled the air with terrific thunders. Flying from the mass of falling ruin which leapt over the high walls, and shook the ivy towers, a crowd of soldiers made for the road by which I came; I was surrounded, hemmed in by them, unable to get forward. My impatience rose to its utmost; I stretched out my hands to the men; I conjured them to turn back and save their General, the conqueror of Stamboul, the liberator of Greece; tears, aye tears, in warm flow gushed from my eyes—I would not believe in his destruction; yet every mass that darkened the air seemed to bear with it a portion of the martyred Raymond. Horrible sights were shaped to me in the turbid cloud that hovered over the city; and my only relief was derived from the struggles I made to approach the gate. Yet when I effected my purpose, all I could discern within the precincts of the massive walls was a city of fire: the open way through which Raymond had ridden was enveloped in smoke and flame. After an interval the explosions ceased, but the flames still shot up from various quarters; the dome of St. Sophia had disappeared. Strange to say (the result perhaps of the concussion of air occasioned by the blowing up of the city) huge, white thunder clouds lifted themselves up from the southern

horizon, and gathered over-head; they were the first blots on the blue expanse that I had seen for months, and amidst this havoc and despair they inspired pleasure. The vault above became obscured, lightning flashed from the heavy masses, followed instantaneously by crashing thunder; then the big rain fell. The flames of the city bent beneath it; and the smoke and dust arising from the ruins was dissipated.

I no sooner perceived an abatement of the flames than, hurried on by an irresistible impulse, I endeavoured to penetrate the town. I could only do this on foot, as the mass of ruin was impracticable for a horse. I had never entered the city before, and its ways were unknown to me. The streets were blocked up, the ruins smoking; I climbed up one heap, only to view others in succession; and nothing told me where the centre of the town might be, or towards what point Raymond might have directed his course. The rain ceased; the clouds sunk behind the horizon; it was now evening, and the sun descended swiftly the western sky. I scrambled on, until I came to a street, whose wooden houses, half-burnt, had been cooled by the rain, and were fortunately uninjured by the gunpowder. Up this I hurried—until now I had not seen a vestige of man. Yet none of the defaced human forms which I distinguished, could be Raymond; so I turned my eyes away, while my heart sickened within me. I came to an open space—a mountain of ruin in the midst, announced that some large mosque had occupied the space—and here, scattered about, I saw various articles of luxury and wealth, singed, destroyed—but shewing what they had been in their ruin—jewels, strings of pearls, embroidered robes, rich furs, glittering tapestries, and oriental ornaments, seemed to have been collected here in a pile destined for destruction; but the rain had stopped the havoc midway.

Hours passed, while in this scene of ruin I sought for Raymond. Insurmountable heaps sometimes opposed themselves; the still burning fires scorched me. The sun set; the atmosphere grew dim—and the evening star no longer shone companionless. The glare of flames attested the progress of destruction, while, during mingled light and obscurity, the piles around me took gigantic proportions and weird shapes. For a moment I could yield to the creative power of the imagination, and for a moment was soothed by the sublime fictions it presented to me. The beatings of my human heart drew me back to blank reality. Where, in this wilderness of death, art thou, O Raymond—ornament of England, deliverer of Greece, “hero of unwritten story,” where in this burning chaos are thy dear relics strewed? I called aloud for him—through the darkness of night, over the scorching ruins of fallen Constantinople, his name was heard; no voice replied—echo even was mute.

I was overcome by weariness; the solitude depressed my spirits. The sultry air impregnated with dust, the heat and smoke of burning palaces, palsied my limbs.

Hunger suddenly came acutely upon me. The excitement which had hitherto sustained me was lost; as a building, whose props are loosened, and whose foundations rock, totters and falls, so when enthusiasm and hope deserted me, did my strength fail. I sat on the sole remaining step of an edifice, which even in its downfall, was huge and magnificent; a few broken walls, not dislodged by gunpowder, stood in fantastic groupings, and a flame glimmered at intervals on the summit of the pile. For a time hunger and sleep contended, till the constellations reeled before my eyes and then were lost. I strove to rise, but my heavy lids closed, my limbs over-wearied, claimed repose—I rested my head on the stone, I yielded to the grateful sensation of utter forgetfulness; and in that scene of desolation, on that night of despair—I slept.

[3] Calderon de la Barca.